



Public Questions

Questions from Mr T Kevans	Questions to Council
<p>1. Under the provisions of the equalities act and data protection act can you please tell the public and families and relatives of our local homeless population, if the very vulnerable homeless people with severe mental health illness and addiction are giving their informed consent to P3 for their data to be used by private investors to profit from?</p>	<p>It may be useful if I briefly explain the background to the Council's involvement in the countywide rough sleeper arrangements, which are overseen by a countywide group of officers representing the six district councils, Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, and the County Council and since October 2017 has commissioned a countywide outreach programme to provide support to roughsleepers. P3, a registered charity currently hold this contract. The public are encouraged to assist by providing information on the location of rough sleepers via the www.streetlink.org.uk website or by phoning 0300 500 0914 (open 24/7)</p> <p>In 2016 the Government announced a bidding round for funding for entrenched rough sleepers using social impact bonds. A cross authority group developed a bid and, in line with the bidding process, Gloucester City Council was identified as the lead authority. Funding of up to £990,000 was awarded and subsequently a contract was let under Gloucester City Council's procurement rules to P3 (who also work with Caring for Communities & People (CCP) and Addiction Recovery Agency (ARA) to provide the ACTion Glos service. This £990,000 represents a considerable increase in our ability to work with entrenched rough sleepers, supporting them on their journey to a more positive settled and secure future. This cohort need not just housing but a high and lasting level of professional support to shift them away from a lifestyle that ultimately has the capacity to severely curtail their life chances.</p> <p>Subsequently the partnership has been awarded a further £272,000 for an additional 16 clients, bringing the total number across the County to 126. The model being used within Gloucestershire is a Housing First approach but also provides intensive and long-term support. The SIB model is a payment by results system and providers need to either involve financial institutions or to supply up front funding themselves before they are paid for achieving specific outcomes which undergo a robust verification process.</p>

	<p>P3 and the County Homeless Co-ordinator gave an update on progress in Stroud to the Housing Review Panel last month (September 25th). I have subsequently asked for a report on Homelessness to come to the December Housing Committee, in order to consider a number of issues including the procurement of temporary accommodation for homeless people within the district, and the provision of more settled housing accommodation.</p> <p>Turning now to your first question I am advised that neither Gloucester City Council nor P3 work with private investors in the way assumed by the question. Charity P3 is providing its own up-front funding with payment from Government on production of outcomes verified by the commissioning partnership.</p> <p>Finally, it may be of interest to the questioner that last week's The Big Issue magazine has a focus on money and funding matters, and carries an article on the benefits of ethical and impact investing.</p>
<p>2. Can you please advise the public what interest SDC has received on the balance of both earmarked housing and general reserves and un earmarked housing and general reserves?</p>	<p>For the 2017/18 financial year the interest received by the Housing Revenue Account was £33k and the General Fund received £162k.</p> <p>Investment income is generated across the Council's entire cash flow and working capital position as a whole, and therefore interest is not separately identifiable to earmarked or un-earmarked reserves.</p>
<p>3. Does SDC have an anti slavery policy and can you explain how accepting money under this sibs scheme fits in with this policy?</p>	<p>The Council does not have an anti-slavery policy, however, the Cooperative Alliance Administration is seeking to adopt the Cooperative Party Modern Slavery Charter. For your information this has already been adopted on an all party basis by Gloucester City Council following a motion by Cllr Kevin Stephens and this charter would therefore already apply to the SIB contract.</p> <p>The SIB scheme helps protect vulnerable rough sleepers from slavery and exploitation. It provides intensive support and works with rough sleepers to access and sustain housing and, ultimately, engage in meaningful activity such as employment or volunteering. All these factors help defend individuals from exploitation.</p>

Questions from Mr S Gower	Questions to Council
<p>1. Can you please confirm what proportion of the social impact bond for homelessness awarded to Gloucestershire County Council, has SDC agreed to?</p>	<p>The social impact bond was additional investment secured through a partnership bid submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The partnership consists of the six district councils, Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, and the County Council. This is a Countywide Project that works with a referred client group from across Gloucestershire.</p>
<p>2. In light of a recent press release that confirms that SDC directors made the decision to take money from the Gloucestershire County Council £990k SIB for homelessness, and that the deputy leader of Conservative led, Gloucester City Council is leading the sib scheme, can you please explain how voters and in Stroud have a say over councillors making decisions in Gloucester?</p>	<p>The decision to take part in this bid was an operational decision and not a political decision. SDC councillors monitor work on homelessness, rough sleeping and housing-related support services through the Housing Committee.</p>
<p>3. Can you please tell the public who the private investors are that are paying money to the local homeless service provider, P3?</p>	<p>There are no private investors involved. Charity P3 is providing the up-front funding itself.</p>

Questions from Mrs D Hicks	Questions to Council
1. Can you please confirm how many empty residential dwellings there are in the Stroud district that have been empty for more than 6 months?	There are currently 590 dwellings that have been empty for more than 6 months.
2. Can you please tell the public how many times SDC has used their powers with EDMO's under the Housing Act, 2004, to take control of empty properties?	The Council has yet to use their EDMO powers to bring a property back into residential use. We started a proactive programme in July to encourage and assist the owners of such properties to ensure they become re-occupied without having to resort to costly and time intensive enforcement procedures. We offer a loan to the owners of empty dwellings and advise them of other organisations such as Warm & Well who may know of other funding available to improve energy efficiency. We have had a good response to date and are hopeful that our intervention will assist in reducing the number of long term empty properties in the district.
3. Can you please confirm what the current total balance is for unearmarked housing and general reserves, and earmarked housing and general reserves?	<p>At the end of the 2017/18 financial year the General Fund balances were £18.45 million of which £16.28 million was earmarked and £2.17 million was not earmarked.</p> <p>At the same point in time housing balances were £11.69 million of which £8.69 million was earmarked and £3 million was not earmarked.</p> <p>I have previously contacted you to arrange a meeting with officers and would be more than happy to facilitate a meeting to discuss the work we are undertaking on homelessness in Stroud.</p>