



CHELTENHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Notice of a meeting of Council

**Monday, 18 July 2016
2.30 pm**

Council Chamber - Municipal Offices

Membership	
Councillors:	Chris Ryder (Chairman), Klara Sudbury (Vice-Chair), Matt Babbage, Paul Baker, Garth Barnes, Ian Bickerton, Nigel Britter, Flo Clucas, Chris Coleman, Mike Collins, Bernard Fisher, Wendy Flynn, Tim Harman, Steve Harvey, Colin Hay, Rowena Hay, Karl Hoble, Sandra Holliday, Peter Jeffries, Steve Jordan, Adam Lillywhite, Chris Mason, Helena McCloskey, Paul McCloskey, Andrew McKinlay, Dan Murch, Chris Nelson, Tony Oliver, Dennis Parsons, John Payne, Louis Savage, Diggory Seacome, Malcolm Stennett, Pat Thornton, Jon Walklett, Simon Wheeler, Roger Whyborn, Max Wilkinson, Suzanne Williams and David Willingham

Agenda

6.	PUBLIC QUESTIONS	(Pages 3 - 4)
7.	MEMBER QUESTIONS	(Pages 5 - 8)

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Head of Paid Service

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Public Questions (1)

1.	Question from Tess Beck to Cabinet Member Housing, Councillor Peter Jeffries
	<p>Recent months have seen a number of retrospective applications for planning permission for large Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs with more than 6 tenants). Some of these HMOs had been operating as such for several years and had been licensed by Cheltenham Borough Council during that period.</p> <p>Why were these properties licensed despite not having planning permission in place?</p> <p>What steps will be taken to improve cross-checking and communications between the Planning, HMO Licensing and Building Control teams in the future?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member Housing
	<p>Historically, Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) were licensed without planning consent being in place, because some properties had been in this form of occupation for many years and therefore had established use and owners were not obliged to seek planning consent. A lack of planning consent is not an automatic bar on a property being licensed, as separate pieces of legislation govern these issues.</p> <p>More retrospective applications are being submitted for planning permission relating to larger HMO's as a direct result of the activity of the council's enforcement team. Since the housing and enforcement teams were merged, closer joint working has generated significant additional income from retrospective applications.</p> <p>A number of issues arise in ensuring that HMO's have the required license and planning consent, for example:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of occupants can vary over time; • The level of occupancy is not always obvious and may change where a property is subdivided or extended; • Properties are often adapted without consent, or under permitted development rights, without any notification to the council of an increase in the number of occupants.

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Member Questions (7)

1.	Question from Councillor Tim Harman to Cabinet Member Corporate Services, Councillor Roger Whyborn
	<p>The Cabinet has recently performed a massive U turn by withdrawing Revenue and Benefits from the 20/20 process.</p> <p>20/20 is a process of sharing back office services with other Councils which has helped to drive down costs thereby protecting valued front line services. Will the Cabinet Member confirm whether the Cabinet is planning to abandon 20/20 altogether? Also will he explain to Council how he plans to fill the black hole of £159,000 which will be created in the budget next year arising from this decision?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member Corporate Services
	<p>The clue to the answer to Cllr Harman is in the question. Cabinet has identified that 'Revenues and Benefits' is not primarily a back office service. Many residents who deal with the service – for example if there are issues with Council tax benefit or Housing benefit – are dealing with a very much 'front of office' public facing service. Often this can involve some of the neediest and least empowered members of the public. I note that the new Prime Minister has recently spoken of the need for government to empower all, and not just the privileged few.</p> <p>The £159,000 figure which is quoted presumably includes Customer Services (£105,000 = Revs & Bevs plus £54,000 = Customer Services), and again Customer Services is about as 'front-facing', and non 'back office' as it gets.</p> <p>The Cabinet is not planning to abandon 2020 vision rather to progress it with GOSS, ICT, counter fraud and audit services.</p> <p>The Cabinet accepts that savings not taken in one area must be made in another, and will be addressing the whole question of developing the budget for 2017/18 in the context of updating the MTFS as part of an ongoing exercise.</p>
2.	Question from Councillor Tim Harman to Cabinet Member Finance, Councillor Rowena Hay
	<p>Will the Cabinet Member update the Council on the present position with regard to the future of North Place?</p> <p>In considering what options the Council might have will the Cabinet Member include as one option the possible repurchase of the site in the public interest as a means of securing the key objectives such as additional affordable housing?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member Finance
	<p>In answering this question it is important to remember that the detail of any discussions between the parties needs to be treated with strict confidence, considering the commercial sensitivities involved.</p> <p>However, in answer to the question I am able to update this council as follows: Subsequent to Morrison's withdrawal from the scheme, Augur Buchler are currently in discussions with a number of interested parties regarding alternatives. The council</p>

	<p>are supporting them in developing a way forward and are undertaking the necessary due diligence and risk assessments to understand the benefits, potential risks and viability of any proposals.</p> <p>As part of the due diligence and risk assessment process currently underway, due consideration will be given to all potential options open to this council. The uncertainty in the development market caused by recent national events has made risk profiling more complicated. Housing could form part of a scheme going forward as the current development brief states mixed use.</p> <p>Any alternative option would be subject to legal considerations in addition to planning and viability testing. I will of course ensure that as soon as any decision is made Members are informed, I am as keen, as I am sure you are to see this very important site developed.</p>
3.	<p>Question from Councillor Babbage to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Coleman</p>
	<p>Wheeler recycling bins can make it easier for residents to recycle domestic waste. Will the Cabinet Member follow the example of neighbouring councils and offer wheeler bins, where suitable, for recycling?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment</p>
	<p>Neighbouring councils operate with a variety of different ways for residents to recycle at home. Whilst it is correct to say that Tewkesbury Borough Council have decided to continue with their co-mingled service using wheeled bins for recycling, Gloucester City Council, Forest of Dean District Council and Cotswold District Council all use boxes in a similar way to how we operate.</p> <p>Wheeled bins for recycling have to be collected using a co-mingled collection where all the recyclables are mixed together and taken to a Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) to be sorted. This type of collection doesn't provide as good a quality recyclate once they have been sorted and therefore the materials aren't worth as much compared to the current method of collection used in Cheltenham, where all recyclables are sorted at the kerbside.</p> <p>However, as part of the work underway in preparation for the potential service redesign in 2017, we are assessing the pros and cons of the current recycling collection method and the other options available in the industry including co-mingling. This appraisal together with the results of the consultation will help us choose the most practical and cost-effective option for Cheltenham.</p> <p>This Administration continues to be committed to providing the best service possible for the people of Cheltenham.</p>
4.	<p>Question from Councillor Babbage to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman</p>
	<p>How many households take up the garden waste service and what steps are being taken to promote this scheme?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment</p>
	<p>For the past 3 years, the council has offered a promotional discount from February until May of £2 on new garden waste bin subscriptions, with those current users</p>

	<p>renewing before their renewal date also being eligible for the discount. We always see a surge in new business at the end of May from customers wishing to secure the discount. There is a renewal rate of more than 95%.</p> <p>We have been keen to promote the service as widely as possible. We have distributed bin hangers at the start of spring publicising the service as well as adverts being placed in the Echo and posters being displayed in the public areas. There have been banners at the HRC and on the sides of our vehicles. There has also been reference to the service in the Council Tax mailing as well as online.</p> <p>Take up is continuing to increase year on year and we currently have approximately 15,800 current bin subscriptions compared to 14,703 as at 31 March 2015, 13,699 as at 31 March 2014 and 12,781 as at 31 March 2013. I am satisfied with this increase in take up as well as feedback around the service received from customers.</p>
5.	Question from Councillor Babbage to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	<p>Could the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the implementation of the Cheltenham Transport Plan in general, and the Albion Street changes in particular.</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member Housing and Safety
	<p>The bulk of the works in Albion Street being carried out by Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) began on 14th April and concluded on 8th July 2016 as planned. I believe that some minor non-disruptive works are continuing such as the closing off of the now redundant access road into the former Beechwood car park.</p> <p>The traffic flows and behaviours are I believe being monitored by GCC so that any fine tuning – traffic signal timings, signage etc – can be amended as appropriate. My understanding is that parallel to this monitoring exercise GCC are making preparations for phase 2 (Imperial Square) such that should they be satisfied that the implementation of phase 1 is satisfactory, they will be in a position to proceed, without undue delay and still meet their procurement requirements.</p>
6.	Question from Councillor Savage to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Coleman
	<p>Cheltenham sends a higher proportion of household waste to landfill than our neighbours in Tewkesbury and Cotswolds. Can he explain why we are lagging behind other local councils in this important area?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment
	<p>Cheltenham is far more densely populated than the rural districts of Tewkesbury and the Cotswolds and has a far greater number of properties to collect waste from.</p> <p>The Joint Waste Committee received a performance update for 2015/16 on 21st June, which shows that whilst we are seeing an increase in waste across the country, Cheltenham was the closest to achieving its target for landfill waste per household (475 kg's against a target of 464 kg's) than any of the other authorities in Gloucestershire – as shown on page 5 of the report.</p> <p>http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/b11845/Agenda%20Item%2011%20-%20Performance%20Monitoring%20Presentation%20Tuesday%2021-Jun-2016%2010.00%20Gloucestershire%20Joi.pdf?T=9</p>

	<p>Recycling and waste performance is not a competition. Whilst I could be satisfied at comparing our performance to other similar Authorities, such as Gloucester City Council for example, that would miss the point. Here in Cheltenham, we are committed to providing as good a service as possible and our focus will remain on reducing waste and increasing recycling where possible.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Savage to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Coleman</p>
	<p>Can the Cabinet Member guarantee residents that fortnightly bin collections are safe? Can he assure the Council that there are no plans to move to 3 weekly bin collections?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment</p>
	<p>We are currently considering the various options available to improve our waste and recycling services, with potential changes to be introduced in 2017.</p> <p>We are keen to hear residents' views so that we can make informed decisions when re-shaping and enhancing our services. Therefore we are currently inviting residents to take part in a consultation exercise which is asking for their thoughts on everything from frequency and ease of collections, materials which can be collected, the type and style of bins and recycling containers, as well as questions relating to other parts of the service.</p> <p>As part of the work we are also looking at in close detail, the approaches used by other local authorities, which includes things such as the introduction of a greater number of materials which can be recycled at the kerbside, the co-mingled recycling collection approach and three weekly refuse collections.</p> <p>I have personally reassured residents that we won't be implementing any changes to this valued service until all of this work has been carried out and we are comfortable with the best and most practical option for Cheltenham.</p>