

Cabinet

Tuesday, 14th October, 2014

6.00 - 6.40 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Steve Jordan (Leader of the Council), John Rawson (Cabinet Member Finance), Rowena Hay (Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles), Peter Jeffries (Cabinet Member Housing), Andrew McKinlay (Cabinet Member Development and Safety), Jon Walklett (Cabinet Member Corporate Services) and Chris Coleman (Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment)
Also in attendance:	Councillor Tim Harman

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

1.	Question from Mr Ken Pollock to the Leader, Councillor Steve Jordan
	<p>The developer Pre-Submission responses reveal that Hayden has been re-evaluated (as was scheduled) and been declared substantially <u>available now</u> for development within the JCS period, and this less prominent area of greenfield (far less sensitive than inspector-commended Leckhampton) <u>also</u> has the potential to create a section of Cheltenham's much-needed 'Outer Ring Road' to relieve overloaded Princess Elizabeth Way.</p> <p>Considering that the officers' <u>conclusion</u> in their 'Interim Response Report' (disclosed yesterday) is that no further amendment is warranted to the JCS (other than minor "textual corrections"),</p> <p>Why has information such as (but not only) Hayden's emergence been concealed, and been withheld from consideration by Cheltenham's elected representatives (including MSG members) during this most critical final period?</p>
	Response from the Leader
	Both Severn Trent and their agents made representations in regard to the land to the west of Cheltenham at Hayden for this last round of consultation and on the previous draft JCS. Hayden sewage treatment

	<p>works is the main treatment works for Cheltenham and is a significant constraint to the development of the area.</p> <p>The current Cheltenham Plan identifies a development exclusion zone surrounding the works due to the impact of odour from the site. There has been no change to this position. Severn Trent and their Agents are undertaking ongoing technical work to examine the extent of odour impact from the works and consider whether further mitigation measures could be enacted that would reduce the Development Exclusion Zone. This work will then need to be evaluated by the Councils' environmental health team along with DEFRA and the Environment Agency, where appropriate. Since this work has not been done yet it is right to retain the Development Exclusion Zone as it currently stands, and therefore no further amendment to the JCS is warranted at this time.</p> <p>We need to plan both for our current needs and those into the future, and therefore the opportunity to safeguard this area to the west of Cheltenham for future development will allow sufficient work to be done to ensure that any development here will be of a high quality that offers the opportunity for a good quality of life for residents. If work is completed and reviewed on the impact of odours or changes to the plant in the future, then this will be taken into account when the JCS is reviewed.</p> <p>There was a large response to the JCS pre-submission publication with representations from over 2,800 individuals, groups and companies. Scanning these in, entering details onto a database for the Planning Inspector's use and then reading them has taken some time. We have made them available as soon as we were able, along with an interim summary of the main issues raised. We have done this before we are required to do so, before submission.</p> <p>In a supplementary question Mr Pollock asked the following : Considering that further information has just become available for <u>non-GreenBelt</u> sites on the east and west sides of Gloucester, which would relieve the pressure for high-population-growth Gloucester to be pushing housing numbers into and across the Green Belt towards Cheltenham, objectors believe many more major disclosures, very relevant to Cheltenham's JCS predicament, have been withheld from due consideration, by the unjust and manipulative <u>officer blackout</u> of the consultation Responses. Specifically, have lead councillors looked at the <u>new</u> evidence for Brookthorpe, as well as for Highnam and Mitton (north of Tewkesbury)?</p> <p>In response the Leader stated that proper process had been followed and therefore refuted suggestions that there had been a conspiracy. In terms of detail he confirmed that the whole area had been examined. He was happy to look at the particular places mentioned and undertook to provide a written answer to the supplementary question.</p>
2.	Question from Mr Ken Pollock to the Leader, Councillor Steve Jordan
	Considering that it is upon <u>Cheltenham's</u> rural periphery (not around Gloucester's) that the largest total area of countryside is planned for

	<p>development (or "Safeguarding" for development), and considering that most of the Objections (still a huge number, even at this late stage) originate from <u>Cheltenham</u> residents and businesses, shouldn't Cheltenham's greater sensitivity have <u>already</u> resulted in its political leaders insisting on some significant change following the massive well-documented Response, and will this occur <u>now</u> (following the release of the Reponse evidence)?</p>
	<p>Response from the Leader</p>
	<p>There was a significant change to the draft JCS when following the previous consultation the Objectively Assessed Need for housing was reduced from 33200 across the JCS area to 30500 and the Chargrove site was completely removed as a proposed development site.</p> <p>The recent consultation on the Pre-Submission JCS is about whether the plan is sound and initial analysis of the feedback is that there is no reason to think it is not. Other than minor amendments, changes to the JCS will only be made before examination if there is a significant change in the evidence informing the JCS.</p> <p>In a supplementary question Mr Pollock asked the following : Considering that Cheltenham's rural setting is currently set to lose <u>THREE</u> chunks of GreenBelt/greenfield, (namely the three major incursions at: Cheltenham NorthWest, Cheltenham West (Hayden) and Leckhampton), does the Leader agree that <u>ONE</u> (or at most two) Urban Extensions is more than enough (a) to suffice and (b) to be coped with in terms of viably delivering <u>infrastructure</u> and minimising the loss of peripheral countryside amenity ?</p> <p>Infrastructure delivery (secondary school and roads) will be more likely to be <u>viable</u> if much of the relatively small Leckhampton site is <u>added</u> to the NorthWest urban extension.</p> <p>In response the Leader of the Council said that in terms of safeguarding areas there would not be the potential to develop until formal decisions had been taken. He undertook to provide a fuller response to Mr Pollock.</p>

5. SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - HIDDEN DEPRIVATION IN THE TOWN CENTRE

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, Councillor Tim Harman, was invited to address Cabinet. He firstly gave thanks to the work of the Scrutiny Task Group and in particular former Councillors Driver and McClain and Councillor Coleman for their contributions. The intention of the report was to address the fact that there were parts of the town which risked being ignored.

6. CABINET RESPONSE TO THE SCRUTINY TASK GROUP REVIEW ON HIDDEN DEPRIVATION IN OUR TOWN CENTRE

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles thanked the Scrutiny Task Group for its report. She said that whilst it was well documented that the town had areas of social deprivation one that did not come to mind was the town centre and she thanked the scrutiny group for identifying these hidden areas and for producing some practical recommendations as set out in the cabinet response. She

explained that the recommendations cut across several portfolios and they had already been consulted upon.

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles added that after looking carefully at current and proposed work streams all of the scrutiny recommendations could be included therefore there would be no need for the STG to undertake any further work at this stage. She took the opportunity to thank officers who had supported the work of the task group and Bernice Thomson from Cheltenham West End Partnership.

Members welcomed the work of the STG and in particular the recommendation relating to plans to licence all private rented sector accommodation. The Cabinet Member Development and Safety said that before an effective scheme could be put in place there would need to be an assessment of staff and resources and the aim would be to start in the town centre as a pilot. There were 9500 private sector houses with most not up to decent homes standard.

In terms of the recommendation relating to the night time economy work would be undertaken with the Police and agencies in terms of using late-night levy funds to implement initiatives which would reduce the impact on local residents. Specific proposals would come forward in early 2015.

Summing up, the Leader acknowledged that the private landlord proposal could be a major piece of work. With regard to the other recommendations these would be referred in various directions without the requirement of extra resource.

RESOLVED THAT

- 1. the O+S committee's proposal that the recommendations relating to the work of the Town Centre Neighbourhood Coordination Group (NCG) (1,11 and 12) are passed to the Group coordinator to action, be supported;**
- 2. the O+S committee's proposal that the recommendations relating to reducing alcohol related violence (2) and the late night levy (3) are passed to the Cabinet Member Development and Safety to action, be supported;**
- 3. the action relating to developing a collaborative approach to drug dealing (4) is already a commitment within the 2014-15 corporate strategy with the Deputy Chief Executive being the lead officer be recognised**
- 4. the O+S committee's proposal that the recommendation in respect of greater promotion of housing advice services (6) is passed onto the Housing and Communities Manager to action be supported;**
- 5. the Scrutiny Task Group's proposals to licence all private rented sector accommodation in the borough (5) and the**

introduction of a more pro-active enforcement regime (7) are passed to the Cabinet Member Development and Safety and the Cabinet Member Housing to consider within the scope of the commissioning review looking at Environmental and Regulatory Services and its work-strand looking at private-rented sector housing;

6. the Scrutiny Task Group's proposals in respect of Ubico operational matters (8,9 and 10) are passed to the Joint Waste Team and Ubico to investigate and they report back to the Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment on their feasibility within existing operational budgets.

7. O&S are not required to do any further work at this stage.

7. 2 GLOUCESTER ROAD

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report and explained that as part of the planning permission for a new retirement development at 2 Gloucester Road a bridge needed to be constructed to allow flat owners easy access onto the Honeybourne line. In order for the bridge to be built, the developer required permission from the Council as owner of the Honeybourne line. The developer had also expressed an interest in acquiring a lease of two embankments for landscaping purposes. He explained that approval was therefore sought from Cabinet to dispose of 2 small pieces of council owned land which were technically public open space.

Members agreed that this was a positive way forward and would encourage the use of the Honeybourne line.

RESOLVED THAT

1. the parcels of open space land outlined in green and blue on the attached plan be declared surplus (attached as Appendix A) and the granting of a lease in respect of these two areas of land (together with necessary ancillary rights) to Rusty Shilling Limited for a term of 20 years be approved

2. authority be delegated to the Head of Property and Asset Management, in consultation with the Borough Solicitor, to agree the terms of the leases and the Borough Solicitor be authorised to enter into such documents as she considers necessary or advisable to reflect the terms agreed, and upon such other terms as she considers appropriate to reflect the agreement reached.

8. BUDGET MONITORING 2014-15 -POSITION AS AT TO END AUGUST 2014

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report which updated Members on

the Council's current financial position for 2014/15. He explained that in terms of negative variations there was a shortfall in income for off street car parking by around £175.6k. This was due to the sale of North Place and Portland Street car parks. A reserve had been set-aside to counterbalance this and once development at North Place and Portland Street commenced the Council would be in receipt of a guaranteed £350k of replacement income per annum from the developer.

The Cabinet Member also reported the downturn in income at the cemetery and crematorium in comparison with the same period in the previous financial year. This had been compounded by loss of income arising from the essential maintenance in July which resulted in a two week shutdown of both cremators. It was anticipated that outturn would be 15 % short of target if the downward trend continued.

In terms of positive news the Cabinet Member reported that the net positive variance for business rates in 2014/15 was estimated at £294 k. He also informed members of a predicted surplus of interest of £70k on treasury management within the General Fund.

Finally, the Cabinet Member paid tribute to the hard work of officers in monitoring and managing the budget situation. He assured Cabinet that further work would be undertaken to bring in a balanced budget at the end of the financial year.

RESOLVED THAT

- 1. the contents of this report be noted including the key projected variances to the original 2014/15 budget, and the projected delivery of services within budget.**
- 2. officers be authorised to take corrective action to ensure that the council delivers services within the overall budget for the year if, following the more detailed monitoring process currently being undertaken, a potential overspend is identified.**
- 3. a contribution from general balances of £20,000 be approved to fund additional Joint Core Strategy costs in 2014/15, as recommended in paragraph 2.4.**

9. BUDGET STRATEGY AND PROCESS

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report which proposed a broad strategy and outlined a process for setting the budget, housing rents and council tax for 2015/16. It outlined a number of principles that needed to be established at this stage to enable budget preparation to commence.

The Cabinet Member explained that over the last 5 years the Council's core funding from Government had been cut by £4.2 million. The starting point for constructing the 2015/16 budget had been a MTFS funding gap of £902k. The MTFS table outlined in Appendix 3 identified £602k prospective savings which included a reduction in senior management costs, sharing services, restructuring Public Protection and transferring leisure and culture services to

the Cheltenham Trust. He explained that there was still some way to go and Cabinet and Council would need to consider using New Homes Bonus money to support the budget. It was likely that this would increase next year by £400k. Meanwhile officers would work hard to present a budget in December to ensure that local services could be delivered to the standard expected and Council tax could be kept to the lowest level feasible.

The Cabinet Member Finance informed members of two amendments to the budget timetable. The November meeting of the Treasury Management Panel would be 17 November and the Council budget setting meeting would be on 26 February 2015.

He then took the opportunity to thank finance officers and all officers who had worked hard to Bridge the Gap and generate the savings needed to maintain services for the people of Cheltenham.

In summing up the Leader of the Council paid tribute to the work that had been done by officers. Consideration would now be given to how best to consult on the budget package once published.

RESOLVED THAT

- 1. the budget setting timetable at Appendix 2 (as amended) be approved.**
- 2. the expected cut in government funding of £835k for 2015/16, the estimated funding gap of £902k and the large amount of work done so far to bridge this gap be noted.**
- 3. the budget strategy outlined in section 5 and appendix 3 be approved.**
- 4. the increases in garden waste charges as at paragraph 5.15 be approved**
- 5. the Section 151 Officer and the Cabinet Member for Finance be requested to consider suggestions from the Budget Scrutiny Working Group in preparing the interim budget proposals for 2015/16 as outlined in section 5.**

10. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment informed the meeting that he had attended a meeting that afternoon of the Joint Waste Committee. It was proposed that the partnership and committee meetings would be combined into 1 meeting with Gloucester City and Stroud becoming observers at the committee meetings.

He also reported the news that food waste caddies could now be lined with normal plastic bags which would hopefully encourage residents across town who rarely used the service to use it. He hoped all Councillors would help promote the process.

The Cabinet Member Development and Safety reported that following a consultation a decision had been taken that in future taxis in Cheltenham would be silver. There would be a three month introductory period after which all new taxis would be expected to conform with the new arrangements.

The Leader informed Cabinet that the proposed strike by the unions had been called off. The unions had agreed to consult on new proposals and it was hoped that the negotiations would come to an agreed conclusion shortly.

Chairman