

Cabinet

**Tuesday, 19th April, 2016
6.00 - 6.15 pm**

Attendees	
Councillors:	Steve Jordan (Leader of the Council), John Rawson (Cabinet Member Finance), Rowena Hay (Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles), 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 Matt Babbage

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

Councillor Peter Jeffries.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2016 were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

There were none.

5. COUNTER FRAUD AND ANTI-CORRUPTION POLICY

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services introduced the report and explained that the policy required updating to reflect the changes to the counter fraud arrangements at the Council, since the 1 April 2015, with the development of a new counter fraud unit within Internal Audit.

He explained that the draft Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy had been developed to conform to latest legislation and to reflect the changes brought about by the creation of the Single Fraud Investigation Services (operated by the Department for Work and Pensions) which subsumed the Council's responsibilities for investigating Housing Benefit Fraud.

The draft policy had been developed in consultation with other Gloucestershire authorities and West Oxfordshire District Council to provide a platform for the operation of the counter fraud unit.

The Cabinet Member reported that the draft policy was considered by Cheltenham Borough Council's Audit Committee on the 13 January 2016.

RESOLVED THAT

- 1. the Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy (appendix 2) be approved.**
- 2. Internal Audit be authorised, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, to update the Policy with any additional comments resulting from the on-going counter fraud project.**

6. COUNTER FRAUD PROJECT UPDATE

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services introduced the report which had been circulated with the agenda. He explained that in February 2015, Cabinet approved an evolutionary approach for the establishment of a Counter Fraud Team, to be managed by Audit Cotswolds. This included the creation of a Counter Fraud Officer post within phase 1 of the project.

The 1 FTE post was to be funded by contributions from Cheltenham Borough Homes Ltd and some of the residual benefits administration grant for 2015/2016 with review to be undertaken during the financial year.

In addition, the Director of Resources was authorised to enter in to such documentation as necessary to enable the establishment of the Counter Fraud Team. This included agreements with Cotswold District Council as the host authority for Audit Cotswolds and the successful DCLG Counter Fraud Bid.

The Cabinet Member was pleased to report that the project was progressing and referred to the achievements to date which were listed in Appendix 2.

He reported that the review of the Counter Fraud Officer post and the funding of the counter fraud project had been undertaken.

Members welcomed the report and recognised that as nationally and locally the risk of fraud was growing, measures to counter this needed to become more sophisticated. The amounts lost to fraud at the council were not insignificant so came at a great loss to the Council. They thanked the Cabinet Member Corporate Services and officers involved for the considerable work they were undertaking in this respect.

RESOLVED THAT

- 1. the financial arrangements for the Counter Fraud Project funding of £55,600 to cover the period from April 2015 to March 2020 be approved.**

7. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles reminded Members that both the Positive Activities Fund and the Community Pride Fund were open for bids.

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services reported to Members that further to the discussion at the last Council meeting with regard to the diary, he had undertaken to look closely at the issues raised in terms of the timing of Council

and meetings in school holidays. To this end he was proposing to ask neighbouring councils if they had experienced similar issues with timings of meetings and see what action they had taken, if any. This exercise would be completed prior to the consultation on the 17/18 diary. He also referred to the issue of webcasting which had been raised and informed Members that a local organisation would be presenting their business solutions for this to the 2020 partner councils in June to which all Members would be invited.

The Leader clarified that voting on the BID would close at 5pm on 28 April and the announcement of the result was expected on the Friday morning (29 April).

The Leader also informed Members that the report regarding the County Council's request to join Ubico did not form part of this meeting's agenda as the County was not due to take its decision on whether to join until the following day. Therefore it was proposed that a Cabinet or Cabinet member decision be taken in due course.

On behalf of the Cabinet the Leader wished to thank the Head of Paid Service and all relevant officers for their support of Cabinet. He also wished to thank in particular the Cabinet Member Finance, Councillor John Rawson, for his significant contributions to the Council.

8. CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS SINCE THE LAST MEETING

The following decisions were reported to Cabinet:

Cabinet Member Finance	Allocation of £4,400 Grant from Cheltenham Environment Fund to Connect Regen to support the implementation of upgrade works to Bath Terrace/Commercial Street car parks.	30/03/16
Cabinet Member Development and Safety	Agreed Council's response to DCLG consultation-Technical Consultation on Implementation of Planning Changes	14/04/16

Chairman