

Council

Monday, 4th April, 2016

3.00 - 6.20 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Duncan Smith (Chairman), Chris Ryder (Vice-Chair), Matt Babbage, Flo Clucas, Adam Lillywhite, Chris Mason, Dan Murch, Chris Nelson, John Payne, Max Wilkinson, Wendy Flynn, Andrew Chard, Paul Baker, Garth Barnes, Nigel Britter, Chris Coleman, Bernard Fisher, Jacky Fletcher, Colin Hay, Tim Harman, Rowena Hay, Sandra Holliday, Steve Jordan, Helena McCloskey, Andrew McKinlay, John Rawson, Anne Regan, Rob Reid, Louis Savage, Diggory Seacome, Malcolm Stennett, Klara Sudbury, Pat Thornton, Jon Walklett, Simon Wheeler, Roger Whyborn and Suzanne Williams

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Jeffries and Councillor Stennett.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Duncan Smith and Suzanne Williams declared an interest agenda item 9 as directors of Cheltenham Borough Homes and announced their intention to leave the chamber for this item.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 February were approved and signed as a correct record subject to Councillor Tim Harman being recorded as the "Leader" and not "chair" of the Conservative Group.

4. COMMUNICATIONS BY THE MAYOR

The Mayor confirmed that he was standing down at the next elections and therefore this would be his last Council meeting. He said his last 18 years as a Councillor had been interesting and he was proud of the innovation and the cross-party working that the council had achieved during that time in the interests of the town.

He also bid farewell to his fellow Councillors Anne Regan, Rob Reid, John Rawson and David Prince who were also standing down.

The Mayor invited retiring Members to speak and other Members thanked them for their contributions.

5. COMMUNICATIONS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader advised that voting on the process for BID was now under way and he asked Members to encourage eligible businesses to vote. There would be a formal announcement on 28 April after the close of voting.

He was pleased to announce that work was now under way on the improvements to Royal Well and the reinstatement of the telephone boxes in the Promenade which would be used for displaying artwork.

The Leader referred to his detailed answer to the question regarding devolution. He was concerned at the prospect of CDC potentially leaving Gloucestershire and the county council trying to rush through an elected Mayor deal by May. The lines of accountability and responsibility needed to be considered carefully and it was not a matter that should be rushed through in this way.

He added his thanks to the retiring Members and in particular to Councillor Rawson as his deputy and for his leadership on the budget and in his role of facilitating improvements and change in Cheltenham.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1.	Question from Martin Tracey to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	The site of the former Post Office premises at 24 Carlton Street, Cheltenham has been an eyesore since planning permission was given for the redevelopment of the site. Can the Cabinet Member responsible advise who is the landlord and how long does the Council expect the site to remain an eyesore?
	Response from Cabinet Member Development and Safety
	The landlord is a Jersey-based company, Trigger Holding Ltd and has advised that there is no timetable for implementing the extant planning consent which expires in August 2017. In a supplementary question, Mr Tracey asked whether the Cabinet Member could confirm that this was an offshore-based company. The Cabinet Member responded that he would assume this was the case and clearly it was a holding company rather than being a developer.
2.	Question from Martin Tracey to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	What powers does the Council have in relation to the site of the former Post Office premises at 24 Carlton Street, and when will they exercise these powers to enforce the current landlord to improve the repair and condition of their property?
	Response from Cabinet Member Development and Safety
	Officers from the Council have been monitoring this site for some time in response to complaints from local residents. The Council has a range of powers, including in particular Section 215 of

	<p>the Town and Country planning Act 1990, which can compel owners to undertake remedial works where a site is assessed to be '<i>detrimental to the amenity of the locality</i>'.</p> <p>In this case, the site does not currently meet the appropriate policy criteria which need to be fulfilled before the authority could reasonably commence formal enforcement action.</p> <p>The site will continue to be monitored and action will be taken to resolve the situation, if the condition of the premises deteriorates to the extent that such action is likely to be upheld by the courts.</p> <p>In a supplementary question Mr Tracey referred to a recent document published by the deputy Prime Minister's office in relation to derelict land which appeared to encourage actions under section 215 or 219 of the legislation. Could the council take action under one of these clauses?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member referred to the criteria in his response and the officer's advice he had received but officers would continue to monitor the situation. He added that the council had a record of taking action in cases where the criteria had been met. He acknowledged that it was not adding value for local residents but he assured the questioner that the council would take action when it was in a position to do so. In this case the absentee landlords were clearly waiting for the property to increase in value.</p>
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7. MEMBER QUESTIONS

1.	<p>Question from Councillor Adam Lillywhite to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</p>
	<p>Any newly arriving 'MD of Place and Economic Development ' does not have the necessary background experience of Cheltenham's peculiarly unique road network for a large town for which there is no longer any road-building money to remedy.</p> <p>The MD of the Development Task Force is responsible for 'development' and increase in business rate revenues, not for the viability of the town's traffic circulation and its wider environment. A sensitive and heavily contested scheme demands wider and wiser counsels throughout its implementation.</p> <p>In view of the lengthy controversy over CTP, is it not irresponsible to be restricting all subsequent CTP implementation decisions to two officers and one Cabinet member, rather than to all elected Councillors.</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>The MD of Place and Economic Development is responsible for the Directorate which has had primary responsibility for development and delivery of CBC's input into the Cheltenham Transport Plan and consequently, I believe that he is fully briefed.</p>

	<p>The MD of the Task Force has also been involved with this project as it impacts upon investment decisions for several major schemes. Securing John Lewis was linked to the decision making process regarding changes to Albion Street for example.</p> <p>I and colleagues at GCC are fully aware of the sensitivity of the Cheltenham Transport Plan which is why it has been subject to lengthy consultation.</p> <p>At the last full Council meeting on 25th February 2016 there was a full debate on an item relating to the Cheltenham Transport Plan mitigation funding and according to the draft minutes I believe that this issue was fully rehearsed, an additional recommendation made and the following decision recorded.</p> <p><i>4. During the assessment period for each completed construction phase of the CTP, the Highways Authority be requested to report on it and the contents of the next phase.</i></p> <p>I believe that the previous debate fully addressed this question with a vote by full Council – 34 in favour, 2 abstentions and none against.</p>
2.	Question from Councillor Louis Savage to Cabinet Member Corporate Services, Councillor Jon Walklett
	<p>As a Council we should encourage participation in local democracy, and a key component of this is ensuring good turnout in local elections. What evidence has the Cabinet Member seen to suggest that holding 2 yearly local elections, rather than 4 yearly elections like neighbouring local authorities, will decrease 'voter fatigue' and increase political engagement?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Turnout at elections depends on a number of factors such as, for example, the type and (when combined) the number of elections being held, publicity and media coverage, the extent of campaigning by candidates and parties and the weather on polling day. However, I know of no evidence that would suggest that for local council elections, the alternatives of four or two year cycles will make a difference to turnout. The preferred frequency of elections might rather depend on a judgement as to the best way to ensure the accountability of local politicians to the voting public and whether an opportunity to show approval or disapproval or change an administration should occur more or less often. Therefore my belief is that by retaining the current 2 year cycle we are offering Cheltenham's electorate more opportunity to express their views than would be the case with a 4 year cycle thus enhancing the local democratic process.</p> <p>In a supplementary question Councillor Savage advised that there was evidence from responsible organisations that suggested that as the frequency of elections increased, turnout fell due to voter fatigue. He asked whether the Cabinet Member would agree to a cross-party working</p>

	<p>group being set up after the elections in May to review the issue in its totality?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member advised that such a working group had been set up in 2012/13 and had looked at the frequency of elections as well as the number of councillors. The group had been cross party and had reported its recommendations to Council in 2013. Their report had highlighted that the cost of an election was in the order of £100,000 and set out all the arguments.</p>
3.	Question from Councillor Louis Savage to Cabinet Member Corporate Services, Councillor Jon Walklett
	Does a 2 yearly election cycle, rather than a 4 yearly cycle adopted by neighbouring local authorities, increase or decrease Cabinet Members and Councillors ability to make long-term strategic decisions in the best interests of our town?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>I do not believe so, if the art of politics is about making the best decisions, whatever the timescale involved, and being prepared to defend and be accountable for judgements at the ballot box there seems no reason why a 2 yearly cycle should inhibit or impair long-term strategic decision making. A cynical view might be that a 4 yearly cycle simply allows more time for voters to forget or forgive bad or unpopular decisions made at the beginning of the cycle.</p> <p>In a supplementary question Councillor Savage asked the Cabinet Member whether he considered that breaking from Council business every two years was deleterious to the interests of the town.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member didn't acknowledge that there was a detrimental effect and he didn't feel there was any significant delay in implementing council plans as a result.</p>
4.	Question from Councillor Anne Regan to Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles, Councillor Rowena Hay
	<p>It was resolved at the Cabinet meeting on the 8th March that:- "Authority be delegated to The Managing Director Place & Economic Development to consider in consultation with the Cabinet Member how the £50,000 funding for Tourism should be allocated "</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member give this chamber an update on the number of meetings held so far and what the timescale will be before any positive Tourism objectives will take place?</p> <p>Will the salary of the Tourism Manager be part of the 50k?</p> <p>What working budget do you envisage to give to the new Tourism Manager?</p> <p>Where will the extra working finances come from?</p>
	Response from

First of all in answering Councillor Regan I would like to point out what the recommendations approved actually say. Which is different from the quotation marked paragraph of her question.

1. To accept the Consultants report.
2. To delegate authority to managing director, place & economic development to further consider the delivery plan and the proposed delivery mechanism in consultation with the cabinet member healthy lifestyles.
3. To delegate authority to the managing director, place & economic development to consider, in consultation with the cabinet member healthy lifestyles, how the £50,000 funding set aside to support strategic tourism should be allocated.

I am pleased to report that over the last fifteen working days since the 8th of March Cabinet meeting, Tim Atkins has made good progress.

The report by Creative Tourist is a strategic tourism document, it gives both a position statement and a direction of travel or 'outcomes proposition'. What it does not do and was never intended to do so, is set out the delivery plan or mechanism. This council has a strong track record of working in partnership and the tourism partnership is a key partner in delivering this Town's strategic tourism, long gone are the days where the council does it all.

I have spoken and met with Tim Atkins twice since the 8th to discuss how best to allocate the 50K which is to be used

Tim Atkins has had discussions with several of our tourism stakeholders including Cheltenham Business Partnership, the Cheltenham BID shadow board, marketing Gloucester, Cotswold DMO, and the Cheltenham Trust to list a few.

Following the above conversations he has drawn up a specification for what we want to achieve with the funding, I expect to see this paper by the end of the week.

The appointment of a resource is proposed to be in place by the end of May 2016. One of the first outputs for this resource will be the production of a detailed action plan for the next six months, running through to the end of the year.

I am not in a position to answer the last three bullet points as they follow on from the Cabinet recommendation two. I am as keen as Councillor Regan to see progress made and would be happy to update her again.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Regan requested that following the elections in May, the Cabinet Member, if still in place, responded to these last three questions in a briefing note to all Members.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that she would do this.

5.	Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to Cabinet Member Finance, Councillor John Rawson
	<p>Could I please ask the Cabinet Member for Finance: has Delta House been revalued since its purchase, in preparation for the annual accounts or otherwise, what the valuation amount is, and how this figure has been/will be calculated?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Delta Place has not been revalued since its purchase but is one of the properties that is due for revaluation by the middle of May. The value will be based on comparable current market rents and yields for offices in Cheltenham.</p> <p>In the light of the increase in rental values the initial indication is that the value of Delta Place will be in the region of £17 million.</p>
6.	Question from Councillor Chris Mason to Cabinet Member Finance, Councillor John Rawson
	<p>With regard to the new municipal offices would Cllr Rawson please inform the Council of the latest considerations to build a new office on the shop fitter's site and whether any alternatives to Delta House are being considered?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>The Council will shortly begin converting the Shopfitters site into a car park which has temporary planning permission for 5 years. No decision as to future alternative uses for Shopfitters has been made but it may be suitable for office or residential development, subject to planning.</p> <p>Cllr Mason will recall that when we considered various options for relocating the council's headquarters, all the new build options, including building new offices on the Shopfitters site, were substantially more costly over a 20 year period than purchasing Delta Place.</p> <p>However, rising rental levels over the past few months certainly increase the attractions of new build as a potential alternative. Another factor that might make new build feasible is if partners, from either the public or the private sector, were to come forward to join us in a development scheme. Therefore, so long as there are still uncertainties about when a move to Delta Place might happen, the council will be flexible enough to consider other opportunities that may arise.</p> <p>If such an opportunity did arise, it would be subject to normal processes and procedures and approvals. Delta Place could then be retained as an investment.</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Mason asked when assessing the four options last year whether significant rental growth had been taken into account for the Shopfitters site and asked why this option had been rejected in favour of Delta Place.</p>

	The Cabinet Member referred to the report to Council in April 2015 and at that time Delta Place was clearly the most cost-effective option for the council ahead of the Shopfitters site. It may be that some circumstances have now changed and it would be foolish to rule out discussing other options such as a joint development on the Shopfitters site.
7.	Question from Councillor Chris Mason to Cabinet Member Finance, Councillor John Rawson
	Would Cllr Rawson please in a clear and concise manner confirm the rationale to purchase Delta House for £13,750,000, £2,750,000 above the market value as investment with reversion to vacant possession value (10th April 2015)?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>As Cllr Mason is looking for conciseness and clarity, I will explain our rationale in three simple points, though with some further elaboration of each point.</p> <p>1. The benefits of acquiring Delta Place, in terms of its potential for generating income, substantially outweigh the cost.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By purchasing the building, we are guaranteed around £10 million of rental income from the current head lessee over the period 2015-23 – well above market levels. Effectively this will mean that rental income will pay around 72 per cent of the cost of acquiring the building in just eight years. • Over the same period, the income from the building will contribute £100,000 net annually to the Council’s budget, • In the longer run, from 2023 onwards, reflecting recent increases in rentals, the council will stand to earn in the region of £1 million a year in rental income from the building if it leases out the entire space and £500,000 a year if roughly half the space is let and the other half occupied by the council itself. If the latter occurs, the purchase will also make it possible to redevelop the Municipal Offices, generating a further income stream. <p>2. The investment valuation made by GVA had little relevance to our situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At a commonsense level, it was unrealistic to expect the owner to part with the building for £11 million when he could have gained an income totalling £10.2 million between 2015 and 2023 just by sitting tight, and still owned the freehold of the building at the end. • The investment valuation did not fully reflect our aspiration to occupy a large part of the building as our headquarters. Put simply, the building would be worth considerably more to us for owner occupation than if we let it entirely to tenants. This was accepted both by GVA and Doherty Baines as our independent property advisers because (as Doherty Baines expressed it) “an investor will invariably factor in void periods to reflect the risk of

re-letting to another occupier...An owner occupier does not incur this cost.” In those circumstances GVA estimated the value of Delta Place as £16 million in their addendum to the valuation, a figure which Doherty Baines accepted as reasonable.

- As Doherty Baines pointed out to us: “An opinion of value is by its very nature retrospective – generally a valuer has regard to transactions which have occurred and attempts to extrapolate from that”. We were aware that the market for high quality modern office accommodation in Cheltenham was likely to improve considerably in the months to come – and so it has proved.

3. The independent professional advice we received confirmed that acquiring the building on the terms negotiated was the right thing to do.

- The Cabinet did not complete the purchase without taking the best available professional advice. After the decision in principle to buy Delta Place, officers consulted an independent real estate consultancy arm of Grant Thornton, who were supported by the leading property consultants Doherty Baines, to ensure that the Council had approached the purchase in the right way and considered the relevant factors.
- The advice Doherty Baines gave us reinforced our view that the investment valuation was not the only consideration in deciding whether £13.75 million was a fair price. As they said in a letter of 16 June 2015: “You have obtained valuation advice as to the amount the owners of Delta Place might be able to obtain in the open market and that advice ranges from £10.5m to £12.5m but that advice should not in our opinion have any significant impact on your decision, although a purchaser might use the information to frame a negotiation strategy.”
- Specifically Doherty Baines confirmed that the deal we had negotiated was a good one. They wrote: “There is no compelling reason to believe that CBC would be able to strike a better bargain for another building in the market. We also do not consider that CBC acquiring Delta Place for less than £13.75m is a realistic scenario.”
- Crucially Doherty Baines concluded in the same letter that: “the proposed transaction represents the most effective option and that £13.75m is a prudent price for CBC to pay for Delta House in all the circumstances.”

It is worth adding that, since the purchase was made, the case for acquiring Delta Place has grown stronger.

The building is now fully sub-let, disproving the claim by some councillors that we were “buying a building no one wants”. At the same time, market

	rents for good quality modern office accommodation have increased, which should have a very positive impact on the forthcoming revaluation and could easily make the current disagreement about valuation somewhat academic.
8.	Question from Councillor Diggory Seacome to Cabinet Member Development and Safety , Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	<p>At the last planning committee meeting, an application for another HMO was approved. However the residents of St Pauls had been promised urgent action in January 2013 to regulate this kind of development. The current administration made a promise 'to agree funding to carry out the necessary survey work for introduction and approval of additional licensing and article 4 direction schemes and this was added to the Forward Plan in September 2014.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member explain why this promise has not been delivered? How many more family homes have to be lost to this kind of development before the administration makes good on its promise?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Let me be clear from the start. This administration is fully aware of the problems being caused in some wards in the town as a result of the excessive density of Houses in Multiple Occupation, and is committed to finding an effective method of licencing and regulating Houses in Multiple Occupation.</p> <p>As Cllr Seacome points out the Council added a commitment to fund survey work into HMOs into the Forward Plan in September 2014.</p> <p>This was followed by the Cabinet agreeing on 17th March 2015 that a house condition and management survey of the private rented stock should be carried out by consultant surveyors. This is the first stage in the process required to introduce a discretionary Licensing Scheme under housing act legislation and or an Article 4 Direction under Planning Legislation.</p> <p>Delays have occurred for two principal reasons:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the complexities of overlapping planning and housing issues; and 2. the possible extension of mandatory HMO licensing which is likely to be introduced in the autumn. <p>In November 2015, after the Council's tender process had commenced, the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) introduced a technical discussion document entitled "Extending Mandatory Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) and related reforms". Provisions in the recent Planning and Housing Bill also contain powers which would allow better identification of HMO stock.</p> <p>The proposed extension to mandatory licensing may replace the identified need to consider 'Additional Licensing' within the six wards that</p>

	<p>were initially identified for survey.</p> <p>The issue of HMOs, in particular their quality and quantity, was discussed at the cross-party Planning and Liaison Member Working Group on the 9th of December 2015. The working group recommended that the Council allows a period of time to review the effects of the extension to mandatory licensing to assess the effectiveness of the new arrangements prior to considering any planning policy change. As a result the survey work was delayed.</p> <p>In my view it is likely that the extension to the mandatory licensing proposed by the Government will not on its own address the problems of HMOs that we face in Cheltenham, and that further controls will be required.</p> <p>As Council is aware any method to control new HMO accommodation, including Article 4 Directions, needs to be evaluated as part of the Council's overall planning strategy.</p> <p>The emerging Cheltenham Plan provides an opportunity to frame new planning policies and strategies that could help to control numbers and improve the quality of HMO's.</p> <p>In response to the increasing concern of the residents of St Pauls, it is proposed, subject to Cabinet approval, to initiate the survey work associated with the St Pauls and All Saints wards. This will help gain information on the numbers and types of HMOs in the wards in preparation for any extension of mandatory licensing, as well as gain information required to support the use of planning powers if this is required.</p> <p>In a supplementary question Cllr Seacome asked whether the Cabinet Member could give any timings for implementing these new policies which could help allay some of the concerns of residents and Councillors.</p> <p>In response the Cabinet Member confirmed that work on the survey was going to be restarted following the delay. The good news was that the implementation of their findings would not be delayed as these would be picked up in the development of the local plan. This would ensure that they would have planning weight when dealing with future planning applications. There was already a specific timetable laid out for the development of local plan and there was an item in the Forward Plan for a Cabinet report on this issue.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Tim Harman to the Leader, Councillor Steve Jordan</p>
	<p>In 2014 the Borough Councils economic plan was slammed as "not fit for purpose" by independent consultants. We were promised action to improve the Council's strategy and deliver economic growth, yet despite this commitment given by the leader of the Liberal Democrat Administration, two years later our Town is still rudderless and lacking vision.</p>

	Will the Leader tell us how much longer we have to wait until our Town has a clear plan for the future?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Cllr Harman seems to be a bit confused since the process of commissioning Athey Consulting to advise on a new economic strategy for Cheltenham was commenced because the existing one was now out of date. It was not a shock revelation from the consultants. For the record, the final report from Athey Consulting was published in January 2015, so just over a year ago.</p> <p>The purpose of the report was to help identify key challenges and opportunities and to support these issues for CBC moving forward. This included:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking a leadership role – to this end we have appointed to the post of MD Place and Economic Development. A post that will work closely with the Cheltenham Development Task Force which has been widely praised for its work. • Prioritising actions to address employment land shortfall – which is why we are supporting through the JCS the potential release of employment land to the West of Cheltenham and encouraging the development of modern commercial office space; the latter assisted by the recent uplift in rental rates which after several decades starts to make new build a viable proposition. We are also exploring the potential for an Article 4 direction to help resist government policy on the conversion of offices to residential. • We have also been working closely with interested parties on the development of a potential cyber zone which overlaps with the above reference to seeking employment land. <p>In addition, the Cabinet has been actively working with partners to develop the new Tourism Strategy and working with the Cheltenham Business Partnership to support a Business Improvement District currently subject to ballot of businesses in the proposed zone.</p> <p>The Athey report has also been used to inform the emerging Cheltenham local plan and several strands of work have been subject to consultation as part of this.</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Harman asked when the strategy would be brought before Council?</p> <p>The Leader referred to the September target in the Corporate Plan. He highlighted that the strategy was not the be all and end all as work had been continuing in this important area alongside the strategy being developed.</p>
10.	Question from Councillor Tim Harman to the Leader, Councillor Steve Jordan
	Will the Leader take this opportunity to reaffirm that the Liberal Democrat Administration Continues to support the County wide devolution bid?

	Also will he take this opportunity to deny rumours circulating that across the County that his group are considering a Cheltenham Unitary bid with a land grab from Tewkesbury?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>On behalf of the Cabinet I have taken the lead in discussing the evolving devolution proposals with partners across Gloucestershire. I also encouraged the creation of the Devolution Task Group in Cheltenham to allow wide cross party discussion. Since Cllr Harman is a member of the Task Group he will be aware that there has been a broad consensus in Cheltenham to work to improve the current 2 tier structure. This involves both encouraging devolution of powers from central government but importantly allowing Cheltenham to have more say in decisions such as those relating to highways and street trees currently taken at county level. There has also been broad agreement that there is minimal support for the elected mayor option within Gloucestershire. However it seems clear that the current Gloucestershire proposal will not get official government support in 2016.</p> <p>The recent 'Oxfordshire' proposals seem to stem from major disagreements between Conservative politicians in Oxfordshire involving but possibly not limited to the leader of Oxfordshire County Council, the Prime Minister and the leaders of various district councils. While this proposal came as a surprise and does not seem to be fully thought through, it does not mean it or something similar will not happen in due course.</p> <p>Clearly since Cotswold District are part of the 'Oxfordshire' proposals we need to consider the implications for us. I think this should trigger a wider debate over the next few months about all the possible options within Gloucestershire. Based on discussion at the Leadership Gloucestershire meeting on 31st March, I am concerned that Gloucestershire County Council now seem to be trying to rush through a Gloucestershire deal by May involving signing up to the elected mayor option. I do not support this approach since it fails to even consider options such as unitary authorities and involves no public consultation. In any case it seems entirely impractical when half the county is now engaged in local elections.</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Harman asked the Leader to justify his response in view of the statement from Leadership Gloucestershire last week that at this point there was not a commitment to support an elected mayor.</p> <p>The Leader advised that he had been informed by an informal view of a Cabinet member who was also a member of the county Council. In his view the county council were trying to push it through when a thorough review of all the options needed to be carried out.</p>
11.	Question from Councillor Tim Harman to Cabinet Member Finance, Councillor John Rawson
	This question was withdrawn at the request of Councillor Harman.

12.	Question from Councillor Chris Nelson to Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles, Councillor Rowena Hay
	<p>According to well known legend, Cheltenham Spa started its days in 1716, when a spring was discovered by local farmer William Mason in one of his fields, when he saw pigeons pecking at salt deposits on the ground and he realised that a mineral spring lay underneath (the field in question was where the Princess Hall of the Ladies College now stands, between present day Montpellier Street and Bayshill Road). This site was later developed by William Mason's son-in-law, a flamboyant and well travelled Merchant Sea Captain and adventurer, called Captain Henry Skillicorne.</p> <p>We know that the Cheltenham Civic Society are marking this great occasion with a dinner later this year and the presentation of a picture of Capt Skillicorne to the Wilson but what is the Council doing to celebrate and publicise our great 300 year anniversary? As you appear to have "some money to spend", as reported in the Echo on Easter Monday, what funding has been allocated to support festivities and anniversary events?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>I thank Councillor Nelson for his short "according to well known legend" history lesson.</p> <p>For the sake of completeness I would like to ensure that credit is given where due. Indeed Cheltenham's Civic Society together in partnership with the Friends of The Wilson are proposing to hold a Tercentenary Civic Dinner at Pittville Pump rooms on the 3rd of November, it sounds a very grand affair!</p> <p>I do know that the Friends of the Wilson are looking to gain support from our vibrant voluntary arts organisations. I am sure they would be grateful to hear from anyone who could help, you can email to offer your support to Chair@friendsofthewilson.org.uk</p> <p>The "picture" Councillor Nelson refers to was purchased by the Friends of the Wilson at auction recently, it had been in the ownership of the Queens Hotel where it had hung for some time. I am delighted that the Friends decided to buy it keeping an important part of Cheltenham's history where it belongs. The portrait of Captain Henry Skillicorne will be officially handed to the Council at the Tercentenary event. Which of course means it will remain in public ownership for all to enjoy who visit the Wilson.</p> <p>As budgets have been cut back so much, it is fantastic to see two very successful voluntary organisations coming together. I wish them every success in raising the sponsorship and to see that any proceeds will go to Water Aid. I am sure this Council would like to pass on its thanks and perhaps we could ask the Leader to do this.</p> <p>This Council has a proven track record of working in effective, positive partnerships. That is why earlier in the year the Cheltenham Trust were asked to lead, they have a Cheltenham 300 years campaign plans and</p>

	<p>ideas document, which I am happy to share with you however it is work in progress which is why I have not included it.</p> <p>You can also visit the paper store at the Wilson where you will find an exhibition about Cheltenham becoming a spa town. If that is not to your taste then there is a Poetry Festival event on the 9th of May at the Strand – Chapter and Verse – Cheltenham an Alternative History with Kim Fleet and Angela France.</p> <p>You cannot always take what is reported in the media to be the complete picture. I did indeed say that there is some money I have available. What was not clear is that it is for Health Inequalities that has criteria which must be met. To answer your question “what has been allocated” you may have seen the email recently letting you know that a Cabinet Member delegated decision was taken to allocate money to the Festival of Childhood in May at the Town Hall and Imperial Gardens also an event in Pittville Park called Summers End, you can also find others on the Council website.</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Nelson asked why the council had no plans to do anything to celebrate this event?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member advised that the Cheltenham Trust had shared their ideas and they would be delivering events on behalf of Cheltenham. She was not in a position to make those ideas public at this stage. She advised that the council was no longer able to take on all these types of events and they rely on voluntary organisations and partners for their delivery. She encouraged Councillor Nelson to get involved.</p> <p>The Deputy Mayor added that she was organising a tea to commemorate the event.</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Chris Nelson to Cabinet Member Housing, Peter Jeffries (Councillor Andrew McKinlay will respond to any supplementary question)</p>
	<p>Do you believe there is a problem with begging in Cheltenham? To the casual observer it would appear that the numbers are increasing. I appreciate that the reasons for begging are many and varied but is there a link to a shortage of suitable housing in Cheltenham? Is there enough accommodation within Cheltenham to house all those who need a bed? Is the Council doing all it can - directly and indirectly with partners - to understand and help solve this difficult issue?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>There has been an increase in street begging in recent months. Street begging is not the same as street homelessness, and usually most street beggars have their own home – although the position can change over time. The council has commissioned Cheltenham Housing Aid Centre to provide Assertive Outreach services to work with the street homeless. Anyone who is begging and homeless will be identified and supported into housing. Gloucestershire County Council commission the provision of direct access accommodation for individuals with complex needs, and the street homeless will have priority for this accommodation. In addition</p>

	<p>there is supported housing for those with high support needs which they can subsequently move into for a longer period of time, if general needs accommodation is not immediately appropriate. Both Stonham and the YMCA provide high supported accommodation for those in need. Again, these are commissioned by Gloucestershire County Council's Supporting People team.</p> <p>Cheltenham Borough Council's interests are represented via Supporting People's Core Strategy Group, which is made of a partnership of district authorities, probation and commissioning leads from within the county council. It is from within this partnership that the issue of street begging in Cheltenham has been raised by CBC officers. The County Council's Drugs & Alcohol's commissioning lead has noted an emerging gap in service provision and is looking to plug this gap by reviewing the service contract with Turning Point (an organisation providing a drugs and alcohol treatment and support service) in order to ensure that they provide an assertive outreach approach to individuals who are begging in Cheltenham, with a view to bringing about better engagement of street beggars with drugs and alcohol treatment and support services.</p> <p>In addition to the support element, the Council is also working on taking appropriate enforcement action against street beggars who are committing anti-social behaviour. Again, this is a partnership approach involving Housing, Turning Point, CHAC and the Police. Enforcement is an area of work overseen by my Cabinet Member colleague, Councillor Andrew McKinlay. Any such enforcement action will be undertaken when street beggars are causing anti-social behaviour, particularly where they are refusing help from support and/or housing services.</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Nelson asked whether there was sufficient accommodation in Cheltenham for any homeless person requiring accommodation and could listings be produced?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member advised that there was such accommodation at the YMCA and an additional 200 bed spaces were provided by a local housing association. He emphasised that the issue was not about availability of bed spaces. He understood that it had been suggested at the last O&S meeting that members may want to set up a scrutiny task group to look at the subject so this may be something that Councillor Nelson wished to progress.</p>
14.	Question from Councillor Chris Nelson to the Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman
	<p>I understand that the Liberal Democrats gained cross party support within the County Council for a motion to improve the maintenance and care of our street trees. The Echo reported that Councillor Klara Sudbury had said: "For Cheltenham in particular street trees are such an intrinsic part of the character of our town. Given how important they are to the very fabric of Cheltenham, the importance of their maintenance cannot be overstated. Quite simply Cheltenham would not be Cheltenham without our street trees." I am sure the Cabinet Member agrees with those views but the Town also has many other trees in prominent locations that help to make the main routes into Cheltenham green and memorable. What</p>

	has this Council done to protect those significant trees it has responsibility for?
Response from Cabinet Member	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a proud Cheltonian, I agree wholeheartedly with Cllr Sudbury's observations at the recent meeting of Gloucestershire County Council. In particular, I believe that street trees are indeed an intrinsic part of the character of our beautiful town which has of course often been called "a town within a park". <p>This administration is committed to caring for the trees that we are responsible for. Accordingly, Cheltenham Borough Council employs 2 full time Trees Officers to manage all trees on "Leisure Land" and an internal arrangement has been set up so that trees on Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land are also managed by our Trees Officers.</p> <p>There are 5,000+ "Leisure" trees under routine health and safety inspection which are pruned/removed when necessary or when good arboricultural practice recommends. Cheltenham Borough Council has planted more trees than felled each year for several years. We also harness tree planting help from the Cheltenham Tree Group which is a voluntary organisation.</p> <p>Cheltenham Borough Council funds £15,000 annually to support Gloucestershire Highways street tree planting arrangements which, sadly, would otherwise fall well short of replacing the trees that they fell. In addition, this Council has been committed to improving working arrangements between ourselves and Gloucestershire Highways Trees Officers.</p> <p>There are also many trees on private land along main routes into Cheltenham. Where appropriate and necessary, this Council places Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on such privately owned trees.</p> <p>There are 686 TPOs within Cheltenham. A TPO could cover 1 tree, several trees, a large area (e.g. Redgrove Park) or a woodland (e.g. Cheltenham Film Studios). These trees are either within domestic gardens or in commercial sites.</p> <p>When land is to be developed and the trees within a site are not worthy of a TPO and are earmarked for removal, our Trees Officers recommend to the case planner that a Landscaping Condition including appropriate tree planting is used so as to ensure that canopy cover is maintained in a site in the longer term.</p> <p>The extensive nature of the Conservation Area within Cheltenham means that virtually all proposed tree surgery work has to be approved by Trees Officers. The voluntary Cheltenham Tree Group are formal consultees on tree work applications and</p>

	<p>comment on such applications when necessary.</p> <p>It is true to say that I, as well as other Liberal Democrat County Councillors, have become increasingly concerned about the way Gloucestershire County Council approaches the care of the trees in our town which are under their control. Any assistance that you, or other members of the Conservative Group here, could give to persuading the administration at Shire Hall to show more interest in street trees in Cheltenham would be greatly appreciated.</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Nelson asked whether the council could find a bit more money to plant more trees?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded that Councillor Nelson would be fully aware of the difficult budget situation that the council had faced. As the Cabinet Member he would like nothing more than to deliver enhanced planting for the town but the council was not in a position to do this financially. His concern was not so much with open spaces but with street trees where he was concerned that the county council was not doing proper maintenance on the trees.</p>
15.	Question from Councillor Andrew Chard to the Leader, Councillor Steve Jordan
	Will the Leader please confirm that the current administration fully supports the proposed development of a BMX Pump Track in Burrows Field?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	This is an interesting local initiative which was approved by the Planning Committee on 18 th February 2016. As an administration we are fully supportive of local communities working together to improve their area and so would be happy to support this proposal. Any formal request for funding to assist would be considered under the appropriate financial regulations.
16.	Question from Councillor Andrew Chard to Cabinet Member Finance, Councillor John Rawson
	Will the Cabinet Member for Finance please confirm where the funding for the proposed BMX Pump Track in Burrows Field will come from and, if it is S106 money has it been allocated and when will it be available?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>The BMX Pump Track is a community initiative which, as I understand it, aims to draw its funding from a number of sources, including County Council money. The Borough Council could consider contributing towards the scheme from Section 106 monies, subject to proper approval under financial regulations. So far no S106 money has been allocated for this purpose.</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Chard asked why County Councillor Dobie was advising people in his ward that the funding would be available and the scheme would be financed by Cheltenham Borough Council?</p>

The Cabinet Member advised that he could not speak for the County Councillor. There had been a good deal of support for this project in this chamber but there was a proper process to go through and any decisions on funding would be made at the appropriate time according to the democratic process.

8. COUNCIL DIARY SEPTEMBER 2016 TO AUGUST 2017

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services introduced the report on the Council Diary September 2016 to August 2017. There has been wide consultation with councillors and officers, and any feedback had been considered and the diary revised as appropriate.

A Member suggested that in future Council meetings should start at 5 p.m. to encourage a wider range of people to stand as councillors, including mothers with young children, and to facilitate public attendance.

In the debate that followed, there were mixed views about whether an afternoon meeting would be preferable for Councillors with families and it was acknowledged that working patterns were very different in the modern world. It was suggested that web casting should be looked at as a more effective way of getting more public engagement. One member suggested that all council meetings should avoid school holidays. Members also highlighted that consideration also needed to be given to officers in attendance at evening Council meetings as they too had family commitments.

The Cabinet Member thanked members for their comments. Apart from the point about school holidays the timing issue had not been raised during the consultation on the diary for the coming Municipal Year but he would be happy to look at the issues ahead of the drafting of the diary for 2017/18. He would also investigate the options for web casting.

Upon a vote it was unanimously

Resolved that the draft Council diary of meetings for September 2016 to August 2017 be approved.

9. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT NEW BUILD- GARAGE SITE REDEVELOPMENT

The Deputy Mayor took the chair for this item.

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report which sought approval from Council to authorise the allocation of up to £1,405,150 for the construction of eight new dwellings on three HRA garage sites- Rowanfield Exchange, Hester's Way Road and Ullswater Road. The scheme would provide 5 x 3 bed dwellings; 2 x 2 bed dwellings and 1 x 4 bed dwelling.

The Cabinet Member explained that the new build policy had delivered an impressive number of homes in the borough to date and this scheme was good news for the council and the town for the following reasons :

- it made good use of council owned brownfield sites that were currently under-used and unproductive
- it would deliver homes of a kind that were greatly needed in the town- good quality family homes, built to provide high standards combined with low long term maintenance costs and energy efficiency.
- the development would have a positive impact on housing finances both in the short and long terms as it would deliver a positive cash flow from year 1 and also a very significant return on investment over 40 years
- the new houses represented good value for money. The build costs had been market tested through the tender process.
- the scheme would make the best possible use of Right to Buy receipts. These receipts have to be spent within three years of receiving them and must be spent on providing additional affordable housing. £420,000 of Right to Buy receipts would be put towards this scheme, with the balance being found from a combination of borrowing and new build reserves.

The Cabinet Member thanked Martin Stacy, Lead Commissioner, Housing Services and Cheltenham Borough Homes for the work they had put into this scheme.

The following issues were addressed :

- The legal implications for third party risks had been given a high score on the risk assessment. The Cabinet Member clarified that this was due to potential Rights of Way legal issues. Currently the proposal was for up to 8 homes but this covered the scenario where there were insolvable legal problems which did not enable the council to develop 8 units.
- Members welcomed the development of the garage sites in general and paid tribute to CBH who had in some instances gone over and above their remit. They also commended the high quality of housing provision and sustainability of the developments. One member suggested that CBH could consider developing its own in house team to build homes by working together with, for example, Gloucestershire College to take on apprentices. Members also paid tribute to CBH for its work on significant redevelopment of communal areas and the added social benefits that this work generated.
- CBH was congratulated on its excellent consultation undertaken during the process of this particular scheme which was appreciated by ward councillors and residents alike
- Concern was expressed with regard to current government policy on starter homes which was likely to have a detrimental effect on the supply of affordable housing

In summing up the Cabinet Member Finance praised CBH for its excellent work, professionalism and proactivity. He believed CBH had a great sense of what the town required. He personally wished to thank them for the pleasant working relationship he had with them during his time as Cabinet Member Finance.

Upon a vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED THAT

1. **The allocation of up to £1,405,150 for the construction of eight new dwellings be authorised.**
2. **It be noted that the Total Scheme Costs of £1,405,150 (broken down in further detail in exempt appendix 3) will be funded by circa £420k of RTB receipts with the balance funded by the most appropriate combination of the other funding streams noted within the report – this decision being delegated to the Section 151 Officer in accordance with Financial Rules B7 and B8.**
3. **An Authority sourcing loan finance of up to £1.0m from the Public Works Loan Board be authorised to be used for the construction of eight new dwellings.**

10. ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2016/17 - 2020/21

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the Asset Management Plan 2016/17-2020/21, as circulated with the agenda. The Council's current Asset Management Plan (AMP) had been due to expire in 2015 and the production and approval of the replacement Asset Management Plan had been deferred. This was to allow time for consideration to be given to the advice and suggestions made by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) following their review of the council's approach to asset management. The Asset Management Working Group (AMWG) had considered the replacement plan the previous week. Council was now being required to specifically approve Appendix G of the report although the Cabinet Member would welcome comments on the report in its entirety.

The Cabinet Member explained that a key recommendation of the CIPFA review was that the AMP should be a more dynamic, 'living' document which played a key role in the organisation. He believed effective asset management assisted the council in achieving its core objectives –

- delivering better services,
- helping to bridge the ongoing budget gap,
- helping to make the town a more beautiful, vibrant place,
- supporting the local economy,
- nurturing the town's cultural life,
- providing more and better housing,
- and supporting the voluntary sector.

All of these threads were woven into the plan, together with policies and strategies to achieve them.

He stated that there were a number of things that were clearly required of an effective Asset Management Plan :

- clear objectives (set out in the Asset Management Policy Appendix A)
- clear performance indicators (set out at appendix J)

- a series of policies and methodologies covering such things as :
 - roles and responsibilities
 - capital investment
 - planned maintenance
 - Disposals and rental policy
- Procedures to ensure the decision-making processes are clear, considered and transparent.

The Cabinet Member referred members to appendix I of the report which set out a clear policy for carrying out and prioritising planned maintenance; he highlighted the fact that the CIPFA report recognised that CBC had made great progress in this area. He also commented that the CIPFA report was very positive about the cabinet member role in asset management, but it strongly recommended that the Asset Management Working Group be given a wider and more strategic role. This recommendation had been accepted and made a crucial part of the decision-making process. The Working Group would be encouraged not just to look strategically at the way assets were managed but also to monitor performance on a systematic basis.

The Cabinet Member also said that another significant feature of the Plan was that it proposed a clear policy and process for acquiring assets for investment purposes as set out at appendix G. He explained that this sought to smooth the process and seize opportunities where they arose, but without taking away the constitutional role of the Cabinet and Council in making property decisions. He highlighted the importance of this if property income was going to be used as a means to do more than simply bridge the financial gap.

The Cabinet Member paid tribute to the work of the property services division which had significantly contributed to many of the Council's most important projects over recent years, including the Midwinter improvement scheme, the North Place and Portland Street sale and the renegotiation of the Regent Arcade lease. It had delivered over £13 million pounds worth of capital receipts over the last five years, which have made it possible to invest substantially in the town. It had also increased the rental income from General Fund properties by £120,000 which was contributing to bridging the budget gap. Over five years it has carried out over £3 million pounds worth of planned maintenance to CBC properties. Property services had also played a major role in the Development Task Force programme of work and worked closely with CBH to achieve the council's housing objectives. At the same time it continued to carry out a rolling option appraisal of assets, focusing on the properties that offer the biggest opportunities for increased income or capital receipts.

The Cabinet Member took the opportunity to remind members that investing in income-yielding property was nothing new for the Council and he gave the example of the Regent Arcade development 35 years ago, the decision to acquire the Shopfitters site two years ago and a large part of the rationale for the purchase of Delta Place a year ago.

Finally, he referred to Appendix C (AMP – Work Plan) which was a comprehensive, yet challenging proposition and efforts were being made to build resources within Property Services to enable them to continue to provide major support and even more so in the future.

The Cabinet Member asked Council to support the Asset Management Plan for the management of the Council assets for the period 2016/17 to 2020/21 and to approve the policy G it contained.

The following questions were raised and responses given :

- Delta Place investment- a member challenged whether there had been a switch in emphasis from the investment from providing new accommodation for the council to primarily an investment purpose; in response the Cabinet Member stated that the intention remained for the council to relocate but there was uncertainty in terms of timing; this however was no reason not to look at other options. The investment was proving to be hugely beneficial in terms of income and would deliver £500 000 annually for the council from 2023 onwards if roughly half the space was let and the other half occupied by the council itself. Retaining and sub-letting the whole building would give the council an income of approximately £1 million a year compared to the Regent Arcade investment which generated £560k per annum. He stressed therefore that it was important not to wholly rule out other options at this stage.
- Delta Place-a member questioned why the council had purchased Delta House for £13,750,000 for a property which had an investment value of £11 million, an overpayment of £2.75 million and whether future rental growth was built into the calculations and if so why was it ignored. In response the Cabinet Member confirmed the responses to these questions had been addressed in Member Questions. The intention was for the council to move to Delta Place and also use it for income generating purposes. Retaining Delta Place purely as an investment would without a doubt be highly beneficial to the council. He added that one of the rationales for buying Delta House was based on information from the Athey report which stated that rents for office accommodation were likely to rise which was what occurred last year with rates rising from £12.50/sq ft to £17-23/sq ft. Therefore factoring in new rental levels would increase income post 2023 quite considerably. The Cabinet Member believed that the investment value was of limited relevance to the situation as valuations tended to be retrospective and it was clear that an increase in rental levels would enhance the value of the investment which was going to be long term.
- A question was raised with regard to the working methods of the Property Acquisition Assessment Group (PPAG) and what "Briefing notes will be prepared where appropriate". In response the Cabinet Member explained that the PPAG was an officer led group and he clarified that the "if appropriate" related to AMWG as it was important to give AMWG a bigger role in monitoring performance to enable it to input into the process.

In the debate that ensued the following points were raised :

- The Chair of Audit Committee welcomed the timely presentation of the AMP as it complemented the new Grant Thornton accounting regime which looked at ensuring that assets were performing to their maximum and valued in the correct way. In the Value for Money exercise the Auditors also looked very carefully at the decision-making process which was now set out very clearly in the AMP.

- The investment policy in terms of the acquisition of Delta Place was challenged by some members who believed there was a changing emphasis in terms of the purpose of the investment, albeit subtle. The potential office space rental value of £23 per sq. ft. quoted by the Cabinet Member was queried. In response the Cabinet Member Finance stated that Delta Place represented a big income generator for the council and provided flexibility in terms of the council being able to occupy as much space as it required or, if there was a better option, even lease the entire space
- The issue of the absence of a fit for purpose asset management database was raised which had been highlighted in the CIPFA Asset Management Health Check. The Cabinet Member Finance commented that the criticism was that the data was not as accessible through IT as it should be. AMWG had discussed this issue at length at its recent meeting and it would receive a report on this in due course.
- Some Members gave thanks to the Property Services team and the Cabinet Member Finance for providing options for the future which would generate income.

Upon a vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED THAT

1. **The policy set out in Appendix G be approved.**

11. DRAFT CORPORATE STRATEGY 2016-17

The Leader introduced the draft corporate strategy which had been endorsed by Cabinet at their meeting on 8 March and was now coming to Council for their approval. The strategy was ambitious but achievable and set out a clear vision for Cheltenham under four high-level outcomes. The strategy highlighted areas where plans were to be achieved through working in partnership. The strategy had been developed in parallel with the budget and consideration was also given as to whether there was adequate resource to undertake what was identified in the strategy. He wished to thank both officers and Members for their input including the Overview and Scrutiny committee which had considered the report at its last meeting and whose suggestions had been incorporated into the draft strategy.

The Leader highlighted the following:

- It was hoped that the JCS would be completed this year.
- The 3 year business plan for the Cheltenham Development Task Force
- The council was also driving the economic development and tourism strategy.
- New tranche of affordable housing.
- The Pittville Play area project was a positive enhancement of the town.
- The development of the cemetery and crematorium
- The planned review of recycling services

The Leader emphasised that this could not be achieved without the positive hard work of officers.

A Member suggested that second homes were having a real impact on communities by causing an imbalance between housing need and supply and that domestic violence should be a strand in all strategies for safer communities.

The Leader thought the comments regarding domestic violence were entirely appropriate and the council was awaiting the outcome of two homicide reviews in the town and there may be learning points arising which needed to be incorporated in council policies and strategies. The council had attempted to address the issue of second homes through higher council tax and the bigger picture would be addressed as part of the JCS.

A Member referred to 'Econ 4' on page 11 which stated that the council would support the delivery of the Taskforce Business Plan. He asked where was the business plan that the Council were being asked to support as a copy was not attached to the strategy document. He understood that earlier this year, the Cabinet had signed off the task Force funding for another three years and he assumed they had received the business plan prior to this decision. He asked for clarification on the current version as he had only been able to find one that runs 2013 to 2015, with no dates into 2016.

He also sought clarification on the proposed role of the Taskforce? According to the latest Memorandum of Understanding and Councillor McKinlay at the last Council meeting on 25th February, the role of the Task Force was purely advisory and CBC had no say or influence in what it does despite paying well over 95% of its costs. He questioned why an advisory body appeared to have a delivery role in the strategy with the MD as Project manager, alongside the officers of the council. He questioned whether it was constitutional for Members to vote to have delivery of this important piece of strategy mandated to a group that cannot be influenced by, and is not accountable to the Council in any way?

The Leader responded that the business plan had been tabled as part of the Cabinet Agenda and therefore should be available as a public document. The Cabinet Member Development and Safety gave his assurance that he would ensure officers supplied the Member with the latest version. He added that it was true that the CDTF was not in control of the council but it did not take any decisions and was purely an advisory body. It looked at issues and gave feedback to Council when decisions were needed as part of the democratic process. Referring to Econ 4 in the corporate strategy, he explained that the public realm upgrades were the only part that the council was entirely accountable for.

Another Member repeated the comments he had made at the overview and scrutiny committee. Whilst welcoming the inclusion of the review of recycling and HMOs he thought air quality was also an important issue where it was important that the council worked closely with the county council as the highways authority. The member also urged the council to develop a more long-term vision for the next 5,10 or even 20 years and engage the public in the process.

The Leader advised that he would be looking for improvements in air-quality issues through the implementation of the Local Transport Plan. He would be

happy to consider a wider public consultation in the development of a more longer-term vision in a similar format that had been done for the budget in previous years.

RESOLVED THAT (with one abstention)

The draft corporate strategy 2016-17 be approved and to be used as a basis for monitoring the council's performance over the next 12 months.

12. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

The Leader introduced the report which had been circulated with the agenda. The report explained that on 14 April 2015 Cabinet had agreed a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (PDCS) for public consultation. This work was progressed in collaboration with Gloucester and Tewkesbury councils and consultants Peter Brett Associates (PBA) were appointed to help consider whether a CIL should be taken forward.

The report brought together all the relevant threads of information informing the revisions to the charging schedule, taking account of consultation responses to the PDCS and further detailed viability assessment. The report had been discussed in detail by the Planning and Liaison member working group and the proposals had also been the subject of a recent member seminar.

The purpose of the report was to gain agreement to undertake public consultation on the Cheltenham CIL Draft Charging Schedule (DCS) prior to independent examination. The other councils were being asked to make the same decision.

A CIL rate is proposed for development within the Borough for the following uses: Residential, Out of Town Retail and Retirement and Care Homes. Other development uses were assessed, but based on viability evidence recommended as a zero rate (£0). Separate CIL rates were proposed for the JCS strategic allocations and for development within Gloucester City and Tewkesbury Borough areas. Taking on board the evidence on viability a one size fits all approach was not appropriate for the JCS area as a whole. The report detailed the recommended CIL charge for Cheltenham, but the details for Gloucester and Tewkesbury are set out in the PBA report appended.

The Leader emphasised that the council was not proposing to scrap Section 106s as they may still be relevant in some cases but they must be kept distinct from CILs.

In response to a question he clarified that the levy was not designed to promote green field development ahead of brownfield. There were infrastructure costs related to urban extensions which would apply across council boundaries.

A Member raised a question regarding the position of a charity such as the Cheltenham Trust where they were leasing a building from the council. What would be their position if they wanted to develop the building and would they be liable for CIL?

The Head of Planning, Tracey Crews, had given an initial response to the member on this issue. There was a facility for exemptions and discretionary relief within the policy and a further advice was needed on whether this was

applicable in this situation. She agreed to take further advice from One Legal and produce a briefing note for all members.

Upon a vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED THAT

- 1. The publication of the Draft Charging Schedule for public consultation purposes be approved;**
- 2. The Director of Planning in consultation with the Leader of the Council be authorised to prepare the final publication documents as required, based on the detail of this report and information in Appendix 2;**
- 3. The Director of Planning be authorised to agree the date of publication on the Draft Charging Schedule with Gloucester and Tewkesbury Councils; and**
- 4. Following the conclusion of the publication period, the responses received be compiled and submitted with the Draft Charging Schedule to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination.**

13. NOTICES OF MOTION

None received.

14. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

None received.

15. ANY OTHER ITEM THE MAYOR DETERMINES AS URGENT AND WHICH REQUIRES A DECISION

There was no urgent business.

Duncan Smith
Chairman