

Cabinet

Friday, 24th February, 2017
4.00 - 4.15 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Steve Jordan (Leader of the Council), Flo Clucas (Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles), Chris Coleman (Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment), Rowena Hay (Cabinet Member Finance), Peter Jeffries (Cabinet Member Housing), Andrew McKinlay (Cabinet Member Development and Safety) and Roger Whyborn (Cabinet Member Corporate Services)
Also in attendance:	Councillor Matt Babbage

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 meeting held on 7 February 2017 were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

There were no questions or petitions.

5. FINAL GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2017/18 (INCLUDING SECTION 25)

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report which summarised the revised budget for 2016/17 and the Cabinet's final budget proposals and pay policy statement for 2017/18. She highlighted that this was yet another budget cycle in which huge savings had to be found in already extremely difficult financial times, as the government funding was cut again at the last minute with the £600 000 loss of New Homes Bonus. The net result of this was that the budget process for 2018/19 would be even tougher and would make it very difficult to avoid making cuts.

The Cabinet Member Finance noted that the council had always been prudent in its use of New Homes Bonus which has meant that any excess had been used to bolster reserves. The plan for 2017/18 was to put £300k into 2020 vision and £300k into the budget strategy reserve, but if this was to be realized then bringing in a balanced budget without making cuts to services would not be possible. She emphasized that not making service cuts had been a priority for the administration which was why it was being proposed to use the planned excess to support the revenue budget for this year.

The administration was looking to the future positively, with a number of exciting improvements and projects in the pipeline including the new crematorium, improved kerbside recycling, the potential of hosting the tour of Britain cycle race and the funding awarded to take the cyber centre forward. Smaller projects, such as the changing places public conveniences along with the cycling and walking project were of equal importance.

Finally, the Cabinet Member Finance expressed her sincere thanks to all of the Go Shared Services finance team, in particular Paul Jones and Sarah Didcote, for their enormous amount of hard work in supporting the process.

A Member commented on the table outlined in paragraph 4.11 in the budget report which set out the proposed levels of government funding per dwelling in 2017/18 across the Gloucestershire Districts. Whilst the differences between rural and urban authorities were recognised he questioned the way in which the Government was awarding grants.

The Leader endorsed the thanks already given to the Finance team.

RESOLVED THAT it be recommended to Council that :

- 1. the revised budget for 2016/17 be noted and the recommendation of the Section 151 Officer to transfer the identified saving of £110,737 to the budget strategy (support) reserve as detailed in Section 3.1 be approved.**
- 2. Having considered the budget assessment by the Section 151 Officer at Appendix 2 the following recommendations be approved :**
- 3. the final budget proposals including a proposed council tax for the services provided by Cheltenham Borough Council of £197.12 for the year 2017/18 (an increase of 2.60% or £5.00 a year for a Band D property), as detailed in paragraphs 4.37 to 4.42 be approved.**
- 4. the growth proposals, including one off initiatives at Appendix 4, be approved.**
- 5. the savings / additional income totalling £1,408,700 and the budget strategy at Appendix 5 be approved.**
- 6. the use of reserves and general balances be approved and the projected level of reserves, as detailed at Appendix 6 be noted.**
- 7. Award temporary business rates relief for local newspapers for up to two years from April 2017, as set out in paras 4.30 to 4.33, subject to full reimbursement from the Government and the award of such relief be delegated to the Revenues Manager.**
- 8. It be noted that the Council will remain in the Gloucestershire business rates pool for 2017/18 (para 4.26).**

9. **an above inflationary increase in cremation fee (estimated to generate additional income of £373,550) with a corresponding contribution to the budget strategy (support) reserve, as detailed in paragraphs 6.10 to 6.13 be approved.**
10. **the Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18, including the continued payment of a living wage supplement at Appendix 9 be approved.**
11. **a level of supplementary estimate of £100,000 for 2017/18 as outlined in Section 14 be approved.**

6. FINAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET PROPOSALS 2017/18

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report which summarised the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revised forecast for 2016/17 and the Cabinet's budget proposals for 2017/18

She highlighted that through this budget, CBH and CBC were achieving much more than was immediately apparent. It did not just concern the £4 million of spending on repairs and maintenance, and approximately £8 million on property improvements and major works but also the £2.7 million on new build and acquisitions, and the continuing spending on benefits advice, employment initiatives and services for older and disabled people. The council should be very proud of what it was doing, despite the squeeze on finances which the Government introduced last year.

The Cabinet Member Housing highlighted other work that had been undertaken, namely the provision of a number of accommodation units for the Syrian refugee programme and accommodation for veterans of the armed forces.

Members wished to put on record their thanks to officers at both CBH and CBC.

RESOLVED THAT it be recommended to Council that

1. **the revised HRA forecast for 2016/17 be noted**
2. **the HRA budget proposals for 2017/18 (Appendix 2) including a proposed rent decrease of 1% and changes to other rents and charges as detailed within the report be approved**
3. **Approve the proposed HRA capital programme for 2017/18 as shown at Appendix 3 be approved.**

7. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment informed Members that there would be a public consultation on the plans for the cemetery and crematorium between 1.30 and 7.30 pm on Wednesday 1 March.

8. CABINET MEMBER DECISION TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF CABINET

Cabinet Member	Decision
Leader	Appointment of Cllr Coleman to replace Cllr Whyborn on Ubico Board
Cabinet Member Development and Safety	Removal of BT public payphones

Chairman