

Cabinet

Tuesday, 13th February, 2018
6.05 - 6.55 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 and Councillor Bernard Fisher

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 and 12 December 2017 were signed and approved as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

There were none.

5. DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS POLICY

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report. She explained that the council has powers to award Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to provide additional financial assistance towards housing costs where claimants are in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, provided housing costs are included. The report proposed an updated policy to include the council's responsibilities in respect of Universal Credit claimants and ensure that consistent decisions are made. Funding would be provided by the Department for Work and Pensions.

The Cabinet Member Development and Safety gave their support to the proposals. They considered that the introduction of Universal Credit would have an adverse impact on those most in need and the recommendations in this report would allow the council to respond more flexibly to the additional demands created.

RESOLVED THAT

- 1. the Discretionary Housing Payment Policy in Appendix 2 be approved.**
- 2. decisions relating to the award of DHP in line with the policy and DWP guidance, be delegated to the Head of Revenues and Benefits, with the final decision in the event of dispute being taken by the Chief Finance Officer.**
- 3. the Chief Finance Officer be authorised to apply to DCLG for an accounting direction if it appears that the annual allocation will be exceeded in any financial year**

6. DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS RATES RELIEFS

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report which explained that at the Spring Budget 2017, the Government had announced three separate relief schemes to help business ratepayers facing large increases in bills as a result of the 2017 revaluation of business premises. The three schemes were Supporting Small Businesses, Relief for Pubs and the Local Revaluation Support Scheme and the report set out details of each. Approval was now being sought to award these reliefs using discretionary powers introduced by the Localism Act. The first two reliefs were to be awarded in accordance with the Government set criteria and would be fully funded and the proposed criteria for the Local Revaluation Support Scheme were detailed in appendix 2.

The Leader commented that the take up to date had been a challenge so he appreciated the efforts that were now being made by the council to ensure small businesses can benefit from the scheme.

RESOLVED THAT

1. a change to the amount of local discretionary revaluation support scheme for 2017/18 as set out in section 2.3 of this report and appendix 2
2. the local discretionary revaluation support scheme for 2018/19 be approved in accordance with section 3 of this report and appendix 2
3. the extension of the relief scheme for pubs in 2018/19 be approved to be awarded in accordance with the detailed guidance in appendix 3
4. the Supporting Small Businesses relief scheme in 2018/19 be approved to be awarded in line with the detailed guidance in appendix 3
5. the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Finance, be authorised to set the percentage relief level for local revaluation support in 2018/19 as detailed in section 3.4 of this report.
6. due to the volume of cases, decisions relating to the application of these reliefs be delegated to the Head of Revenues and Benefits and officers in the Business Rates team. In the case of a dispute a reconsideration is

to be made by the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member Finance.

7. EVENTS PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report which considered the options around delivery of a future collaborative events programme for Cheltenham. In this context it took lessons learnt from the 9th September 2017 Cheltenham Festival of Cycling both in terms of costs related to the delivery of a major event, importance of partnership working and funding, impact on officer resources together with whether further activities under the Cheltenham Festival of Cycling banner should be supported.

The report set out four options to deliver a joined-up events programme for all stakeholders, with a budget to extend the town's event offer within the context of delivery of the council's 5 year strategy to grow the visitor economy. The report sought agreement to the budgetary implications and commitment for delivery of a community based cycling event in 2018 and a one off allocation of up to £150,000 to deliver a major cycling event in 2019. If the recommendations were agreed today then officers would bring back a business case for the latter in a future report to Cabinet.

She concluded by expressing her thanks to all the individuals who had contributed to making the Cheltenham Festival of Cycling such a successful event.

Members were supportive of the recommendations. They felt that the Festival of Cycling had been very well supported despite the weather and could be even more successful in the future. It was recognised that the resource requirement would be too high to put on such a high profile event every year therefore it was important to build in extra capacity which the additional budget would facilitate.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the preparation of an events programme to support the delivery of the Council's 5 year strategy to grow the visitor economy that promotes Cheltenham as a world class destination be agreed.**
- 2. that a budget of £50,000 per annum be built into the base budget to support the delivery of a collaborative Cheltenham events programme which facilitates a mixture of high profile and community led activities and events.**
- 3. to commit to delivery of a community based cycling event in 2018 and agree to seek to deliver a high profile cycling event in 2019 within the context of an events programme. Officers to bring back to Cabinet a business case for 2019 one off funding in due course.**
- 4. that the most effective means of the future delivery of the marketing and events programme be investigated and that a further report be brought back to Cabinet accordingly.**

8. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2018/19

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report which had been circulated with the agenda. She explained that the council under the CIPFA code must report annually on its treasury management strategy statement and its prudential indicators and the report incorporated the annual investment strategy which is also a requirement prior to the start of a new financial year.

The Treasury Management Panel (TMP) had recommended that Cabinet approve this report and forward it to Council.

She drew Members' attention to the revisions made to the lending and parameter list on page 86 appendix 2.

Since the budget monitoring report in December the investment income had improved for 17/18 and was currently showing as a likely surplus of £34,800 above the budget and this figure was largely due to investing in the CCLA property fund.

She gave thanks to council officers and advisors for their achievements.

RESOLVED THAT

Council be recommended to approve the attached Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy for 2018/19 at Appendix 2, Lending list at Appendix 2, Table 2 page 6 and MRP policy statement for 2018/19 at Appendix D be approved, including :

- **The general policy objective 'that Council should invest prudently the surplus funds held on behalf of the community giving priority to security and liquidity'.**
- **That the Prudential Indicators for 2018/19 including the authorised limit as the statutory affordable borrowing limit determined under Section 3 (1) Local Government Act 2003 be approved.**
- **Revisions to the Council's lending list and parameters as shown in Appendix 2, Table 2 page 6 are proposed in order to provide some further capacity. These proposals have been put forward after taking advice from the Council's treasury management advisers Arlingclose Limited and are prudent enough to ensure the credit quality of the Council's investment portfolio remains high.**

9. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2017/18 - POSITION AS AT DECEMBER 2017

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the third financial monitoring report giving the position statement for the financial year 2017/18. The purpose of the report was to notify members of any known significant variations to budgets for 2017/18 and highlight any key issues.

She concluded that the net effect on the general fund of the variances reported was that the outturn position was expected to be delivered within budget and she asked Cabinet to support the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED THAT

the contents of this report including the key projected variances to the 2017/18 budget and the expected delivery of services within budget be noted.

Council approve the budget virements to the 2017/18 budget, as part of the revised budget 2017/18, as detailed in Appendix 6.

10. FINAL GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2018/19 (INCLUDING SECTION 25)

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report which summarised the revised budget for 2017/18 and the Cabinet's final budget proposals and pay policy statement for 2018/19. She reminded Members of her introductory statement last year when she predicted that there were extremely difficult financial times ahead, and with further cuts to government funding 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. Staff were to be congratulated that cuts to services had been avoided.

Despite huge year on year financial cuts and future financial uncertainty whilst the government determined how and where local authority funding would come from and how it will be divided, the ability for local authorities to generate a sustainable independent revenue income was a journey that the council was already on.

The Cabinet Member highlighted some of the very positive steps that the council had taken over the last year that not only maintained existing services but also looked to improve, enhance and invest in Cheltenham for the benefit of its residents and businesses.

This administration had seen herself and other Cabinet Members bring forward a number of reports for approval aimed at ensuring the council looked at many different and diverse ways and means to protect what makes Cheltenham a great place to live and work. This had included the introduction of a commercial strategy, investment in cultural services, using diverse and new Treasury instruments taking a more risk aware approach, property investment had seen small increases in income, the pension advance lump sum payment that would net the authority £400K over two years, a new extended kerbside recycling service, investment in the new build crematorium, a successful bid to join the business rates pilot and the launch of marketing Cheltenham alongside hosting a successful new festival of cycling event.

She concluded that it was a budget that the Cabinet could be rightly pleased to recommend to Council and asked for their support to approve the recommendations as set out in the report. She expressed her sincere thanks to all of the finance team, in particular Paul Jones and Sarah Didcote, for their enormous amount of hard work in supporting the process. This was endorsed by the Leader.

The Leader commended the excellent financial control which the report demonstrated by officers across the council. He considered that it was a very positive budget which demonstrated the efforts being made to protect and enhance services and the decision to increase council tax was appropriate in the circumstances.

RESOLVED THAT it be recommended to Council to:

- 1. Approve the revised budget for 2017/18.**
- 2. Consider the budget assessment by the Section 151 Officer at Appendix 2 in agreeing the following recommendations.**
- 3. Approve the final budget proposals including a proposed council tax for the services provided by Cheltenham Borough Council of £203.01 for the year 2018/19 (an increase of 2.99% or £5.89 a year for a Band D property), as detailed in paragraphs 4.26 to 4.30.**
- 4. Approve the growth proposals, including one off initiatives at Appendix 4.**
- 5. Approve the savings / additional income totalling £716,500 and the budget strategy at Appendix 5.**
- 6. Approve the use of reserves and general balances and note the projected level of reserves, as detailed at Appendix 6.**
- 7. Note that Gloucestershire was successful in becoming a 100% Business Rate Retention pilot in 2018/19 and propose that the additional revenue generated be earmarked for economic growth initiatives specific to Cheltenham (paragraphs 4.19 to 4.20).**
- 8. Approve the extension of grants to Cheltenham Performing Arts (£20,000) and the Holst Birthplace Trust (£7,500) for a further 3 years, as detailed in paragraph 5.12.**
- 9. Approve the deferral of the 2017/18 Cheltenham Trust management fee saving to 2019/20 and 2021/22 and provide for a contingency within the working balance of £150,000 for the Trust to drawdown (paragraphs 5.13 to 5.18).**
- 10. Approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2018/19, including the continued payment of a living wage supplement at Appendix 9.**
- 11. Approve a level of supplementary estimate of £100,000 for 2018/19 as outlined in Section 13.**

11. FINAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET PROPOSALS 2018/19

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report which summarised the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revised forecast for 2017/18 and the Cabinet's budget proposals for 2018/19.

She highlighted some of the achievements on CBH and CBC. These included over three and a half million of spending on repairs and maintenance, and nearly eight million on property improvements and major works, one and a half million on new build and acquisitions, and the continuing spending on benefits advice, employment initiatives and services for older and disabled people.

She concluded that the council should be proud of what had been achieved despite the squeeze on finances which the Government had introduced on rent reduction, however none of this could be achieved without a dedicated hard working committed team of staff across the organisation and she invited her Cabinet colleagues to join her in thanking them..

The Cabinet Member Housing supported the recommendations and gave a special thanks to all the staff at CBH for their excellent work.

RESOLVED THAT it be recommended to Council that

- 1. the revised HRA forecast for 2017/18 be noted.**
- 2. the HRA budget proposals for 2018/19 (shown at Appendix 2) including a proposed rent decrease of 1% and changes to other rents and charges as detailed within the report be approved.**
- 3. the proposed HRA capital programme for 2018/19 as shown at Appendices 3 and 4 be approved**
- 4. authority be delegated to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, to apply for a direction from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to permit Discretionary Housing Payments to Council Tenants to be funded from the HRA if it appears probable that the annual Government allocation for the year will be exceeded (see paragraph 6.6 of the report).**

12. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles was pleased to report that building work had now started at Leisure@ and this would provide a terrific resource for families in Cheltenham once the work was completed.

She advised that she had attended a meeting of the Community Partnership with the Leader and this had provided an opportunity to get some valuable feedback on the Place Strategy.

She informed Cabinet that an event would take place in Cheltenham on 10 March 2018 to mark International Women's Day and an impressive range of speakers had been organised to help celebrate the role of women in Cheltenham.

A variety of events were being organised to commemorate the centenary of Armistice Day in November 2018.

The Cabinet Member Development and Safety advised that the Gloucestershire Constabulary had successfully applied for an injunction against drug gangs in Gloucester who were also having an impact in Cheltenham. A press statement would be going out tomorrow.

He had met with the Police and Crime Commissioner to approve funding from the late night levy to support three initiatives; street pastors, 300 drug testing kits for licensed premises and a grant to support student community controls to improve safety at the University.

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services advised that there were a number of projects in hand to improve the efficiency of back office services.

He advised that he would be taking a briefing note to overview and scrutiny regarding the sound system in the Council Chamber which needed renewal. An allocation of £75,000 was included in the budget papers and a decision on the final spend would be brought back to Cabinet. He anticipated that 2/3 of this budget would be dedicated to installing a good quality sound system which would fully support those with hearing difficulties and the remaining third could be allocated to desirable features, possibly at a later date.

The Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment advised Members that a decision had been taken as of yesterday to suspend the operation of both cremators at the crematorium due to health and safety concerns. He apologised for the impact this would have on bereaved families and friends. He thanked the local funeral directors who would be taking their calls and he thanked the dedicated officers at the Crematorium who did everything they could to keep the service going. Engineers were now on site to try and rectify the problem as quickly as possible. A media statement was being issued today.

The Leader advised that he was aware that a scrutiny task group had devised a list of proposed improvements for Cheltenham Spa Railway in 2015, which had been accepted by Cabinet. He had circulated the proposed draft response to the rail franchise consultation to the task group for their comment before formally submitting it next week.

13. CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS SINCE LAST MEETING

Cabinet Member	Decision	Link
Finance	Appointment of NKS Contracts (Central) Ltd to renovate void properties	https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1057
Healthy Lifestyles	Positive Activities 2017/18	https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1058
Leader	Written Resolution for the Revised Executive Management Structure Gloucestershire Airport Limited	https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1060
Leader	Appointment of Peter	https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1060

	Hibberd as specialist non-executive director of Gloucestershire Airport	tails.aspx?ID=1061
Leader	Articles of Association and Shareholders' Agreement Gloucestershire Airport Limited	https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1064

14. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972-EXEMPT BUSINESS RESOLVED:-

“That in accordance with Section 100A(4) Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining agenda items as it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, if members of the public are present there will be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in paragraph 3, Part (1) Schedule (12A) Local Government Act 1972, namely:

Paragraph 3; Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

15. EXEMPT MINUTES

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2017 were signed and approved as a correct record.

Chairman