

Council

Monday, 10th December, 2018
2.30 - 5.55 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Bernard Fisher (Chair), Roger Whyborn (Vice-Chair), Victoria Atherstone, Matt Babbage, Paul Baker, Garth Barnes, Dilys Barrell, Angie Boyes, Nigel Britter, Jonny Brownstein, Flo Clucas, Chris Coleman, Mike Collins, Stephen Cooke, Iain Dobie, Tim Harman, Steve Harvey, Rowena Hay, Alex Hegenbarth, Karl Hobley, Sandra Holliday, Martin Horwood, Peter Jeffries, Steve Jordan, Chris Mason, Paul McCloskey, Andrew McKinlay, Tony Oliver, Dennis Parsons, John Payne, Diggory Seacome, Malcolm Stennett, Jo Stafford, Klara Sudbury, Simon Wheeler, Max Wilkinson, Suzanne Williams and David Willingham

Minutes

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Flynn and Savage.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated with the agenda.

Upon a vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 15 October 2018 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

4. **COMMUNICATIONS BY THE MAYOR**

The Mayor confirmed that carol singing would be taking place on Thursday at 5pm in aid of the Mayor's charity.

5. **COMMUNICATIONS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

The Leader wished to thank colleagues who had taken part in the photograph outside the Municipal Offices to show support for the local campaign against gender-based violence 'Glostakeastand'.

He also wished to pass on his thanks to all those involved in the WW1 remembrance weekend which he felt had done Cheltenham proud. He also passed on his good wishes to Pat Pratley, Chief Executive, who he hoped to see well again in the new year.

6. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

Councillor Harman presented a petition to the Mayor requesting that Boots Corner be re-opened at the earliest opportunity. He advised that it was on behalf of the Conservative group and the wider community and it had received around 5200 signatures.

In response to a question, Councillor Harman confirmed that the petition was the same petition that Alex Chalk had emailed about.

7. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1.	Question from Stephen Williams to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	Comparing like with like, i.e. same days, same times etc., please can you provide details of traffic counts before and after implementation of the Boot's corner closure, for College Road, St. Lukes Road, Ambrose Street, St. Georges Street and Gloucester Road between the Train Station and the Lower High Street?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>GCC colleagues have a network of 27 traffic monitoring points which formed the baseline prior to any phases being implemented and is designed to give robust and sufficient data in order to evaluate the trial. Clearly for consistency sake these monitoring points have remained the same and the data has been evaluated after each phase to identify impact.</p> <p>The full set of monitoring points is listed below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Monson AveClarence SquareAll Saints RoadFairview RoadBayshill RoadCollege RoadSt Georges StHigh StreetSt James SquareImperial Square Southern ArmMontpellier Spa RoadPoole WaySt. Johns AveHigh StreetLondon RoadSt. George RoadImperial Sq Northern ArmAmbrose StRodney RoadAlbion StreetGloucester PIWinchcombe St NorthNorth PlaceClarence StreetSt. George PIRoyal Well Road

	<p>Winchcombe St South</p> <p>Whilst these may not cover the specific sites desired they collect data on adjoining routes.</p> <p>Data has been collected since 2015 which was used as the baseline, and added to year on year as various phases of the trial have been implemented. Whilst headline analysis has been undertaken where concerns have been raised, GCC colleagues are keen to collect the full 6 month like-for-like data since the phase 4 trial began so that a full picture can be gathered.</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Mr Williams asked when the vehicle movement data would be available in the public domain.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member explained that this was in the hands of the County Council and they had been given no firm date on when this would be received. He advised that Cheltenham Borough Council were also keen to receive this data.</p>
2.	<p>Question from Susie Godwin to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</p>
	<p>Assuming that the Council finally accepts that this ill-advised scheme has not worked, would they agree with me that many issues could be resolved, including pedestrian safety, if:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. There were 'proper' traffic lights, as at the top of Montpellier, and not the flashing orange variety and, b. that a bus lane remains on the left alongside Superdry etc, enforced by a camera 24 hrs a day. This would mean a single line of traffic on the right hand side (after removal of the seats and bike racks etc), and combined with better traffic lights, would ensure that pedestrians, businesses, locals and tourists, can get back to some normality in Cheltenham.
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>As this phase of the Cheltenham Transport Plan is a trial, and the full data sets are not yet available it is premature to judge the outcome. Whilst several indicators are pointing to improved footfall, cycling and bus patronage other indicators, notably on traffic dispersment are yet to be released by colleagues at GCC highways. The trial is seeking feedback so I would encourage you to put your suggestion for a dedicated bus lane to GCC at https://gloucestershire-consult.objective.co.uk/public/trp/phase4/phase4</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Miss Godwin queried why, in her opinion, the people of Cheltenham had not been consulted on the closure of Boots corner before its implementation and why residents' complaints were being ignored.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member advised that consultation on the transport plan had been ongoing since 2006, the experimental TROs being introduced, which included the closure of boots corner, formed Phase 4 of the scheme. He explained that all comments were being taken on board and</p>

	<p>consultation on the scheme had been extended to after race week. He continually directed residents to the consultation page on Gloucestershire County Councils website to make their views and these comments would be taken on board when the TRO committee analysed the data and decided on how to proceed.</p>
3.	<p>Question from Gary Knight to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</p>
	<p>Now that Councillor McKinlay concedes (October 15th) that the equalities act 2010 does not mention 'all taxis must be wheelchair accessible', and furthermore can he now accept that sections 160-164 of the same act are 'prospective' and are not 'live'.</p> <p>Will the councillor agree that the framework for changing the taxi policy is fundamentally flawed.</p>
	<p>Response from</p>
	<p>At no time have I said that the Equalities Act 2010 requires all Taxis to be wheelchair accessible.</p> <p>What I have repeatedly said is that the Equalities Act 2010 places an obligation on licensing authorities to ensure that all taxis comply with the Taxi Accessibility Regulations.</p> <p>Through consultation the council have looked at various options giving consideration to the representations made to the council. Given the complexities of the issues involved, the council is considering a wide range of views and evidence in coming to its policy conclusions and would not wish to limit itself to a single piece of evidence.</p> <p>In my response to another council question in October, I said: “The Equalities Act 2010 does not refer to all Taxis having to be changed to Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles.</p> <p>However, as was outlined in the Cabinet report in March 2018, the Equality Act 2010 does place a general public sector equality duty which place a duty on the council to have due regard to the following when discharging its functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act. • Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (including age and disability). • Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. <p>Furthermore, the Government’s own The Inclusive Transport Strategy stated:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">- 4.21 In the longer term we want the service currently provided</p>

	<p>by taxis and PHVs to be as accessible to disabled passengers as it is for those who are not disabled.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chapter 8 has a whole section on “Increasing levels of Wheelchair Accessible Taxis and PHVs” saying: “8.35 Through our engagement with disabled people during the consultation it was clear how important wheelchair accessible taxis and PHVs were to enabling people to attend hospital appointments, go shopping or visit friends. We want to see a much greater proportion of WAVs, particularly in non-urban areas, over the next 10 years.” <p>As can be seen from the above quote it is clearly Central Government’s intention to end disability discrimination in the Taxi Service, (a policy that this administration fully supports)</p> <p>The decision taken by this Council to introduce a 100% Wheelchair Accessible fleet is not “fundamentally flawed” as you suggest, but entirely consistent with Central Government policy and legislation.</p>
4.	<p>Question from Gary Knight to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</p>
	<p>What evidence can the council provide, that the people of Cheltenham, wish to have all taxis, wheelchair accessible and euro 5 (emissions) compatible.</p>
	<p>Response from</p>
	<p>The issue of emission standards is not an accessibility issue but one relevant to air quality. In October the council consulted with the trade and wider public on a number of technical issues associated with the implementation of the new wheelchair accessible policy for taxis. One issue relevant to this consultation was the emission standards the council should apply to licensed taxis. The <i>minimum</i> adopted standard, taking into account the consultation feedback, was Euro 5.</p> <p>As I previously alluded to, Cabinet looked at a range of issues and options when considering the adoption of the wheelchair accessible policy for taxis. This included feedback received during the public consultation and subsequent engagement and feedback. Given the complexities of the issues involved, the council would not wish to limit itself to a single piece of evidence.</p> <p>The consultation feedback, including that submitted by members of the public who responded, can be found on the council’s website.</p>
5.	<p>Question from John Firth to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</p>
	<p>As a regular town centre user, I can see no benefit from the closure of Boots Corner. As a resident of Saint Luke's Road, since the closure, especially between 4:30 and 6:30 there is a solid stream of traffic from the Bath Road to College Road along Saint Luke's Road, with lots of impatient and dangerous behaviour with cars driving fast down Saint</p>

	<p>Luke's Place to queue jump. A pleasant and quiet town centre residential area has turned into an almost permanent traffic jam with a consequent detriment to quality of life.</p> <p>I would like the council to reject this pointless scheme, reopen Boots Corner and reverse the damage to my neighbourhood. If not what do the council propose to do to mitigate the dramatic traffic increase in St Luke's?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>Whilst you may see no benefit in the trial closure, others have identified significantly increased pedestrian movement at Boots Corner itself, greater use of cycling, more bus patronage and improved footfall at key commercial zones. This added to the positive news on the High Street, unlike other towns, suggests that Cheltenham is remaining attractive for investors which is important for the vibrancy of the town long term.</p> <p>My understanding from colleagues at GCC is that Saint Luke's Road and College Road have for many years suffered from peak time traffic flows but there is no suggestion of a "permanent" traffic jam.</p> <p>Any measures to mitigate traffic increases will be determined once GCC are in a position to release data sets.</p>
6.	<p>Question from Mike Mudie to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</p>
	<p>Given the increased likelihood of accident, injury and, frighteningly fatality in a pedestrianisation scheme involving motor vehicles (particularly now that people routinely walk around looking at their mobile phones) are our Councillors jointly and severally prepared to accept responsibility for any such deaths ?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>Sadly there have been 3 deaths within the town centre attributed to speeding vehicles within the last few years; all before the phased introduction of the Cheltenham Transport Plan.</p> <p>Slower speeds as now seen on Albion Street tend to reduce the likelihood of fatalities. Equally buses have been utilising the High Street with pedestrians from Boots Corner to Bennington Street for many years with no significant incidences; again because of the slow operating speeds.</p> <p>All phases of the Transport Plan have been subject to road safety audits by GCC prior to implementation and in line with many other towns and cities the objective is to create a more pleasant and safe environment.</p>
7.	<p>Question from Mike Mudie to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</p>
	<p>As the current scheme is so overwhelmingly unpopular and dangerous, would the Council now consider the alternative of a bus free pedestrianisation scheme in tandem with a suitable road system to deal with the displaced traffic ?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>Whilst that it a personal opinion, the suggestion of a bus free pedestrianisation area is helpful. This was considered at length but unfortunately due to the historic nature of the street configuration no solution could be found that would not interrupt the flow of buses into the</p>

	town centre. The first phase of the Transport Plan with 2 way flow on Albion Street improved direct bus access but designers have not found a solution that removes bus movements whilst equally ensuring that bus passengers can easily access their goal of the town centre.
8.	Question from Carl Friessner-Day to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	The closure of Boots Corner is a trial and by definition a trial is a temporary measure in time. However in recent media commentary Cllrs have presented the closure of Boots Corner as a fait accompli and that if anything the road structure elsewhere would be tweaked to make it work. Could the Council go on record for the constituents of Cheltenham and confirm that reopening Boots Corner is still a possible outcome should the desired outcomes presented by the Council in 2015 not prevail?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	The GCC traffic regulation order committee stipulated that phase 4 Boots Corner would be a trial and nothing has changed to that position.
9.	Question from Carl Friessner-Day to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	One of the objectives to the closure of Boots Corner was to reunite the high street and stop severance of our town centre. Given the continued need for traffic lights at Boots Corner because of the volume of buses and taxis, and more concerning the massive increase of traffic on Rodney Rd, would it be fair to conclude when it comes to at least the severance element of the high street, the transport plan has failed to deliver on the promises made to the electorate of Cheltenham.
	Response from Cabinet Member
	The traffic lights were retained at Boots Corner at the request of the disability consultative group who wished to be reassured that east-west travel would remain as before during the trial. The temporary narrowing of the road has made general pedestrian flows easier but the requirements of all groups will inform any final determination. Options to address the increased traffic flow in Rodney Road are being explored by GCC. The issue of severance has been significantly reduced as shown by the increased pedestrian and cycle movements east-west but the purpose of the trial is to understand as many dynamics as possible.
10.	Question from Liz Rolls to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	Given we have the evidence of the World Health Organisation concerning the impact of air pollution exposure on the development of cancer, cardiovascular disease, and respiratory disease, how does Cheltenham Borough Council propose to meet its statutory duties for public health, that were conferred on local authorities by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, when the Council's decision to close Boots Corner to the majority of traffic has increased these known damaging effects on town centre residents by changing a low risk traffic flow situation (that is exposure to pollution by a fleeting and transitory population from moving traffic at Boots Corner), to a high risk one (that is, to increased exposure to pollutants by settled residential populations as a result of the disproportionate increase in stationary traffic outside their homes for significant periods of time?)
	Response from Cabinet Member

	<p>CBC has been working with colleagues at GCC on a range of mitigation measures across the town for several years. This data can be found on the CBC website.</p> <p>The ambition is to continue to reduce the impact which is why this phase of the trial, like all other phases, has both traffic monitoring and pollution monitoring data being collected.</p>
11.	Question from Bernard Rowe to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	<p>Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 and Part II of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 requires local authorities in the UK to review air quality in their area and designate air quality management areas if improvements are necessary.</p> <p>The Public have advised that closing Boots corner will divert traffic to others smaller streets causing congestion, noise and more pollution, particularly St Georges Street.</p> <p>What part of this act gives the council the rights to actively work against this act to drive up pollution in these areas?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>The Council is currently undertaking air quality monitoring beyond the statutory requirements of the Act, for example, in order to provide reassurance in relation to Cheltenham Transport Plan. The map of monitoring points is on our website here:</p> <p>As part of the Boots Corner trial, both traffic flows and pollution levels are being monitored to understand the impacts, along with other performance measures such as pedestrian movements, cycling and bus patronage. All of this information will ultimately inform the decision by colleagues at GCC regarding the impact of the trial.</p> <p>We have started to produce a monthly report of data from gas mesh pods, alongside the annual nitrogen dioxide data. Specific monitoring points in St George's Street are shown on the map and the data currently available does not show an exceedance. If levels approach statutory limits in future, we will take the necessary steps to address the issue, as described below.</p> <p>We have commissioned a Detailed Assessment of local air quality, and anticipate the results will be received in Spring 2019. It is our intention to review the existing Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) based on this study, and the legislative process will be followed accordingly. This might result in the existing AQMA being amended and a new local Air Quality Action Plan would be produced to accompany this and to set out how the council and partners intend to reduce air pollution impacting on that area.</p> <p>We are also part of a countywide Air Quality & Health Partnership facilitated by the County Council, which aims to deliver a consistent monitoring approach and behaviour change interventions across Gloucestershire.</p>

8. MEMBER QUESTIONS

1.	Question from Councillor Paul Baker to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman
	<p>Single use plastic is a significant issue for our town, for our world. As well as recycling as much as we can we must also reduce the amount of it being produced and sold in our town. I note a number of street traders in the town selling cheap single use plastic balloons and novelties, particularly at this time of year, but other times too. I would like to propose our licensing policy be changed to prohibit licences for such products in the future.</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>The street trading policy is currently being reviewed and the use of single-use plastics will be addressed through this mechanism.</p> <p>For the avoidance of doubt however, many of the mobile traders referred to in the questions to Council are street pedlars, who are not licensed by the authority and do not therefore fall within its jurisdiction. Pedlars are licensed by police forces and to this extent the Council cannot impose any specific restrictions on them.</p> <p>Where a pedlar is operating otherwise than in accordance with the rules (e.g. they cannot be static for extended periods of time and must move from town to town etc.) the Council can act, as this may be considered to fall within the remit of street trading, which is the Council's responsibility.</p>
2.	Question from Councillor Paul Baker to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman
	<p>At the last Council meeting I asked the Cabinet member about the use of single use plastics both by the Borough and our partner organisations. I still await a response from those partner organisations.</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>The Council and its partner organisations are working to reduce the use of single-use plastics.</p> <p>Ubico has confirmed that it, like the Council, is reducing the use of single-use plastics, including cups, cutlery, site notices etc. and is also considering action in relation to single-use plastics used as part of the service e.g. black plastic bags etc. Alternative options will be reviewed as soon as possible.</p> <p>Other partner organisations have been asked to report back to Members in the New Year on actions planned for 2019/20.</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Baker explained that he was happy with the progress made thus far on the plastic free Cheltenham initiative; he was, however, disappointed to see that plastic stirrers were still being used in the Members room and queried when this would be changed.</p> <p>The Cabinet member thanked Councillor Baker for his work and interest</p>

	<p>in the topic, he advised that they were currently using up existing stock and once this had been used they would be reviewing future purchases to find something that was more in line with the Council's aspirations.</p> <p>He explained that conversations had been had with Cheltenham Borough Homes who were also committed to reducing the use of single use plastics.</p>				
3.	Question from Councillor Paul Baker to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay				
	<p>GCC have confirmed that the monies raised from fines issued for drivers ignoring the Boots Corner closure would be spent in Cheltenham. What has the money been spent on to date, what further proposals are there? Could some of it be used to restore the disgracefully rusted and tatty Victorian street lights in the town in roads like Keynsham Road?</p>				
	Response from Cabinet Member				
	<p>The Director of Environment has written to the lead commissioner at GCC, who has confirmed that there was a commitment by the GCC Cabinet lead, Cllr Nigel Moor in response to a question from Cllr Klara Sudbury, to use any income surplus from penalty charges at Boots' Corner to promote walking and cycling in Cheltenham. This was subsequently agreed at the GCC Cabinet on 12th September, 2018. See extract below:-</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="427 1064 1385 1310"> <tr> <td>12. Questioner's name: Cllr Klara Sudbury</td> <td>Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Are the profits from fines received by GCC from vehicles being driven illegally through Boots Corner being ring-fenced to be reinvested in Cheltenham? If not please can I ask that they are and also that the profits from such fines are used in Cheltenham to improve pavements and increase the number of cycle paths in our town; both of which positive and proactive measures are needed to enable more people to choose to walk and cycle safely (particularly those who are less mobile).</td> <td>Legislation requires that all parking remain within Highways and Transport purpose. However in this specific instance agree this request.</td> </tr> </table> <p>GCC is currently working on developing the process for implementing this commitment, but has advised that given the considerable set-up costs for the scheme and the costs of administering appeals, any surplus remaining is hard to estimate at present. Until there is clarity on this, officers at GCC are understandably holding off committing to any works on schemes that could be funded from this source.</p> <p>There are many potential uses that could fit with the agreed funding criteria, but this is ultimately a matter for consideration by GCC.</p>	12. Questioner's name: Cllr Klara Sudbury	Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor	Are the profits from fines received by GCC from vehicles being driven illegally through Boots Corner being ring-fenced to be reinvested in Cheltenham? If not please can I ask that they are and also that the profits from such fines are used in Cheltenham to improve pavements and increase the number of cycle paths in our town; both of which positive and proactive measures are needed to enable more people to choose to walk and cycle safely (particularly those who are less mobile).	Legislation requires that all parking remain within Highways and Transport purpose. However in this specific instance agree this request.
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4.	Question from Councillor Tim Harman to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman				
	<p>Will the Cabinet Member update Council on the commissioning of the new crematorium and the situation with regard to capacity for cremations in Cheltenham?</p>				
	Response from Cabinet Member				
	<p>The project to deliver the new crematorium remains on time and on budget with anticipated completion in Spring 2019.</p>				

	<p>CBC does not have any statutory responsibility for ensuring sufficient cremation capacity within the locality, but has worked with funeral directors to help ensure that this should not be an issue.</p> <p>The Director of Environment has had discussions with the relevant commissioner at the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in relation to mortuary capacity at hospitals, so they are aware of the Council's current position regarding cremations and are reviewing their own business continuity arrangements to identify adequate storage and cremation capacity for the winter peak period.</p>
5.	Question from Councillor Tim Harman to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman
	<p>The Bath Road "bring site " and I believe other sites suffered from massive overflows at the August Bank Holiday due to problems with the availability of drivers in the pre bank holiday period .</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member confirm what steps he has taken in discussion with Ubico to avoid a recurrence over the forthcoming Christmas and New Year's holiday period which is always a time when these sites come under pressure?</p> <p>Will he consider increasing capacity on a temporary basis with additional skips targeted on particularly busy sites such as a Bath Road?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>No operational issues are anticipated with staffing in general, or the bring bank sites over the Christmas and New Year period, but Ubico will be monitoring this closely and taking any necessary action. The public are asked not to fly-tip recycling or other waste on the ground next to the bring banks.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the national situation regarding the availability of HGV drivers has not improved greatly since August. However, Ubico has and still is, training up its own drivers to improve service delivery. The use of agency staff has dramatically reduced as a consequence, thereby mitigating the risk of drivers choosing to go elsewhere, which was causing 'on the day' operational issues for Ubico, such as the difficulties with clearing the bring banks over the August bank holiday.</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Harman queried whether the Cabinet had considered installing additional skips on a temporary basis during peak periods.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member felt that Cheltenham's waste and recycling offer was strong and was satisfied that the depot had remained fully operational 7 days a week unlike other authorities. He did not see the requirement for additional skips, however, advised that this would be monitored over Christmas and New Year.</p>
6.	Question from Councillor Tim Harman to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman
	<p>Will the Cabinet Member outline any plans that the Council may have to introduce low emission vehicles into its fleet?</p> <p>Also will the Cabinet Member indicate if he can influence Ubico and Cheltenham Borough Homes to do the same?</p>

	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p> <p>Environmental considerations always form part of the procurement process and the Council will look to reduce emissions further wherever possible, as part of any of its future procurement exercises.</p> <p>As an example, the Council's car parking team is looking at the potential for using electric vehicles when it replaces its current vans and whether these might be sponsored by a local supplier, to show support for the authority's air quality management strategy and more sustainable travel alternatives.</p> <p>As a commissioner of services, CBC will seek to influence decisions taken by partners to introduce low emission vehicles. Vehicles are procured every 5 years by CBH and as part of the procurement review, electric vehicles are being considered. At present, any savings on fuel are outweighed by the initial costs of the vehicles. However, given the advances in technology, the potential procurement of electric vehicles will continue to remain under consideration at the next review.</p> <p>Since the service change in October 2017, UBICO's current refuse and recycling fleet operates more efficiently to minimise mileage and fuel consumption, helping to reduce emissions. This means that on each day of the week, all collections are made in one area of the borough, rather than having vehicles travelling across the whole town.</p> <p>UBICO vehicles are maintained to the highest standards to ensure engines are operating as efficiently as possible, therefore minimising emissions. Ubico operates a predominately Euro 6 compliant fleet; with the exception of those vehicles identified for replacement in the near future. The Euro 6 engine emits considerably less harmful gases than previous diesel engines, contributing to an improvement in air quality and complementing Ubico's commitment.</p>
7.	<p>Question from Councillor Wilkinson to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</p> <p>Residents in Oakley will have noted that the next concert at the Cheltenham Town football ground is going to be by Craig David. The previous concert – the first hosted at the stadium - was by Steps and was considered a Tragedy by many local residents. Local people would like reassurance that there will be no re-rewind to that scenario of 10 hours of noise pollution. Can the Cabinet Member fill me in?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p> <p>Following complaints received from residents after the Steps concert in 2018, the council's environmental health team will be offering guidance to the event organisers well in advance to control noise during the Craig David concert in May 2019 in accordance with national guidelines for such events.</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Wilkinson noted that this was an ongoing problem and queried whether it may be better for officers to actually attend site and monitor the noise levels.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member agreed to take the suggestion forward.</p>

8.	Question from Councillor Wilkinson to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	<p>After lobbying by Councillor Klara Sudbury, Gloucestershire County Council has agreed to use revenue from fines levied on drivers going through Boots Corner for improvements to cycling and walking facilities. The longstanding ambition to extend the Honeybourne Line to Lansdown Road was recently postponed indefinitely after funding cuts to the Cheltenham station project. Will Cheltenham Borough Council ask the county council to contribute the fines money to this important scheme to improve sustainable transport links?</p>
	<p>I believe that O&S committee was recently advised that whilst there were challenges to delivering the extension of the existing Honeybourne line to the Lansdown Bridge, that both CBC and GCC were collectively engaging with GWR and Network Rail to ensure that it happened. Should there be a financial challenge this would appear to be a suitable solution to ensure delivery and I will ask County colleagues to consider this.</p> <p>Councillor Wilkinson firstly wished to thank Councillor Sudbury for her lobbying to improve cycling and walking facilities across Cheltenham. He acknowledged that they were moving in the right direction with regards to extending the Honeybourne Line to Lansdown, however, he queried what more they could be doing to make the right representations to the County Council.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member explained that they were committed to pursuing it as a matter of urgency and encouraged Councillors to continue to make representations to the County Council.</p>
9.	Question from Councillor Wilkinson to the Leader, Councillor Steve Jordan
	<p>In January 2016 Cabinet endorsed the report of the walking and cycling scrutiny group, which included an endorsement of Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Cycle Campaign's wish list. During the scrutiny period, the group was advised that the most likely route to finding money for infrastructure works was via CIL. When is the CIL board being formed, who will sit on it and how can it be influenced to prioritise investment in cycling infrastructure?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>At full council on Monday 15 October 2018, Cheltenham Borough Council formally adopted a CIL charging schedule and set a commencement date for 1 January 2019. As part of this report (para 1.7.3 set out that "the governance arrangements to be put in place in relation to the expenditure of CIL income, retained by the Charging Authorities, will be considered by the JCS partners over the course of the first 6 months of the programme. These arrangements will be presented to Cabinet for decision". The detailed information as requested by Cllr Wilkinson is not yet available, but work is underway with One Legal and our partners Gloucester and Tewkesbury and a report on this will be considered by Cabinet in due course. Improving infrastructure for walking and cycling will be an important part of this discussion.</p>
10.	Question from Councillor Stephen Cooke to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman

	<p>Will the Cabinet Member responsible please review the provision of public toilets in Cheltenham including their number, maintenance, cleanliness and times of opening, and make these data available to members?</p> <p>What ongoing strategy is in place to provide sufficient public toilets of good quality for the use of residents and visitors to the town centre?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p> <p>As I have previously informed Members, in tandem with the project to install the changing places wc in Pittville park and one in a town centre location, a review of public toilet provision is underway.</p> <p>The review is looking at the investment required to council owned toilets and, as previously indicated will explore the potential to improve public access to facilities in commercial premises.</p> <p>Given the pressures on officers in delivering on major projects including the cemetery and crematorium, leisure @ and WW1 commemorative activities, the wc review has yet to be finalised.</p> <p>Once this is complete, it will be presented to the Asset Management Working Group for consideration ahead of Cabinet.</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Cooke queried whether the review would include input from the community and suggested the provision of public toilets should be reviewed annually.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member confirmed that they would be happy to take this recommendation forward.</p>
11.	<p>Question from Councillor Stephen Cooke to Cabinet Member Finance, Councillor Rowena Hay</p> <p>While the good intention underlying recent property investments by Cheltenham Borough Council is understood, why was a Freedom of Information request necessary for residents and tax payers to learn that £21million of their money was spent on the purchase of a supermarket site?</p>
	<p>I would like to thank Councillor Cooke for his question. It seems a nonsense that once a transaction has completed the purchase price cannot be made public. However as is often the case with commercial property transactions, the contract contained a confidentiality clause inhibiting the Council from disclosing information in respect of the transaction. This would have extended to the purchase price. This clause would have continued to bind the council after completion.</p> <p>The clause contained an exemption for information disclosed under a statutory obligation. Therefore whilst disclosing the information voluntarily would have been a breach of the contract by the Council, responding to a Freedom of Information request would not. The Council is obliged to disclose under a statutory obligation (which could include freedom of information and access to information) and this resulted in the release of the figure.</p> <p>The purchase price will ultimately become public information following</p>

	<p>registration of the transaction at the Land Registry: however, it is likely to be some time before the Land Registry completes the registration.</p> <p>In future this council will not agree to be bound post completion by non disclosure clauses.</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Cooke queried whether Cheltenham Borough Council should find ways to generate income that is more in line with its core activities and expertise.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member explained that at the last Council meeting a considerable amount of money had been committed to building houses in Cheltenham. Due to Government regulations, the Council were not permitted to buy outside of the borough, and so they had been heavily investing within the borough to boost the local economy. She explained that no core services had been cut despite the £8 million cut in central government funding over the last 2 years due to the council's forward thinking. However, noted that with the removal of central government financial support next year, the council needed to investigate alternative ways to generate income and she welcomed suggestions from Members.</p>
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9. COUNCIL TAX PREMIUM ON EMPTY PROPERTIES

The Cabinet Member Finance reminded Members that councils had discretionary powers to set the level of council tax discount on empty properties and CBC had already used its discretionary powers in respect of empty properties and second homes as detailed in appendix 2. She explained that in December 2017 the Council agreed to charge the 50% empty homes premium in respect of properties which had been empty and unfurnished for more than 2 years from April 2018. She reported that new legislation had now come in to force extending discretionary powers to increase the level of premium from April 2019. The rating allowed the following:

- From 1st April 2019 - 100% premium, 200% council tax liability, for properties which have been empty for 2 years or more
- From 1 April 2020 - 200% premium, 300% council tax liability, for those properties which have been empty for 5 years or more
- From 1 April 2021 300% premium, 400% council tax liability, for those properties which have been empty for 10 or more

The Cabinet Member informed that in October 2018, 119 properties in Cheltenham had been empty for more than 2 years and were subject to the premium. In October 2017 the number of properties which had been empty for more than 2 years was 80. She explained that based on the 119 properties and the council tax level for 2018/19, increasing the premium to 100% in 2019/20 would increase council tax income by approximately £12,000 for this Council. The Government had reported that nationally, where councils had been charging the premium consistently year on year, there had been a significant reduction in the number of homes being charged the premium. Whilst Cheltenham's scheme had been running for just nine months she informed Members that since April 2018 25 properties that were charged the premium had become occupied.

The Cabinet Member reported that two letters of representation had been received from investors at Honeybourne Gate and one from the managing agent requesting that in their particular circumstances consideration be given to exempting them from the scheme. She explained that whilst appreciating the particular investment difficulties these investors found themselves in, the potential reward needed to be considered against any risks and when considering these letters Cabinet believed it would be difficult to make an exception in this case. All Members of Council had received a copy of these letters and she requested that they should also give consideration to the requests.

The Cabinet Member noted that a certain level of empty homes was inevitable and was a feature of a healthy housing market, however properties which had been empty and unfurnished for 2 years or more were often subject to deterioration that could affect the fabric of the property and could cause damage to neighbouring homes. With increased pressure to find housing for people in need homeowners should be encouraged to bring long term empty homes into use to the benefit of all residents. Increasing the empty homes premium to the maximum allowed would therefore send a clear message to owners that it was not acceptable to keep properties empty for long periods.

Members discussed the proposal and the following points were raised and responses given:

The premium would apply to Cheltenham Borough Homes properties. There were currently 33 CBH properties which qualified as long term empty. The Cabinet Member Housing highlighted that this figure represented less than 10 % of the housing stock and most of them were uneconomic to repair and therefore let. CBH and CBC were however working hard on the regeneration of whole areas and this was considered a priority.

Whilst Members were sympathetic to the representations regarding Honeybourne Gate any investment had a risk and these properties were currently out of the reach of a significant number of people. It was therefore felt that no exemption should be granted.

The Cabinet Member clarified that flats above shops which were accessed separately would be subject to the premium.

Members wholly supported the proposals, it was important empty properties were brought back into use and the council should do the maximum it could to do this. Members felt that it was a scandal that any property was being deliberately left empty when there was significant housing need in the town. This proposal would send out the right message; it was not so much about income generation for the council but about bringing back into use empty properties.

RESOLVED (unanimously) THAT

- 1. The Council Tax Empty Homes Premium be increased to 100% from 1st April 2019 in respect of properties which have been unoccupied and unfurnished for more than 2 years**

2. **From April 2020 the Premium for those properties which have been empty for 5 years or more be increased to 200%**
3. **From April 2021 the Premium for those properties which have been empty for 10 years or more be increased to 300%**

10. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME FOR 2019/20

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report and explained that in April 2013 the council introduced its local council tax support scheme. She explained that council tax support for pensioners was not localised and continued to be provided for by a national scheme and in Cheltenham there were approximately 2,400 of pension age.

She explained that council tax support was given to around 6,000 households in Cheltenham at an annual cost of just under £6m. This included working and pension age claimants. Approximately 60% (3600) of those households were of working age. The cost of the council tax support scheme was met by this council and the precepting authorities.

The Cabinet Member reported that based on 2017/18 data, CBC was one of 37 councils out of 326 whose local council tax support scheme had not been amended to date to reflect reduced government funding.

The Cabinet Member then went on to explain that Cheltenham became a full Universal Credit area in January 2018. As the number receiving Universal Credit increased, the administration of calculating local council tax support entitlement became greater. This was because Universal Credit was reassessed on a monthly basis and any changes in income would mean that a different level of income needed to be taken into account for assessing council tax support. A change in the level of council tax support, however small, meant that a revised council tax bill needed to be issued. Issuing revised bills on a monthly basis was not sustainable for this authority or for those in receipt in managing their budgets.

The Cabinet Member informed Members that a consultation exercise on proposals for a revised council tax support scheme for 2019/20 was undertaken from 25 July until 9 September 2018 and was widely promoted. 130 people responded to the consultation which was considered a good response when compared to some other councils. Consultation was also undertaken with Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucestershire Police and the parish councils. The responses to the consultation had been analysed as outlined in appendix 3. Together with the income and household composition of the current council tax support caseload, these responses had been used to design the proposed scheme which was summarised in appendix 2.

The Cabinet Member explained that the income bands set the percentage discount to be awarded based on the level of household income. The overriding aim of the scheme was to:

- Protect the most vulnerable individuals and families by continuing to provide 100% support to those on the lowest income;
- Provide some financial support to low income individuals and families, based on their level of income;

- Minimise the number of changes to the amount of support awarded and therefore the amount of council tax payable due to monthly Universal Credit reassessments;
- Reduce the overall cost of the scheme to the taxpayer.

The scheme would be based on 5 income bands with the highest band providing support at 100% of the council tax liability, then reducing to 80%,60%,40% and 20% as household income increased.

Once the scheme was approved by Council the Revenues and Benefits team would notify all those claimants who would be affected by the change to make them aware that they would face an increase in council tax in 2019/20. When council tax bills were issued in March next year further letters would be sent with bills to explain payment options.

The Cabinet Member referred to the Equality Impact Assessment for the proposed scheme in appendix 4.This had been undertaken once the consultation had finished and analysed at which time the proposed scheme was designed.

The Cabinet Member Finance believed that adopting this scheme would reduce the support provided to some claimants, but would protect the most vulnerable. She proposed that there should be a hardship scheme to support those most affected and highlighted that a reduction awarded under this policy would be wholly discretionary and the only requirement would be that the Council must consider each case on its own individual merits. The full cost of awarding any reductions would be met by the General Fund. The Council must therefore balance the need of the individual council payers requiring support against the interests of the council tax payers generally. The Cabinet Member explained that arrangements had been made with Gloucestershire County Council for them to contribute to reductions awarded under this policy to those affected by the changes to the local council tax support scheme.

The Cabinet Member wished to highlight the following:

- Over two thirds of working age customers would see no change to their entitlement
- 100% protection would continue for the most vulnerable of customers with the lowest incomes
- Child benefit and child maintenance payments would not be taken account of in the calculation of household income
- Child minding fees of up to £175 per week for one child and up to £300 per week for two or more children were disregarded from a person's income (subject to further conditions)
- An additional disregard where a person has a disabled child or children had been introduced
- Personal Independence Payment and Disability Living Allowance was ignored for all members of the household
- No non dependant deductions where the claimant or partner were in receipt of Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance
- The Revenues & Benefits team would work closely with customers in the new year preparing them for the changes

- Customers would be invited to pay their council tax instalments over 12 months instead of the statutory 10
- A visiting officer would be made available for welfare visits on request
- There would be closer working and liaison with CBH where tenants were affected by the changes
- Provision of personal budgeting and support by CCP for the year 2019-20 to support customers through the transition
- Close monitoring of council tax accounts and identification of people struggling to pay who have been affected by changes
- A new Discretionary Hardship Relief policy to support those with extraordinary circumstances
- Less revision of awards and council tax instalments for Universal Credit recipients in receipt of CTS

Finally, the Cabinet Member wished to put on record her thanks to all those who had responded to the consultation and paid tribute to officers for the significant work they had undertaken.

Members made the following points:

Assistance for the most vulnerable, particularly those on universal credit was welcomed. Concern was expressed in view of the no child left behind agenda where children were in working households who were not necessarily eligible for benefits. It was requested that officers provided advice and support where this was being brought to their attention so that no child would be disadvantaged as action hadn't been taken. It was important that there was cross portfolio working to ensure the council supported the most vulnerable. The Cabinet Member Finance explained that this issue had been raised with officers. It was not possible to allocate the hardship fund specifically to those mentioned due to the awareness that a number of people were affected. However, she committed to ensure that the no child left behind agenda was at the fore as decisions were taken going forward.

Members welcomed the fact that to date CBC had retained the level of council tax support within a reasonably progressive set of scheme rules. Whilst recognising that the changes were small they could be significant to those individuals in need who were the most vulnerable.

Reference was made to feedback during the consultation regarding the equality impact assessment. The Cabinet Member Finance explained that this was carried out at the stage the proposed scheme was designed, i.e. subsequent to the analysis of the results of the consultation.

In response to a question as to whether this constituted a family friendly policy the Cabinet Member explained that the council had done all it could to mitigate the effects of universal credit. This represented a logical time to make changes.

RESOLVED (unanimously) THAT

- 1. the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for working age customers for 2019/20 in Appendix 2 be approved, in accordance with section 13A(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992**

2. **the Discretionary Hardship Relief Scheme in Appendix 5 be approved, in accordance with Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992**
3. **Decisions relating to the application of Section 13A(1)(c) Hardship Relief Scheme awards be delegated to the Head of Revenues and Benefits. In the case of a dispute a reconsideration is to be made by the Executive Director Finance and Assets in consultation with the Cabinet Member Finance**

11. TREASURY MID-TERM REPORT 2018/19

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report and explained that treasury had changed immensely over the last few years with movement away from deposits in high street banks and diversifying treasury management into new areas.

The Council's treasury management strategy for 2018/19 was approved in February this year. Key to the strategy was the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk. She reported that CIPFA published new versions of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities and the Treasury Management Code of Practice but had yet to publish the local authority specific Guidance Notes to the latter. The Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government published its revised Investment Guidance which came into effect from April 2018.

The Cabinet Member explained that the updated Prudential Code included a new requirement for local authorities to provide a Capital Strategy, which was to be a summary document to be approved by full council covering capital expenditure and financing, treasury management and non-treasury investments. This capital strategy would be submitted to council for approval in February 2019.

The Cabinet Member then summarized the economic update for the first six months provided by the council's treasury advisors and which was outlined in the report.

The following other points were highlighted:

- The treasury management summary position from April to September showed that the council had net borrowings of £53.569 arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure.
- The councils strategy to fund a number of capital asset purchases had been the use of temporary borrowing and then take long term borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board. At the back end of September the Council took out 38 Maturity loans with the PWLB for £43.083m to fund the purchase of several commercial properties within the Borough. The loans were taken out over 3yrs to 40yrs with the average rate of 2.57%. This had saved £940k in interest over the life of the borrowing when compared to the original business cases.
- During the six month period the council's investment balance ranged between £16.625m and £65.234m due to timing differences between income and expenditure.
- In February this year the Investment income for 2018/19 was budgeted to be £328,200. The average cash balances representing the council's

reserves and working balances, was £25.154m during the period this report covers. It anticipated an investment outturn of £477,700 at a rate of return of 2.03% for this financial year. Estimated surplus for investment income was £149.5k for the financial year.

- Net loans and investments were estimated to be £593,500 over the original budget but after aligning budgets with the business cases for the commercial properties purchased the estimated year end will come in on budget.

Finally, the Cabinet Member wished to thank all officers who worked tirelessly to ensure that the council achieved the best possible from its investments and borrowings.

Members also wished to congratulate the Cabinet member and officers for proactively managing the balanced treasury portfolio. CBC set an example to other authorities by investing in the town.

In response to whether the Cabinet Member could comment on the council's investment in some aggressive property funds and the risks associated with this the Cabinet Member replied that whilst the council was risk aware it was not risk averse. The Treasury Management Panel had an important role to play in challenging how the council was managing the risk.

RESOLVED (unanimously) THAT

the contents of the summary report of the treasury management activity during the first six months of 2018/19 be noted.

12. NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion A

Proposed by: Councillor Clucas, seconded by: Councillor Barrell

That this Council being mindful of the findings presented in the 2018 children's needs assessment report, resolves to support a year of action, called No Child Left Behind that will:

- *Highlight the issue of children growing up in poverty in Cheltenham and the inequality between them and their more affluent peers,*
- *Start to address the inequality gap beginning with 12 month programme of events and activities*
- *Be a call to action for all sectors to work together to make transformational change over the longer-term to fight child poverty and create new mechanisms for ensuring that every Cheltenham child thrives.*
- *Set up a CWG to examine the potential for change and to invite Children's Champions to be members'*

That councillors consider nominating themselves to be Children's Champions to support the council in the delivery of the No Child Left Behind programme.

The council invite other organisations to formally commit to supporting the No Child Left Behind programme"

As proposer of the motion, Councillor Clucas gave a brief overview of the issue. She advised that, as colleagues were aware from the recent Members seminar an assessment focussing on the needs of children in Cheltenham had been conducted. This had identified a number of serious concerns for children living in Cheltenham and so Cheltenham Borough Council and its partners had committed to a year of action, called No Child Left Behind. The initiative aimed to highlight the issue of children growing up in poverty in Cheltenham and the inequality between them and their more affluent peers, start to address the inequality gap and be a call to action for all sectors to work together to make a transformational change over the longer-term. The results of the assessment had identified a number of children who lacked access to adequate food, issues of safety and the inability to afford period products. She explained that they would be working with partner organisations including Gloucestershire County Council, public health and local schools to make a real difference to local children. She felt that all Councillors had a responsibility to residents in their wards and invited them to be part of the initiative. She also encouraged all Members to put themselves forward for the Cabinet Member Working Group which they hoped to be cross party.

Councillor Barrel seconding the motion explained that their aspirations were for every child in Cheltenham to thrive as the needs assessment had identified considerable areas of concern. She advised that it would be a 12 month programme of events and activities aimed at making a real difference to local children. She acknowledged that poverty was wider than just money and they needed to look at other factors such as stress as a result of exam pressures and the prevalence of social media, which could act as a platform for bullying and abuse. She cited issues of crime, drugs and self harming, noting that in a recent study 22% of girls and 9% boys admitted to self harming in the past year. She explained that the issues were across the board not just in the normally deprived areas. She stated that they needed Councillors from all parties to nominate themselves as children's champions to support the council in the delivery of the No Child Left Behind programme.

Members from all parties were fully supportive of the motion and were saddened by the results of the needs assessment. They agreed that in the 21st Century, social media and the mental health impacts were a great concern, they also found the number of children requiring free school meals alarming and felt strongly that the gap in achievement between genders needed addressing. Members were startled by the inequality across the borough and stressed the importance of analysing the local data as pockets of deprivation could often be masked. Some Members agreed to engage with businesses in their wards to support the programme and offer opportunities for funding and also engage with local schools. The importance of engaging with local sports clubs and organisations was also noted. One Member was extremely supportive of the campaign given that it was in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, a call for a action by all countries to eradicate poverty. Members were further alarmed by the high exclusion and non attendance rates at schools and acknowledged that whilst schools were doing everything in their power to reduce this a lot of it was outside their control and was as a result of issues at home. Members noted that whilst central Government had a key role to play, Cheltenham could take a lead.

One Member confirmed that Gloucestershire County Councillors were also fully supportive of the No Child Left Behind programme and advised that the County were running a scheme whereby organisations were being invited to apply for grants for 2018-19 to invest in community initiatives which can alleviate the impact of period poverty. They reported that the applications were open until 31st December and were keen that Cheltenham benefitted from the scheme. It was requested that the information on the scheme be circulated to all Members.

In response to a Members query about the practical steps being taken to help those in poverty, the Cabinet Member explained that the year of action involved a monthly plan of events, they advised that Richard Gibson's team had all the information regarding the programme should Members wish to find out more.

In summary, Councillor Clucas reiterated that they wanted to make a real difference to the lives of vulnerable children. She thanked Richard Gibson and his team for the enormous amount of work they had put into the programme. She explained that the programme would begin with the child poverty summit in January which would bring together all the organisations responsible for the care of children, inviting them to get on board with the programme. Other planned activities included educating children and families in how to grow their own food, engaging with sports clubs and offering career advice to children. She noted that there was also a real issue with children spending long periods of time on their phones and iPads and so the programme would also look to hold organisations such as Facebook accountable. She thanked everybody for their cross party support and reiterated the importance of raising issues within their wards.

Upon a vote the motion was CARRIED unanimously.

Motion B

Proposed by: Councillor Clucas, Seconded by: Councillor Stafford

Council congratulates all those who were involved in the unique projection that was created for the centenary of the Armistice in 1918. Tens of thousands of views of the projection on the internet demonstrate how popular it was.

Therefore, Council requests officers to look at developing Cheltenham as the UK's first City of Light, through which Cheltenham's amazing architecture might be utilised in storytelling and action in light, sound and music, for specific periods or weeks through the year.'

As proposer of the motion Councillor Clucas referred to the more than 100k who had seen the projection which illustrated what the council could achieve and how it could reach out. She wished to request officers to talk to colleagues at the Festivals, the Everyman and the Cheltenham Trust to come together and create a City of Light to enhance the Cheltenham offer and spread this beyond the town. This would provide opportunities for people, particularly students at the university. She wished to thank officers, the Everyman, Evenlode Productions, the Cheltenham BID and council officers for their valued involvement in the event.

Members made the following comments:

- The WW1 projection made Cheltenham proud, it was an accessible and inclusive free offer and was a fitting tribute to those who had made the ultimate sacrifice.
- It was suggested that a feasibility study be undertaken to investigate the possibility of putting on similar events at various times throughout the year. It would be an excellent opportunity to draw in local talent, including students and to involve them in working on a high end project which would have significant marketing potential. Reaching out to schools was also key and involving the whole community in reinforcing Cheltenham as a place of culture.
- Accessibility was key.
- There was potential for synergy with other things in the town and specific reference was made to the lighting up of the GCHQ building
- The use of LEDS meant energy efficiency. There were opportunities for CBC to work with the Cheltenham BID on using downlighting rather than A boards on pavements.
- A Member pointed out that the town had a range of prominent buildings, not just public estate and not everyone would necessarily embrace the proposal.
- A Member referred to the potential for a dark skies reserve within the Cotswolds AONB to minimise light pollution and to inform children of the wonders of the universe. He questioned whether a City of Light would be compatible with this.
- It was noted that the town had a high degree of Grade 2 listed buildings and some had expressed concern that there would be issues with lighting such buildings up. This concern was questioned since the national monument commission, under the auspices of English Heritage allowed such buildings to be lit up.

Councillor Clucas welcomed the feedback from Members and the opportunity to explore further. Working with partners, including the BID would be key.

Upon a vote the motion was CARRIED unanimously.

Motion C

Proposed by: Councillor Willingham, Seconded by: Councillor Baker

This Council is concerned about the safety and well-being of our front-line, public-facing staff. Our staff who perform public-facing roles, including enforcement activities, should be able to work without being assaulted, threatened or given verbal abuse; and the Council should ensure that if threats or acts of aggression or violence are made against our staff, this should not be without consequence for the aggressor; the Council should ensure that measures and processes are in place to deter, and quickly resolve, vexatious complaints made against staff to cause them extra stress and prevent them performing their roles. Council notes that modern technology such as body-worn cameras and digital recording of communications can provide an independently verifiable witness of interactions, but that there can be privacy and other concerns about the unregulated deployment of such technology. Council believes that such technology would be beneficial to our employees, and

- 1) *Urges Cabinet to investigate the costs and practicalities of equipping officers with such devices and training them on their use.*
- 2) *Urges Cabinet to engage with affected staff, both directly and by consulting with the Trades Union representatives to ensure that such provisions meet our staffs' needs.*
- 3) *Notes that Overview and Scrutiny Committee may wish to consider these proposals in more detail, to ensure that all of the issues are captured and the correct policy is implemented.*
- 4) *Notes that Audit Committee may wish to consider these proposals in more detail, to ensure that the correct processes, governance, legal and privacy frameworks are in place.*

As proposer of the motion, Councillor Willingham gave a brief overview of the issue. He felt that as the staff were one of the greatest assets to the organisation they had a duty to protect them, particularly from vexatious complaints which could cause a great deal of unnecessary stress to employees. He explained that body cameras would ensure they effectively had an independent witness to any interactions. Similar measures had been adopted in London and evidence had suggested that this had reduced the number of vexatious complaints. He acknowledged that there were practical and regulatory considerations, such as ensuring that the operation was GDPR compliant. He urged Cabinet to investigate equipping officers with such devices and also engage directly with staff and consult with the Trades Union representatives.

Councillor Baker seconding the motion, reiterated Councillor Willingham's comments, agreeing that staff often worked in extremely difficult, confrontational circumstances and that they would benefit from such devices. He urged Cabinet to progress the matter further.

Some Members felt that the issue went deeper than staff protection and felt that careful consideration needed to be given to the practical implications they, however, felt confident that the necessary safeguarding measures would be considered. Other Members agreed that as long as all the necessary policies and processes were in place it could save officers a lot of time, energy and money dealing with vexatious complaints and could ultimately diffuse situations. Members agreed that the proposals should be considered by O&S before being brought before the Audit committee to ensure the correct processes, governance, legal and privacy frameworks were in place. One Member had reservations about proposals 3 & 4 and felt that it was important members of the public were able to make complaints, particularly as the council was not an independent body. They were, however, happy to support proposals 1 and 2.

One Member suggested that in addition to such devices, additional CCTV around the town, particularly by the taxi ranks would be beneficial. The Cabinet Member advised that at the Cabinet meeting on the 4th December, they had agreed the town centre security strategy which included provisions to upgrade of the town's public realm CCTV infrastructure. He further explained that an integrated approach to tackling anti-social behaviour and environmental crime within the town centre was being taken.

In summary, Councillor Willingham explained that it was not a case of taking away peoples ability to make a genuine complaint but reduce the number of

vexatious complaints. He agreed that it was imperative all of the necessary policies and procedures were in place but felt that carrying the motion would send out a strong message to both staff and residents.

Upon a vote the motion was CARRIED unanimously.

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

There were none.

Bernard Fisher
Chairman