

Council

Monday, 18th February, 2019
2.30 - 7.30 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Bernard Fisher (Chair), Roger Whyborn (Vice-Chair), Victoria Atherstone, Matt Babbage, Paul Baker, Nigel Britter, Jonny Brownstein, Flo Clucas, Mike Collins, Stephen Cooke, Iain Dobie, Wendy Flynn, Tim Harman, Rowena Hay, Alex Hegenbarth, Karl Hobley, Martin Horwood, Peter Jeffries, Steve Jordan, Chris Mason, Tony Oliver, Dennis Parsons, John Payne, Louis Savage, Diggory Seacome, Malcolm Stennett, Jo Stafford, Klara Sudbury, Simon Wheeler, Max Wilkinson, Suzanne Williams and Dr David Willingham

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor McCloskey, Boyes, Barnes, Coleman, McKinlay, Barrell, Harvey and Holliday.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Babbage declared an interest in agenda item 13 as an employee of an energy company.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting held on 21st January 2019 were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. COMMUNICATIONS BY THE MAYOR

The Mayor explained that he had made a visit to the new crematorium which was fantastic and a credit to Cheltenham.

5. COMMUNICATIONS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader informed Members that Councillor Rowena Hay would be replacing Councillor Wendy Flynn on Planning Committee. Councillor Flynn would now act as substitute.

6. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

There were none.

7. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1.	Question from Linda Hope to the Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	Cheltenham has a unique Regency Character that has attracted visitors for decades. Are the council really giving enough consideration to preserving this as the recent developments around Boots Corner are ugly, driving in is impossible

	and parking non-existent.
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>One of the tenets of the Cheltenham Transport Plan was to learn from previous mistakes and thus there was a commitment that in delivering any change, there wouldn't be any significant alterations to roads or demolition of buildings, as occurred with the road widening at St Margaret's many years ago.</p> <p>The works at Boots' Corner are only temporary and whilst I agree that 'astroturf' may not be to everyone's taste, the works have demonstrated that by removing through traffic and creating enhanced public space, more people are using that space and staying longer.</p> <p>The recent Business Improvement District survey prior to Christmas, which was carried out independently by Enventure Research, identified that '<i>... Almost nine in ten (88%) respondents said that it was very easy (51%) or quite easy (37%) to travel through or around Cheltenham</i>' – suggesting the view that driving is impossible is not supported empirically.</p> <p>The Cheltenham Transport Plan has not resulted in the loss of any parking in the town and data suggests that parking patronage remains positive. GCC has also created additional blue badge bays on-street to over-compensate for those spaces removed as part of the trial.</p>
2.	Question from Adam Lillywhite to the Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	<p>Despite repeated and strenuous denials by Cllr McKinley that the reason for keeping Boots Corner closed is not the potential development of the Municipal offices, Q36 of the public question from the public questions of 21/1/2019 clearly identifies the high priority rated 16 and rated red in the Task Force risk register,</p> <p><i>"If GCC are unable to close Boots Corner (inner Ring Road) to through traffic then it would significantly reduce the development potential of the Municipal Building and Royal Well and may render the development as Marginal, as it would only allow the Municipal Building to be remodelled without the holistic benefit of Royal Well."</i> (Ref Cheltenham Task Force risk TF. 12)</p> <p>Given the extensive Economic and Environmental case presented to Councillors in the extraordinary meeting on 21st Feb and the officer who wrote the CTP update report being the MD of the task force, will you please outline why this Risk was not presented to the Councillors or included in the risk assessment, Appendix 1 of that meeting.</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>The development potential for the Municipal Offices includes the opportunity to create some world class public space, but this can only be seriously considered if the town embraces traffic removal as a precursor.</p> <p>We are not yet at that stage, as the Cheltenham Transport Plan has been delivered in a phased manner, so there seems little point in flagging risks relating to a separate project that may never materialise.</p>
3.	Question from Adam Lillywhite to the Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	At the Extraordinary Council meeting 21/1/2019 I asked a supplementary question

	<p><i>'Why are the officers of this council so intent on masking the adverse impacts of the Boots Corner scheme whilst at the same time accentuating any potential benefits from developments many of which are unrelated to the phase 4 closure.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. The Boots Corner usage table is totally misleading, increase figures are only reported for the period of the Music and Literature festivals against a base that was not during a festival.</i> <i>2. The detailed data for traffic flows has not been released, traffic increase graphics exclude the street probably most heavily affected, St Georges Street.</i> <i>3. The Nitrogen Dioxide map is for 2017, so is not relevant.</i> <i>4. Serious detrimental impacts on residential areas are dismissed or not addressed.</i> <i>5. Economic activity from completed developments separate to the closure are inaccurately claimed as being dependent.</i> <p><i>How can CBC members or the public be expected to make a reasonable decision without the necessary information and from a report that is so blatantly intended to mislead them?'</i></p> <p>In response the Cabinet Member said he did not agree with my analysis and Members had all the relevant information required.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member now has the time to investigate the five points raised and I would be grateful for a response to each one.</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Boots Corner footfall data and methodology is publically available at https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/47/cheltenham_development_task_force/1452/boots_corner_trial_closure_data <p>The dates for which data has been collected are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Week 1 commencing 11th June; - Week 2 commencing 2nd July; - Week 3 commencing 8th October; - Week 4 commencing 14th November (not yet analysed or published) <p>Unsurprisingly, there were events taking place during all of these weeks, that's the nature of life in Cheltenham:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Week 1: food and drink festival 15-17th June; - Week 2: Music festival, Midsummer fiesta on 7th July; - Week 3: Literature festival, Promenade market on 12th October; - Week 4: November Races 16-18th November. <p>In all cases, it's difficult to assess the impact of the events on Boots' Corner at the times sampled (the hours beginning 8 a.m., 12.30 p.m. and 5 p.m.). For example, with the Literature Festival focussed on Montpelier Gardens, would that lead to a positive or negative impact on the footfall around Boots' Corner?</p> <p>There are many other 'external' factors which impact the counts, e.g. the World Cup was taking place during the second week and there is evidence of a drop in footfall coinciding with England games; the weather, whilst generally good,</p>

	<p>deteriorated markedly during the last days of the third week.</p> <p>So, in order to try to provide a balanced view, we have commissioned surveys covering a number of weeks and averaged out post-closure data across all the weeks sampled. And that's also why we have sampled three periods during the day and looked at individual periods separately to look for inconsistencies in the data.</p> <p>We are currently analysing data for the week commencing 14th November and expect to be able to release that soon. Again there will be differences in the underlying conditions – for example, John Lewis had opened by this date, other major shops had opened / re-opened and, of course Christmas was approaching. On the other hand days were colder and darker.</p> <p>2. We await the release of the raw data by colleagues from GCC and will request this.</p> <p>3. The map and data is updated in line with DEFRA guidance and we anticipate the 2018 data being uploaded shortly.</p> <p>4. The GCC lead cabinet member report considered by this Council in January 2019 did not identify serious detrimental impacts on residential areas. It identified a range of measures which were fully documented in that report.</p> <p>5. The developments cited were measured against the original Treasury Green Book analysis, which itself was produced to support the initial bid to the Department for Transport's Local Sustainable Transport Fund. Whilst other impacts associated with the Cheltenham Transport Fund were noted, these were clearly not measured against the original base case.</p>
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8. MEMBER QUESTIONS

1.	Question from Councillor Chris Mason to the Cabinet Member Corporate Services, Councillor Alex Hegenbarth
	Please could the Cabinet Member confirm the cost to the new audio system recently installed in the Council Chamber and Pittville Room?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Council agreed a budget of £75,000 for the new audio system recently installed in the Council Chamber and Pittville Room and the spend to date is £66,608.16.</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Mason questioned whether the Cabinet Member thought this was money well spent given the number of problems that had been experienced with the new system.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member advised that with any new system a number of teething problems could be expected, however, a meeting had been set with VP Bastion (the supplier of the system) and a number of Council officers to try and resolve the issues experienced.</p>
2.	Question from Councillor Chris Mason to the Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	Income from the Council's off-street car parks is an important revenue stream, which may be affected by a reduction in cars entering the town. Could the Cabinet

	Member please update the Council on the results of any modelling that has been conducted to assess the impact resulting from a reduction in the number of people using the car parks?										
	Response from Cabinet Member										
	<p>I would willingly consider any evidence in support of Cllr Mason's view that there has been a reduction in the number of people using CBC car parks, but this has not been provided.</p> <p>I can also confirm that there has been no reduction in income from the Council's off-street car parks, indeed, quite the reverse (see table below). This suggests that visitor numbers to the town have increased, in addition to which Stagecoach has recently advised that Cheltenham bus journeys have increased by 4%, compared to a national decline of 2%.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <th>Year</th><th>Gross Off-Street Parking Income</th></tr> <tr> <td>2017</td><td>£3,798,072</td></tr> <tr> <td>2018</td><td>£4,224,852</td></tr> <tr> <td>Increase</td><td>£426,780</td></tr> <tr> <td>%Variance</td><td>+11.24%</td></tr> </table> <p>For context, it is worth noting that the Council's strategic approach to car parking provision, adopted in 2017 with support from a cross-party working group, does not seek to prioritise car parking income generation, or access to the town by car over other more sustainable transport modes. The approved objectives of our Car Parking and Access strategy are as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure the provision of adequate parking up to 2031, that is delivered effectively, logically and at a competitive cost; • To encourage access by more sustainable transport alternatives, including walking, cycling and public transport; • To assist traffic management, minimising congestion and its associated environmental impacts; • To enhance the visitor experience and thereby help to optimise the economic growth of the town. • To maintain, or increase current parking revenue, to help fund other environmental services which benefit the well-being of Cheltenham and its economy. <p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Mason noted that one of CBC's objectives is to reduce the number of vehicles coming into the town centre which would, in turn, mean less revenue for car parking. He, therefore, queried whether any modelling had been done?</p> <p>The leader confirmed that it is not the intention to prevent people coming into the town centre but instead provide car parking at the first point of contact, as such, they were supportive of initiatives such as the park and ride which reduce traffic but still encourage people to travel into the town centre. He explained that GCC were renewing their transport plan this year and as part of the consultation process they</p>	Year	Gross Off-Street Parking Income	2017	£3,798,072	2018	£4,224,852	Increase	£426,780	%Variance	+11.24%
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	would be discussing parking with them.
3.	Question from Councillor Stephen Cooke to the Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	<p>It was previously agreed that the funds accrued by CBC as a result of fines levied on unauthorised vehicles driving through Boots Corner would be put to good use, for example to improve walking and cycling infrastructure in Cheltenham. Could the cabinet member responsible please tell members:</p> <p>a) how much money has now been taken in fines by GCC and how much of this has been passed on to CBC</p> <p>b) what projects the money has been spent on and</p> <p>c) how much money has been spent on each?</p>
	Response from
	<p>Unfortunately I must correct the assumption. No funds were ever expected to accrue to CBC; the funds are collected by GCC as the highways authority. GCC has previously stated that once the high costs associated with running the enforcement scheme have been recouped, any surplus will be made available for highways works. These schemes are not designed to make a surplus, but rather to help ensure compliance; so generally, the enforcement is aimed at covering costs. Members wishing to put forward works for consideration should do so through their Local Highways Manager, as they currently do, for schemes funded from the capital programme.</p> <p>a) I have requested this information from GCC, but to date do not have an answer. No monies will be passed over to CBC.</p> <p>b) I am not aware that any monies have been allocated to projects to date.</p> <p>c) Not applicable.</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Cooke questioned whether it was accepted that extending the walking and cycling parts of the Honeybourne line South of Landsdown Road and upgrading the High Street further would be a good use for the money accrued to the borough?</p> <p>The Leader confirmed that none of the money accrued goes to the borough and is retained by GCC, however, they are keen that this is spent in Cheltenham. Whilst the fine money would not go far in terms of making improvements to the High Street he was entirely supportive of it going towards walking and cycling initiatives.</p>
4.	Question from Councillor Stephen Cooke to the Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman
	<p>The public will welcome the response of CBC to the Consultation on Rubbish and Recycling conducted over the festive holiday period implying that the Swindon Road recycling centre will stay open (press release of 5th February 2019). Can the Cabinet member responsible confirm:</p> <p>a) that the press release is accurate and the Swindon Road recycling centre will now remain open for the general public to use</p> <p>b) if there is a move to weekly recycling collections that the practicalities of this will be re-examined, particularly with regard to household vs kerbside vs depot sorting of material for recycling?</p>
	Response from
	<p>a) Yes and I am not aware of any inaccurate Cheltenham Borough Council press releases being published. Cheltenham's household recycling centre will remain open and we will be looking to improve the recycling and re-use</p>

	<p>opportunities available to the public in the coming months.</p> <p>b) Cheltenham's kerbside sort recycling service is proving popular with residents so much so that the recent consultation exercise showed strong support for the introduction of a more frequent recycling service at kerbside. The government's waste and resources strategy published in October 2018 promotes kerbside separation of recycling materials to ensure that the recycling opportunities for precious resources are maximised. Cheltenham has already improved its kerbside recycling service back in October 2017 and we will be aiming to further improve both the kerbside recycling service and other recycling and re-use opportunities in Cheltenham going forward. Our success to date is thanks to the support of the residents of Cheltenham who separate out recycling materials and present them at kerbside to be recycled rather than throw recyclable materials into the refuse bin. I would like to thank residents for their support and encourage members to help promote the recycling message.</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Cooke explained that during the previous consultation a more detailed explanation of the questions being asked of residents enabled a better response. He therefore queried whether, in future consultation, the Cabinet Member was going to include a more comprehensive explanation of the questions people might be expected to answer with regards to recycling?</p> <p>The Leader firstly wished to reiterate that it was never true the recycling centre would close. He also explained that the responses to the previous consultation were available and that further consultation would be conducted which would explore the issues in more detail.</p>
5.	Question from Councillor Stephen Cooke to the Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman
	<p>The opening of the new crematorium in Cheltenham is welcome. It will end the regrettable situation whereby families had to arrange for their loved ones to be cremated elsewhere causing additional stress and inconvenience at a time of mourning. Now this episode is thankfully over can the cabinet member responsible tell members:</p> <p>a) how many deceased Cheltonians were sent elsewhere for cremation during the time that cremation facilities were not available</p> <p>b) what was the additional cost</p> <p>c) whether this cost was borne by CBC or the families of the deceased and</p> <p>d) if there is a resultant financial shortfall to CBC how is this to be made up?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>I am pleased to be able to report that the Council's new £8.5 million Crematorium is scheduled to open on time and within budget on 27th February, 2019, with booked cremation services recommencing on 4th March.</p> <p>a) Our excellent Bereavement Services team provides funeral services on behalf of bereaved families from a wide catchment area, primarily through bookings placed by local funeral directors, with whom we have liaised closely on the design and facilities offered by the new Crematorium. The Council does not keep records relating specifically to Cheltonians, as our service covers a wide catchment area.</p> <p>From 2nd October, 2018 until 12th February, 2019, we have provided for 237 funeral services, with funeral directors and their clients having booked</p>

	<p>services with us whilst fully aware that the cremations will need to happen at another crematorium, with our chapel facilities acting as a 'funeral service venue' only. We believe that the choice of crematorium should rightly be left to the families to decide, rather than our bereavement service and the process is easier for all concerned where funeral directors arrange this directly with their clients. Families have never been obliged to have a service at Cheltenham with the cremation happening elsewhere, it has been their choice to make this arrangement.</p> <p>b) The additional costs to the authority relating to our cremation process shutdown, involved both direct and indirect costs, including income foregone as a result of cremations not taking place at our own facility. In total, it is estimated that the authority will have an anticipated service deficit in the financial year 2018-19 of £447.1k, as reported to Cabinet in October 2018.</p> <p>c) Where services were disrupted in an unplanned way as a direct result of the failure of the Council's old crematorium plant, this provided only limited opportunity for bereaved families to make alternative arrangements. As a result, the Council offered to convey the deceased to alternative sites for cremation and paid for the additional transportation costs, as well as providing our chapel service free of charge. This has previously been reported to both the Crematorium member working group, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.</p> <p>Where families booked chapel services understanding that the cremation would need to take place elsewhere, our normal fees have applied.</p> <p>In these cases, CBC has not incurred additional costs, as we have not had to facilitate any coffin transportation. Funeral directors have taken responsibility for organizing and transporting 'post service' for cremations, as we have made it clear from the outset that we are only acting as a venue until the new facility is operational.</p> <p>d) The cost of the new crematorium is being funded in part through capital from the sale of car parking land at North Pace/Portland Street (£1 million), with the remainder being taken out as a loan over 25 years from the Public Works Loan Board. This has been secured at a rate below that originally allowed for in the business plan, helping to offset some of the income shortfall arising as a result of the partial close down of the cremation service this year</p> <p>In addition, increased service fee charges were introduced prior to the borrowing being drawn down, temporarily increasing the surplus which is normally generated each year (this was before the safety-related decision to close down the cremation process completely).</p> <p>Unfortunately, there will be a significant revenue shortfall in 2018-19 as a result of the safety issues with the cremation plant, but officers are confident that this will be recovered over the next few years, as confidence in the service is rebuilt.</p> <p>Prior to the problems with the facility, Bereavement Services typically ran at a revenue surplus in the order of £700k per annum.</p>
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	<p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Cooke questioned whether it was the original intention to increase the cost of the cremations and what the total spend on the new crematorium was?</p> <p>The Leader explained that the increase in charges had nothing to do with the closure of the previous crematorium, they were put in place for the opening of the new crematorium and agreed before any issues were experienced. He further confirmed that the crematorium was an £8.5 million project.</p>
6.	Question from Councillor Stephen Cooke to the Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	<p>The closure of Boots corner has had the effect of displacing traffic on to other roads some of which have become new 'rat runs'. One of those affected is Rodney Road which has become a new 'Boots Corner' close to the entrance of the flagship John Lewis store in the High Street. As well as being unpleasant for shoppers this area has become a poorly-demarcated 'shared space' and is perceived by many as dangerous.</p> <p>How does the cabinet member responsible plan to rectify this situation and by when?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>This was covered in the GCC lead cabinet member report brought to full Council on 21st January 2019 and I cite from page 11 of that report:</p> <p>1. Investigation into options for traffic calming on Rodney Road.</p> <p>GCC are clearly intent on taking action and I have requested details, but understand that currently, designs are being assessed by the highways team.</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Cooke questioned whether the Cabinet Member had any indication of when the issues experienced on Rodney Road might be resolved?</p> <p>The Leader explained that they were in the hands of the County Council with regards to the process. He advised that there were two added complications as Scott Tompkin's at GCC was in the process of leaving to go to Warwickshire and GCC are changing their highways contractors, they were therefore awaiting the exact detail of how things were going to be taken forward.</p>
7.	Question from Councillor Stephen Cooke to the Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	<p>The public have questioned some of the figures quoted to justify the closing of Boots Corner. Please can the cabinet member responsible:</p> <p>a) share the methodology of data collection including where and when figures for walking and cycling were collected</p> <p>b) indicate the time periods during which 'before and after' measurements were taken</p> <p>c) clarify what adjustments were taken to correct for confounding factors that could have affected the data obtained including the opening of new department stores, school and other holidays, sporting events and festivals?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Boots Corner footfall data and methodology is publicly available at: https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/47/cheltenham_development_task_force/1452/</p>

boots corner trial closure data

The dates for which data has been collected are:

- Week 1 commencing 11th June;
- Week 2 commencing 2nd July;
- Week 3 commencing 8th October; and
- Week 4 commencing 14th November (not yet analysed or published)

Unsurprisingly, there were events taking place during all of these weeks, but that's the nature of life in Cheltenham:

- Week 1: food and drink festival 15-17th June;
- Week 2: Music festival, Midsummer fiesta on 7th July;
- Week 3: Literature festival, Promenade Market on 12th October; and
- Week 4: November Races 16-18th November.

In all cases, it's difficult to know the impact of the events on Boots' Corner at the times sampled (the hours beginning 8 a.m., 12.30 p.m. and 5 p.m.). For example, with the Literature Festival focussed on Montpellier Gardens, would that lead to a positive or negative impact on the footfall at and around Boots' Corner?

There are many other 'external' factors which impact the counts, e.g. the World Cup was taking place during the second week and there is evidence of a drop in footfall coinciding with England games; the weather, whilst generally good, deteriorated markedly during the last days of the third week.

So, in order to try to provide a balanced view, we commissioned surveys covering a number of weeks and averaged out post-closure data across all the weeks sampled. And that's also why we have sampled three periods during the day and looked at individual periods separately to look for inconsistencies in the data.

We are currently analysing data for the week commencing 14th November and expect to be able to release it soon. Again, there will be differences in the underlying conditions – for example, John Lewis had opened by this date, other major shops had opened / re-opened and, of course Christmas was approaching. On the other hand, days were colder and darker.

These weeks were chosen to fall outside of school holiday periods. We also did our best to avoid major town events, but this just wasn't possible. However, this shows the nature of our thriving town; events were taking place across all four weeks where data was collected.

We're using these figures to give us an early indication of how the closure and changes to the public space may be affecting movement in the area. Of course, we're also aware that other factors, such as events and the weather may have an impact too.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Cooke questioned whether the Cabinet Member accepted that there were issues that effect the recorded numbers i.e. if you put a bike rack in place then it is inevitably going to increase the number of people passing by with a bicycle.

The Leader explained that by installing bike racks they were meeting a need and it

	was their intention to provide a better service for those walking and cycling.
8.	Question from Councillor Louis Savage to the Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	How many FOBT operators are currently licensed within the Borough? Can the Cabinet Member provide an estimate as to the number of FOB terminals currently operational?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Cheltenham Borough Council does not licence Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs) per se. We are responsible for licensing betting shops and licensed betting shops are permitted in law to make available up to a maximum of 4 FOBTs.</p> <p>There are 16 licensed betting shops in Cheltenham. Each of these betting shops is allowed up to a maximum of 4 FOBTs. There are therefore estimated to be 64 FOBTs currently operational in Cheltenham.</p>
9.	Question from Councillor Louis Savage to the Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	Can the Cabinet Member assure members that the council will be ready for the change in the law from April, initiated by central Government, reducing the maximum stake placed at FOBTs from £100 to £2?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>The regulation of stakes and prizes relating to FOBTs does not fall within the Council's remit; it is the responsibility of the Gambling Commission and Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport.</p> <p>The reduction in FOBT stakes has been brought about due to a change in the law that will place a duty on the manufacturers and operators of FOBTs to make the necessary arrangements, in order to comply with the reduced stakes.</p> <p>In this respect, there is nothing for the Council to do to prepare for the change. The Council's licensing section does proactively inspect all licensed betting shops in Cheltenham and through this process, will help to ensure that the new stakes requirements are complied with.</p>
10.	Question from Councillor Paul Baker to the Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman
	In response to my question at the 10th December Council meeting in regard to the use of single use plastic I was advised that 'other partner organisations have been asked to report back to Members in the New Year on actions planned for 2019/2020. Have we had those responses yet ?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	Further responses have not been received from partner organisations yet however it was concluded that to better progress this issue in a meaningful way a meeting would be organised with representatives from all the partner organisations to seek agreement on the best way forward. Officers are currently trying to identify suitable diary dates to enable this to take place as soon as possible.
11.	Question from Councillor Paul Baker to the Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman
	I would like to congratulate Plastic Free Cheltenham (PFC) on their efforts to raise awareness of the problems associated with single use plastic and on their forthcoming litter pick in Pittville Park. Would the Council be willing to display leaflets from PFC in its buildings and various partner outlets to help raise awareness of this issue?
	Response from Cabinet Member

	<p>I have always welcomed initiatives that help improve the environment and the Council is very willing to have leaflets left in reception areas to promote local events and initiatives.</p> <p>At my request, officers have already met with Plastic Free Cheltenham to determine how we can best work together to optimise the reduction in single use plastics across the town. A meeting is already being arranged with partner organisations and a representative from Plastic Free Cheltenham to ensure the Council is doing all it can to help reduce the use of single use plastic.</p>
12.	Question from Councillor Paul Baker to the Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman
	Following the recent publication by Government on the issue of recycling can I ask what opportunities were presented to Local Authorities to deal with this issue and what new initiatives we are looking to introduce in the coming year ?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Whilst the government's waste and resources strategy was published in October 2018, we are waiting for the government consultation promised on these issues and we will have a much clearer idea of the direction of travel once these consultation exercises have taken place.</p> <p>In the meantime, the Council is looking to further improve its already successful kerbside recycling service by working to introduce weekly recycling collections. In addition to this, following the response from the public to our own consultation exercise, we will be seeking to improve the recycling and re-use opportunities available at the household recycling centre.</p> <p>I believe we need to introduce better recycling opportunities in our parks and the town centre and also encourage local businesses to recycle more of their waste. These initiatives will be taken forward in consultation with members and the public.</p>

9. **ADOPTION OF GAMBLING ACT POLICY STATEMENT**

The Leader, introduced the report, he advised that the authority were required to produce the policy statement every 3 years and that the responses to the recent consultations had been taken into consideration. He confirmed that the policy statement had already been agreed by Cabinet.

He reported that a section on 'Local Area Profiles' had been added and they were committed to engaging with the County Council's Public Health Team to develop local area profiles for Cheltenham. He further explained that 'Local Risk Assessments' had been added, he confirmed that this set a requirement for all gambling operators to undertake local risk assessments for their licensed premises. He further advised that the section on exchange of information had been updated to reflect the recent changes to data protection and privacy laws. He acknowledged the recent changes in national legislation with regards to fixed odds betting terminals and confirmed that during routine inspections they would ensure this was being adhered to.

Members wished to thank officers for their hard work in producing the policy statement. They agreed that whilst gambling was important to Cheltenham's economy it was essential that it was regulated and the necessary support networks put in place. It was noted that the Local Government Association had

recently published a paper titled 'tackling gambling related harm' and agreed CBC should follow best practice guidance.

Members welcomed engagement with the County Council's Public Health Team and the government's decision to reduce the maximum limit on fixed odds betting terminals given the seriousness of gambling addiction.

RESOLVED (with one abstention) THAT

- 1. The proposed changes to the Statement of Principles and associated consultation responses be noted; and**
- 2. The Gambling Act Policy Statement be approved.**

10. FINAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET PROPOSALS 2019/20

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report. She advised that there had been significant changes in the Government Housing Policy during the year, most notably the abolition of the HRA debt cap. She explained that this coupled with the certainty on rent policy until 2025, would have a positive impact on HRA resources, enabling the Council to increase investment in new build and stock improvements. The Cabinet Member finance also made the following comments:

- Rents would again be reduced by 1% and the Government had confirmed that rent policy would then revert back to the previous guidelines of allowing annual increases of up to CPI + 1% per annum for the following 5 years before a further review.
- The 30 year HRA Business Plan has been updated to reflect:
 - The anticipated revenue outturn for 2018/19;
 - The current development programme for the period from April 2019 to March 2022;
 - Contingency budgets for market acquisitions and the purchase of new affordable units on sites where Section 106 planning agreements are in place; and
 - A refreshed assessment of the 30 year "need to spend" on existing stock for both capital and revenue expenditure.
- CBH had taken a balanced approach in order to maintain existing service levels, retain the decent homes standard, continue delivery of the major windows and doors replacement, complete the new build programme, and deliver the new showers programme.
- With regards to UC, she advised that CBH were conducting a proactive campaign to provide support and information to all tenants affected by these changes.
- Significant variations within the 2018/19 revised forecast greater than £30,000 have been identified in budget monitoring reports and were summarised at 5.1 of the report.
- She explained that a new agreement for the HRA grounds maintenance work undertaken by Ubico would commence in April 2019 and that those facing an increase in charges would be protected by transitional arrangements with increases being phased in over three years.

- She reported that garage rents would be increased by 3% from April 2019 in line with the Retail Price Index.
- Significant changes to the HRA greater than £30,000 in 2019/20 as compared to the revised forecast for 2018/19 were itemised in the table at 6.5.
- Revenue contributions totalling £8,436,600 would be required to fund capital expenditure in the year, reducing revenue reserves to £1,568,100 at 31st March 2020.
- CBH had made substantial progress to modernise and transform the housing management and maintenance services delivered to tenants.
- The capital programme would require CBH to carry out procurement on behalf of the council.
- The proposed funding of the capital programme, together with a statement of balances on the major repairs reserve, was shown at Appendix 3. She advised that the main sources of funding remained the major repairs reserve and contributions from the revenue account. The Government's policy to stimulate Right to Buy had also increased the availability of capital receipts and that a proportion of those receipts were only retained by the Council if they were used to fund new affordable housing within 3 years. She reported that further borrowing would be required in 2020/21 and 2021/22.
- She confirmed that 1 in 10 homes in Cheltenham were managed by CBH and they also provided a multitude of other services including advice for people dealing with benefits and money issues and support for people looking to find work and training opportunities.

The Cabinet Member Finance thanked all of CBH's finance team for ensuring that despite the challenges they faced, they still delivered the same level of service to tenants. She reiterated that the budget provides additional resources to support a significant increase in the pace and scale of new supply within the HRA and complements the resources also made available to CBH through the Housing Investment Plan to deliver new market rented units.

In the debate that followed, Members made the following comments:

- CBH provided an exemplary service and Members had huge confidence in both how they build houses and invest money.
- Of note was the fact that 99% of all emergency, urgent and routine repairs were completed on target, with 93% being resolved on the first visit. Some Members highlighted that you wouldn't get the same level of service in many private and social housing service providers.
- There was inevitably a need to invest in more housing and Members agreed that they had a great housing provider to do that.
- The Cabinet Member housing wished to place on record his thanks to all the staff at CBH for the service they provide.
- The Cabinet Member housing confirmed that each spend in the £100 million allocated for future works would come via the governance arrangements as set out in the report on a case by case basis.

RESOLVED (unanimously) THAT

- a) the revised HRA forecast for 2018/19 be noted.**

- b) the HRA budget proposals for 2019/20 (shown at Appendix 2) be approved including a proposed rent decrease of 1% and changes to other rents and charges as detailed within the report.**
- c) the proposed HRA capital programme for 2019/20 as shown at Appendix 3 be approved.**

For (32) Atherstone, Babbage, Baker, Britter, Brownsteen, Clucas, Collins, Cooke, Dobie, Fisher, Flynn, Harman, Hay, Hegenbarth, Hobley, Horwood, Jeffries, Jordan, Mason, Oliver, Parsons, Payne, Savage, Seacome, Stafford, Stennett, Sudbury, Wheeler, Whyborn, Wilkinson, Williams, Willingham

11. FINAL GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2019/20 (INCLUDING SECTION 25)

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report which summarized the revised budget for 2018/19 and the Cabinet's final budget proposals and pay policy statement for 2019/20. Her budget statement is attached in full to these minutes.

The budget was seconded by Councillor Jordan.

The following questions were then raised by Members and responses given:

- Cheltenham Community Lottery-the Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles explained that the council had been receiving advice on this from Aylesbury council and there were now 60 councils nationwide operating a lottery. A technical report on this would be submitted to Cabinet on 5 March setting out how this would operate. The estimate was that it could raise between £90- £100k a year and this would be used for strictly local charitable purposes. The proposal for next year would be for any money raised to be allocated to No Child Left Behind.
- Budget support reserve-confirmation was received from the Cabinet Member Finance that the total use of this reserve in the proposed budget amounted to £256k. In terms of plans to build the reserve back up again she confirmed that the strategy was to put all windfall into this reserve and this practice would continue until the government had announced its decision on business rates retention.
- Planned maintenance budget –the Cabinet Member confirmed that this was a rolling programme with works allocated in terms of priority.

Group Leaders were invited to address Council.

Councillor Harman, Conservative group leader thanked the Cabinet Member Finance and all officers for their significant contributions in preparing the budget proposals. He also thanked Paul Jones in his role as S151 Officer for his assistance in working through the conservative group amendments.

He wished to table the following two amendments as laid out below.

Amendment 1

CAPITAL & ONE-OFF

- Reallocate Boots Corner reserve. Save £1.8m.
- Invest in repaving the High St. Cost £1.5m contribution.
- Invest in anti-Loan Sharking campaign with Gloucestershire Credit Union. Cost £10k.
- Balance to capital reserve

REVENUE

- Move to 4-yearly elections. Save £35k pa.
- Reduce number of Cllrs to 30. Save £55k pa.
- Additional recycle bring site collections at peak times of year. Cost £10k pa.
- Balance and any temporary timing differences to budget reserve shortfall, with intention of using contribution toward part funding future weekly recycling service. £80k pa.

Amendment 2

- Town Centre Bus/Coach Station
- Cycling hub
- Additional blue badge disabled parking
- Fully pedestrianise High St.
- Initial project investigation & planning work. Funded by £250k from Boots Corner reserve.

Speaking to amendment one Cllr Harman highlighted the plight of those vulnerable to loan sharks and believed the £10k one-off funding proposed would, together with the monies allocated by the County Council, assist the Credit Union in providing financial advice to those in difficulties. He then referred to the council's bring sites being overwhelmed particularly over holiday periods which could be addressed via additional collections at a proposed £10k. He felt that by reducing the cost of democracy i.e reducing the number of Councillors and having four yearly elections would drive efficiencies and signal to the public that Councillors were prepared to change.

Referring to amendment two Councillor Harman felt it was important to look at the needs of the town with more sustainable transport and an expansion of current park and ride facilities. This was particularly relevant given the indirect link to junction 10 and the bid in to central government. The proposal to fund

exploratory work up to £250k with regard to further investment in the town centre in terms of central bus/coach station and a cycling hub would start the process.

The Mayor invited the Leader of the PAB group to address Council. Councillor Stennett wished to thank both the Cabinet Member Finance for her statement and officers for their work in bringing forward this budget at a time of constraint.

Council adjourned from 3.55-4.25 pm.

Councillor Harman formally proposed the amendments. The amendments were seconded by Councillor Babbage. In seconding the amendments Councillor Babbage said that the focus was on investing in the High Street by making funds available now to start improvements.

He highlighted that whilst the amount of money being proposed for investing in an anti-loan sharking campaign with Gloucestershire Credit Union was small this would effectively match the funding from GCC.

The other element he wished to highlight was the additional recycling at bring sites since at peak times of year, such as Christmas and bank holidays. Additional collections were required to greatly improve the situation.

Responding to the first amendment the Leader said his group could not support it. Firstly the council had only recently debated Boots corner and had given a firm indication to progress it. It would therefore be improper to remove the funding. If Boots Corner was confirmed as a permanent scheme it was essential that the council properly invested in that area of the High Street and the High Street as a whole. That was why it would look at achieving this collectively with the County Council.

In terms of supporting the anti-loan sharking campaign he referred to the fact that the Gloucestershire Credit Union had received an allocation from the Community Pride fund in September 2018. The Cabinet Member Finance stated that she had invited the union to a meeting but this had not been progressed on their side. Whilst he was sympathetic to its cause it was not appropriate at this stage since no information had been supplied as to how this funding had been spent. CBH was already involved in this area.

The Leader confirmed that the group did not favour four yearly elections nor reducing the number of councillors as this would represent a false saving. In any event, reducing the number of councillors to save money could only be as a result of a full local government boundary commission review.

The Leader recognised that recycling bring sites had been an issue at some peak times due to shortages of Ubico qualified drivers with the focus being to complete household collections as a priority. To address this the council was currently examining reducing garden waste collections for two weeks after Christmas in order for Ubico to have capacity to address such issues.

The following comments were made on the amendment:

- Some Members felt that reducing the number of councillors to 30 would increase workload of existing ward Members which would then make becoming a councillor more inaccessible in terms of time commitment involved and preclude, for example, those working full time and with young families. Having two ward members also provided contingency. Having a diverse council was important but by reducing the number of councillors this would make it harder to achieve. Companionship in the ward, fill in gaps other commitments was important.
- It was important to recognise that the funding concerned was specifically allocated to improve the quality of the public realm in the High Street which was separate to the Boots Corner issue.

Councillor Harman referred back to a meeting he had held with the credit union who felt that they did not have enough provision for the need in Cheltenham. Aggressive marketing companies existed and the situation was complex for those who were exposed to this such as those with gambling addictions.

In summing up Councillor Harman emphasised that his group had a different set of priorities for the High Street. There was a log jam over Boots Corner when really there were other challenges to be addressed and he believed the amendment would improve the position of Cheltenham.

In response to the amendment the Cabinet Member Finance referred to the loan sharking campaign and the letter Councillors had received. She reiterated how she had offered to meet with the group and felt it would be irresponsible to consider granting them more funding whilst there was no knowledge of how the community pride funding which had been awarded had been spent. In any event CBH were actively promoting their work in targeting loan sharks.

On reducing the number of councillors she believed the impact would be significant with the increase in case work and community work. In responding to a Members' comment on the reduction in the number of County Councillors she believed that the case work of a County Councillor and a Borough Councillor was not comparable.

Upon a recorded vote amendment 1 was LOST

Voting

For (6) :Councillors Babbage, Cooke, Harman, Mason, Savage and Seacome

Against (25) :Councillors Atherstone, Baker, Britter, Brownsteen, Clucas, Collins, Dobie, Fisher, Flynn, Hay, Hegenbarth, Hobley, Jeffries, Jordan, Oliver, Parsons, Payne, Stafford, Stennett, Sudbury, Wheeler, Whyborn, Wilkinson, Williams and Willingham

Abstention (0)

Councillor Harman formally moved the second amendment. The amendment was seconded by Councillor Babbage.

In seconding amendment 2 Councillor Babbage clarified that this was separate to the Boots Corner trial but funding from the Boots Corner reserve could potentially be used to change the road layout in front of WHSmith. This amendment concerned a project to allocate funding for building a bus and coach station for Cheltenham. He referred to the commitment Gloucester had recently made to sustainable travel in this regard with its new bus station. This project would have huge benefits and include provision for a cycling hub to demonstrate Cheltenham's commitment to cycling in the town. A central bus station would also release pressure of buses on Royal Well and additionally would remove traffic away from Pittville Street as it was not ideal buses used that route through the town. This would facilitate the full pedestrianisation of the High Street from the Promenade up to Bath Road to include the Rodney Road section with Winchcombe Street which would greatly benefit the street scene and add to the accessibility of the town centre by including more disabled parking bays.

The amendment was to start off exploring options of this work by allocating up to £250k. He hoped that Members would see the merits of this proposal.

In responding to the amendment the Leader was sympathetic to issues with regard to improving the town transport system including encouraging cycling and looking at buses in the town however would not support the amendment. He stated that as part of the Boots Corner trial there had been an increase in blue badge parking and this would increase further. He was supportive of upgrading the High Street as much as possible in conjunction with the County Council but there were restrictions on what could be done. He would make sure that the individual items could be looked at as part of the review of transport around the town and town centre.

Members made the following comments on the amendment:

- It was suggested that the cycling hub could be considered at the next meeting of the cycling and walking group.
- Members recognised there was a need for a better transport network and more focus on cycling and walking but could not support the amendment in this vague format.
- The civic society had said that they would like the town to consider a fully pedestrianised High Street from Sainsburys to the Brewery and there would be a north south route to enable this to happen although the location of this was not yet known.
- The correct location of a bus station was critical.
- Whilst Members felt the ideas should be considered they did not believe that transport planning should be considered during the budget setting process nor should it be funded by moving money from the Boots Corner reserve. They referred to the Connecting Cheltenham agenda as a more appropriate place to develop the ideas.
- The cycling hub was welcomed but a Member felt this could be undertaken in association with the redevelopment of Cheltenham Spa station, since this major transport interchanges were where cycling hubs were usually located.
- Pedestrianisation of the High Street was important but this should include more investment in retail outlets in the Lower High Street which, as an area, had potential.

As proposer of the amendment Councillor Harman thanked Members for supporting the ideas proposed and was pleased that debate had been provoked. It was an embryonic idea at this stage and he would discuss with his group how this could be progressed.

The Cabinet Member Finance felt that many of the ideas in the amendment would be best examined in the framework of Connecting Cheltenham for which the Systra report was expected in the spring.

Upon a recorded vote amendment 2 was LOST

Voting

For (5) :Councillors Babbage, Cooke, Harman, Mason, Seacome

Against (24): Councillors Atherstone, Baker, Britter, Brownsteen, Clucas, Collins, Dobie, Fisher, Flynn, Hay, Hegenbarth, Hobley, Jeffries, Jordan, Oliver, Parsons, Payne, Savage, Stafford, Sudbury, Wheeler, Whyborn, Wilkinson, Williams and Willingham

Absentions (1): Councillor Stennett

In seconding the budget the Leader stated that much of what Cheltenham had been doing was an attempt to mitigate against what was happening nationally. This was particularly true on the financial side where the council had been developing innovative ways of raising extra funding. Property investments made by the council were bringing in extra income of £1 million per annum meaning 11% on council tax. Investment in Cheltenham was a significant feature of this administration, giving the example of the high street improvement works and the new crematorium and the significant £100m investment in housing. He acknowledged that this did involve taking calculated risks but it was the right thing to do. He congratulated officers and the Cabinet Member Finance on leading on this.

Members then debated the substantive motion and the following points were raised by Members and responses given:

- Members welcomed the new ways of generating income streams to avoid rationalisation of services.
- It was noted that nothing had been specifically mentioned with regards to the urban gulls despite commitment from the Cabinet Member Development and Safety. Assurance was sought that this had not been lost. The Cabinet Member Finance confirmed that this was not a budget growth item but the task group had requested £10k that was already within the budget to help alleviate the gull problem. The Cabinet Member had agreed the £10k would be allocated as and when a plan of action was brought forward.

In summing up following the debate the Cabinet Member Finance believed this was a good budget for Cheltenham working within the financial constraints. She expressed her sincere thanks to each and

every member of staff that worked for Cheltenham Borough Council and for those bodies who worked in partnership without whom the budget could not have been achieved. She paid particular thanks to the Executive Director Finance and Assets for lobbying the minister on behalf of the authority with regard to the negative impact of the revenue support grant (RSG) and changes to the new homes bonus which resulted in no changes to new homes bonus and additional transitional RSG funding.

Upon a recorded vote on the substantive motion the recommendations were CARRIED.

RESOLVED THAT

- 1. the revised budget for 2018/19 be approved.**
- 2. Having considered the budget assessment by the Section 151 Officer at Appendix 2 the following recommendations be agreed :**
- 3. the final budget proposals be approved including a proposed council tax for the services provided by Cheltenham Borough Council of £209.08 for the year 2019/20 (an increase of 2.99% or £6.07 a year for a Band D property), as detailed in paragraphs 4.18 to 4.23.**
- 4. the growth proposals be approved, including one off initiatives at Appendix 4.**
- 5. the savings / additional income totalling £1,677,600 and the budget strategy at Appendix 5 be approved.**
- 6. the use of reserves and general balances be approved and the projected level of reserves, as detailed at Appendix 6 be noted.**

- 7. It be noted that the Council will remain in the Gloucestershire business rates pool for 2019/20 (paragraphs 4.5 to 4.17).**
- 8. the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), as detailed in paragraph 5.14 be noted.**
- 9. the Pay Policy Statement for 2019/20 be approved, including the continued payment of a living wage supplement at Appendix 9.**
- 10. the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) detailed in Section 5 and Appendix 10 be approved.**
- 11. a level of supplementary estimate of £100,000 for 2019/20 as outlined in Section 13 be approved.**

Voting

For (25) : Councillors Atherstone, Baker, Britter, Brownsteen, Clucas, Collins, Dobie, Fisher, Flynn, Hay, Hegenbarth, Hobley, Jeffries, Jordan, Oliver, Parsons, Payne, Stafford, Stennett, Sudbury, Wheeler, Whyborn, Wilkinson, Williams and Willingham

Against (0)

Absentions (5): Councillors Babbage, Cooke, Harman, Mason and Seacome

12. COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report and explained that the Council was required to formally approve the total Council Tax for residents of Cheltenham, including the Council Tax requirements of the precepting organisations Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) and Gloucestershire Police.

RESOLVED (unanimously) THAT

the formal Council Tax resolution at Appendix 2 be approved and the commentary in respect of the increase in Council Tax at Paragraph 6 of Appendix 2 be noted.

For (28) Councillors Atherstone, Babbage, Baker, Britter, Brownsteen, Clucas, Cooke, Dobie, Fisher, Flynn, Harman, Hay, Hegenbarth, Jeffries, Jordan,

Mason, Oliver, Parsons, Payne, Seacome, Stafford, Stennett, Sudbury, Wheeler, Whyborn, Wilkinson, Williams, Willingham

13. NOTICES OF MOTION
Proposed by Councillor Wilkinson
Seconded by Councillor Atherstone

Motion to declare a Climate Emergency

Humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt around the world. Global temperatures have already increased by 1 degree Celsius from pre-industrial levels. Atmospheric CO₂ levels are above 400 parts per million (ppm). This far exceeds the 350 ppm deemed to be a safe level for humanity;

In order to reduce the chance of runaway Global Warming and limit the effects of Climate Breakdown, it is imperative that we as a species reduce our CO₂eq (carbon equivalent) emissions from their current 6.5 tonnes per person per year to less than 2 tonnes as soon as possible;

Individuals cannot be expected to make this reduction on their own. Society needs to change its laws, taxation, infrastructure, etc., to make low carbon living easier and the new norm;

Carbon emissions result from both production and consumption;

Cheltenham Borough Council has already shown foresight and leadership when it comes to addressing the issue of Climate Breakdown, having led on recycling issues, delivered a local plan with strong environmental policies and through promoting sustainable transport options.

Unfortunately, while current plans and actions locally are making a difference, they are not enough. The world is on track to overshoot the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit before 2050;

The IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, published last month, describes the enormous harm that a 2°C rise is likely to cause compared to a 1.5°C rise, and told us that limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities;

Councils around the world are responding by declaring a 'Climate Emergency' and committing resources to address this emergency.

Full Council believes that:

All governments (national, regional and local) have a duty to limit the negative impacts of Climate Breakdown, and local governments that recognise this should not wait for their national governments to change their policies. It is important for the residents of Cheltenham and the UK that all settlements commit to carbon neutrality as quickly as possible;

Urban areas like Cheltenham are uniquely placed to lead in reducing carbon emissions, as they are in many ways easier to decarbonise than rural areas – for example because of their capacity for heat networks and mass transit;

The consequences of global temperature rising above 1.5°C are so severe that preventing this from happening must be humanity's number one priority; and,

Bold climate action can deliver economic benefits in terms of new jobs, economic savings and market opportunities (as well as improved well-being for people worldwide).

Full Council calls on the Cabinet to:

Declare a 'Climate Emergency';

Pledge to make Cheltenham carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions;

Call on Westminster to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible;

Work with other governments (both within the UK and internationally) to determine and implement best practice methods to limit Global Warming to less than 1.5°C;

Continue to work with partners across the town, county and region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans;

Report to Full Council within six months with the actions the Council will take to address this emergency.

References:

Fossil CO2 & GHG emissions of all world countries, 2017:

<http://edgar.jrc.ec.europa.eu/overview.php?v=CO2andGHG1970-2016&dst=GHGpc>

World Resources Institute: <https://www.wri.org/blog/2018/10/8-things-you-need-know-about-ipcc-15-c-report>

The IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C:

<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/>

Including US cities Berkeley:

<https://www.theclimatemobilization.org/blog/2018/6/13/berkeley-unanimously-declares-climate-emergency> and Hoboken:

<https://www.theclimatemobilization.org/blog/2018/4/25/hoboken-resolves-to-mobilize>, and the C40 cities: <https://www.c40.org/other/deadline-2020>

Scope 1, 2 and 3 of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol explained:

<https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/faqs/services/scope-3-indirect-carbon-emissions>

Councillor Babbage firstly wished to declare a personal interest as he works for an energy company.

As proposer of the motion, Councillor Wilkinson gave an overview of the issue. He explained that each generation has a duty to improve the situation for future generations. By passing this motion which would declare a climate emergency and commit Cheltenham to becoming carbon neutral in 12 years, he hoped Cheltenham would make a small but meaningful contribution to achieving a better outlook for future generations. He stressed that as elected politicians Councillors must use everything at their disposal to make a real difference. He advised that according to UN statistics we have just 12 years to avert a climate catastrophe and as such, the situation was more stark than ever. On a global scale, vulnerable people were losing their homes, Africa was experiencing severe drought and flooding and Pacific islanders were being forced to abandon their homes, all because of the actions of the developed world. He also acknowledged that the developing world were struggling, for example in Australia, urban areas were being forced to adapt to increasing wild fires and flooding and even in the UK extreme weather had impacted on the elderly. He stressed the importance of joining with other councils to declare a climate emergency and calling on Westminster to provide the powers and resources to allow Cheltenham to make a meaningful change locally in order to make a positive contribution to the international fight.

Councillor Atherstone seconding the motion stressed the importance of investing in schemes such as a local carbon transport plan. She acknowledged that they needed to be realistic and would not be able to achieve these ambitious targets alone but needed to both collaborate with local communities and business and encourage support from GCC to address infrastructure and transport challenges. She suggested CBC consider subsidies to purchase electric vehicles, provide enticing benefits for car pooling, improve the safety on pedestrian and cycle routes, invest in paving and introduce increased park and ride facilities. She reiterated the importance of acting now in order to reduce the production and consumption of carbon emissions.

In the debate that followed, Members made the following comments:

- Members agreed that doing nothing was not an option, they acknowledged that whilst the Council were taking a number of steps to reduce their carbon footprint, they were not doing enough, and as a Council they needed to be civic leaders. Some Members felt it imperative that the Council be ambitious in its objectives, particularly given that air pollution leads to around 40,000 premature deaths a year.
- One Member questioned what the current carbon position for the town was and what measures CBC were proposing to take to become carbon neutral. Some Members were concerned that 11 years was an extremely tight timescale to become carbon neutral. Following the outcome of the Council's recent peer review, Members raised concerns about the potential money and resource implications of the initiative and queried whether the Council should just be considering their statutory responsibilities. Some Members agreed that they needed to be realistic about what CBC could achieve and thought it would be beneficial to see a plan of what was being proposed in order to deliver these objectives following conversations with the Cabinet Member Finance and the Chief Executive about the available resources.

- Members noted the impact that the heating and cooling of homes has on carbon emissions, they reasoned that by ensuring new homes were wind proof, water tight and properly insulated they could reduce the emissions. They also suggested that more research be done into the potential for using wave power and suggested further engagement with schools. They supported CBH in installing solar panels on the roofs of social and council housing.
- Members acknowledged the considerable benefits that greenspace and planting can have on carbon capture and acknowledged that a lot could be achieved by simply changing the way we do things. For example, by planting more trees and using perennial plants in flower beds.
- Members further noted the benefits of plant-based diets on the environment and suggested more plant-based food be sold at the Council's leisure facilities. Alternative suggestions included investing further in the park and ride, reassessing the Council's utility supplier and progressing the Council's move from the Municipal offices. Others suggested reviewing CBC's planning regulations and making a requirement for all industrial buildings to have solar panels.
- It was suggested that a Cabinet Member working group be set up to find ways to help introduce carbon saving measures in the Council's operations.
- One Member acknowledged that over population significantly contributes to climate change and that particularly in the developing world there needed to be more education in birth control measures.
- One Member suggested that the remit of the cycling and walking working group be extended to include all forms of sustainable travel and that the working group be used as a way of taking these ideas forward from a travel point of view.
- One Member acknowledged that there were also socio-economic issues that affect global warming, and that third world countries do not have the luxury of using alternatives to fossil fuels. They noted that emerging nations want the same living standards as the developed world and will inevitably burn fossil fuels in order to get there. As such, they stressed the importance of lobbying the government to get the rest of the world to take it more seriously.
- It was noted that Members should be aware of the unattended consequences of such initiatives, for example, the UK had reduced its carbon footprint in terms of electricity production but this had pushed electric prices up and caused lots of business to relocate overseas.
- The Leader was sympathetic to the case being made and agreed that Cabinet would look at what needed to be done in order to achieve the objectives as set out in the motion, he advised that they would bring a report back to Council in 6 months time.

- Councillor Wilkinson thanked Members for their comments and reiterated the importance of being ambitious in their targets and emphasised the importance of calling on Westminster to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible.

The motion was unanimously passed.

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

None.

15. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 -EXEMPT INFORMATION RESOLVED THAT

“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)

16. A PROPERTY MATTER

The Leader introduced the report on the property matter in the absence of the Cabinet Member Development and Safety.

Members asked questions which were answered by the Leader and the Managing Director Place and Growth and then debated the report in full.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

To adopt the recommendations.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

1. That a budget allocation of £44,000,000 be approved to be funded via prudential borrowing, for the purchase of land that forms part of the allocated land as set out in the JCS located at Fiddlers Green. This will include provisions for :
 - i) £40,000,000 for the purchase of the land, including fees/charges etc
 - ii) £1,000,000 to fund project management procurement of professional services including legal, planning and real estate and the procurement of a master developer as well as other related activities to support the delivery and development of the project

- iii) £3,000,000 for potential enabling works or infrastructure costs if required.
- 2. That it be noted that under the authority granted by Council on 23 July 2018 for the Appropriate Officer to spend against the programme budget, the Managing Director Place and Growth, will undertake the necessary due diligence and financial assessment and modelling and prepare a report for Cabinet setting out the case for purchase prior to the exchange of contracts, or at a relevant point as appropriate.

On behalf of the Cabinet Member Development and Safety the Leader introduced the report. He made reference to the pre-Council briefing Members had received and the decision made by Council on 23 July 2018 to approve the allocation of £250k towards the creation of a multi-disciplinary team to consider how to maximise the economic and social benefit for Cheltenham and the wider region by realising the growth potential of the cyber industry as a commercial anchor for the West Cheltenham urban extension. The Leader explained that the council had some concerns regarding the speed of progress and vision of the existing promoter of the site. West Cheltenham was key for the town and a vital site for the future. However, he stressed that the process of acquiring a strategically important site was not risk free. This represented a massive opportunity for the benefit of the town as a whole. Council approval was now being sought to authorise a budget for the purchase of land at West Cheltenham and the progression of the programme to bring forward a comprehensive development of the wider strategic allocation including these land interests. The actual purchase would be progressed only following Cabinet approval of a report informed by detailed due diligence, financial modelling and risk analysis. Approval by Council was therefore being sought on the following:

- i) Purchase price of £40 million for the purchase of the land including fees and charges etc.
- ii) £1 million to fund project management procurement of professional services including legal, planning and real estate and the

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Draft minutes to be approved at the next meeting on Monday, 25 March 2019.

procurement of a master developer as well as other related activities to support the delivery and development of the project

iii) £3million for potential enabling works or infrastructure costs if required.

The Leader reminded Members that initial access to the cyber park/employment

land would be provided through Growth Deal 3 which had an allocation of £22million.

He wished to put on record his thanks to all officers involved. There was much

more work to do and the acquisition was subject to an ongoing due diligence

exercise relating to finance, planning and development considerations and risk

analysis. When complete a further report would be presented to Cabinet to

proceed with the purchase.

The following questions were raised by Members and responses given:

☐ Interest cost of holding land –Members were referred to paragraph 2.17 of the report by the Executive Director Finance and Assets. As the Council was purchasing land which was not considered to depreciate there was as a consequence no requirement at this stage to make statutory Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) for debt repayment. Therefore the council's exposure to cost at this stage was cost of carry for interest payments. There was a mid-point range of 1% to service the debt and 0.3 % uplift for prudence on current interest rates.

☐ Given the motion passed earlier in the meeting would future properties to be built or funded by the authority be carbon neutral/sustainable - the Leader explained that the motion which had been passed was a wish for Cheltenham to become carbon neutral but did not represent a target for Cheltenham as a whole.

☐ How would sustainable be defined-the Leader acknowledged that this was an important point and explained that this would be outlined in the report coming forward by defining explicitly what elements were included in the definition.

☐ Would the infrastructure be put in place first?-The Managing Director Place and Growth explained that £22million had been secured for the cyberpark. This GD3 fund, was in the process of being implemented and would fund highway improvements for the cyber park. There would be a planning requirement for necessary infrastructure in place prior to commencement.

In the debate that ensued the following comments were made by Members and

responses provided by officers:

☐ Members welcomed the fact that the council had the opportunity to influence a major development and this should not be missed.

☐ Members recognised the significant risks highlighted in the report and by officers in their presentations, but suggested that the risks of not doing it were far greater.

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GCHQ are a very important employer to Cheltenham and the wider region. CBC has an opportunity to help support and develop their future

as part of the economy

□ Concern was expressed with regard to traffic gridlock at the end of Telstar Way to junction 11 and it was questioned whether the issues, which were of great significance to residents of West Cheltenham, were understood. The right infrastructure to facilitate the development was vital. In response the Leader explained that Growth Deal 3 would address the issue at the end of the Golden Valley. He hoped that the likelihood of receiving government support for junction 10 was high given the cyberpark and the location within one of the most deprived wards of the town.

□ The Leader highlighted that it was essential that the whole of West Cheltenham benefitted otherwise the project would deem to have failed. This represented one of the single most important things the Council had undertaken.

□ Scope existed to promote the delivery of the Cheltenham West Regeneration Project-(CBH led) if the housing land identified were purchased along with the employment land.-

□ Timeline following Council agreement- The MD Place and Growth explained that there were a number of delivery related risks which had yet to be ascertained. Generally speaking the council would complete on the purchase then there would be an overall planning brief and procurement exercise to select development / investment partners. The priority if to progress the first cluster of buildings / hub around the Cyber Innovation Centre. Challenges regarding housing were higher as these were relevant to junction 10 for which the outcome was expected in June/July, thus the risks relating to this aspects greater. Whilst the planning application was progressed procurement of a joint venture partner would be sought (twinned tracked). He estimated therefore that work could commence 18 months-2 years hence. He reiterated that there were currently a lot of unknowns, and members needed to be aware of this as a risk of purchasing land without planning consent. However, in any event the aim would still be to deliver housing around the innovation centre.

□ John Griffiths highlighted to Members that the most pressing issue was to meet the needs of GCHQ by accommodating additional space for them. Timescales were already a cause of concern for them last summer therefore there was an urgency to those conversations. Whilst it was important to put the council in the strongest possible position to deliver to important timescales this urgency had to be recognised.

□ With regards to the price being paid for the land, members were advised that the overall figure both housing and commercial land and reflected the fact that CBC are seeking to acquire this land, when not being marketed . As this was an 'off-market' sale, the council is paying what is considered to be a full market value. The inclusion of the housing land

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has increased the overall cost, however does provide greater scope and covers the two corners of the strategic allocation.

□ When asked what risks there were to investment in light of Brexit the MD Place and Growth emphasised that the cyber industry was the main driver behind this project and there was no doubt that given the current instability internationally (surrounding Brexit) cyber security is likely to be

an industry whose development and growth would be more robust in uncertain times. For CBC investment that supported this growth with GCHQ as a potential anchor offered some investment confidence as GCHQ represent the kite mark for standards in this industry. In terms of the Brexit impact on housing he stated that there remained a significant housing requirement in Gloucestershire. Cheltenham through its housing strategy was committed long term and this opportunity could be a game changer for the town and one which the council could control. However, seeking to deliver such ambitions comes with risk.

In summing up the Leader reiterated that this represented a unique investment

opportunity for Cheltenham.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

1. That a budget allocation of £44,000,000 be approved to be funded via prudential borrowing, for the purchase of land that forms part of the allocated land as set out in the JCS located at Fiddlers Green.

This will include provisions for :

i) £40,000,000 for the purchase of the land, including fees/charges etc

ii) £1,000,000 to fund project management procurement of professional services including legal, planning and real estate and the procurement of a master developer as well as other related activities to support the delivery and development of the project

iii) £3,000,000 for potential enabling works or infrastructure costs if required.

2. That it be noted that under the authority granted by Council on 23 July 2018 for the Appropriate Officer to spend against the programme budget, the Managing Director Place and Growth, will undertake the necessary due diligence and financial assessment and modelling and prepare a report for Cabinet setting out the case for purchase prior to the exchange of contracts, or at a relevant point as appropriate.

Bernard Fisher
Chairman

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Mayor, Members

I have great pleasure in presenting the revised general fund budget for 2018/19 and the final budget proposals for 2019/20.

For some years now, we have been working to a Medium Term Financial Strategy that sets out our financial situation over a rolling five-year period. Planning for several years at a time became even more important, when the Government announced that it was going to phase out the revenue support grant over four years and give councils a bigger share of the income from business rates.

Funding Settlement

As members will recall this council took up the four year settlement funding offer in order to bring some guaranteed stability of at least a fixed amount for those years albeit decreasing to zero in 2019/20.

The final financial settlement, was announced on the 29th January 2019, there were some changes made from the draft budget proposals, the most significant changes and announcements proposed in the settlement were:

- The announcement that Gloucestershire was not successful in its application to pilot 75% Business Rates Retention (BRR) in 2019/20;
- No changes in the way that the New Homes Bonus (NHB) is calculated and the baseline target will remain at 0.4%. This equates to an additional £228,797 NHB in 2019/20;
- The distribution of £180m business rates retention levy pro-rata to the 2013/14 Settlement Funding Assessment. This equates to an additional £42,893 in 2019/20;
- An upward adjustment to the 2017/18 tariff for business rates revaluation which resulted in a reduction in retained business rates of £81k;
- Fair Funding Review and Retained Business Rates consultations on new funding methodology from 2020/21 which closes on 21st February 2019;
- Confirmation to the removal of 'negative Revenue Support Grant (RSG)' in 2019/20.

Additional pressures outlined in Appendix 4 have been funded by the additional funding, which will result in a revised net budget requirement of £14.831m as detailed in Appendix 3.

Business rates

The redistribution of business rates income, has become an important part of our lives, to the extent that business rates are a major source of income,

The idea that local councils can share more fully in the proceeds of business rates is very attractive, especially for towns like Cheltenham which are likely to see substantial economic growth over the next few years not least the new West Cheltenham development.

But it must aware the devolution of business rates income to local authorities has introduced a very large element of risk into council finances that wasn't there before.

I am disappointed to say that Gloucestershire was not successful in its bid to become a pilot area again this year for the new 75% retention rate, it is interesting to note that government decided to award this to other authorities including Northamptonshire, Somerset, Worcestershire and Buckinghamshire. (note to self all struggling authorities)

Under the current pilot arrangement which ends on the 31st March this year, 100% of growth is shared locally, with 30% going to the District's, 50% to the County Council and 20% to the Strategic Economic Development Fund. Current projections suggest that the overall pilot gain in 2018/19 is now circa £14m. After allowing for the creation of a £1.4m 'risk reserve', the benefit to Cheltenham Borough Council is estimated to be circa £640k and Council approved that this would be ring-fenced to fund one-off economic growth initiatives specific to Cheltenham.

The move to local business rates retention is still I believe a positive one albeit we have faced a series of obstacles in trying to make it a success. Page 34 significant levels of risk due to the volume of outstanding business rates appeals which are processed by the Valuation Office. Where appeals are successful, refunds of business rates may be repayable back to the 2010/11 financial year, which reduces the business rates yield in the year in which the refund is made. The Council has made provision for its share of the cost of outstanding appeals in its financial statements. The level of provision has been reviewed as part of the preparation of the business rates estimates for 2019/20.

New Homes Bonus

If I could turn to the new homes bonus, this year there are no changes in the way that the New Homes Bonus is calculated and the baseline target will remain at 0.4%.

There have long been concerns as to the sustainability of this funding stream, and in 2017/18 the Government changed the calculation for the award of the grant. Prior to 2017/18 the grant comprised six annual tranches, reducing to five in 2017/18 and four thereafter. A baseline of 0.4% housing growth was introduced under which no New Homes Bonus grant is paid.

MHCLG recently consulted on further proposed changes to the current New Homes Bonus scheme which is intended to incentivise house building within local authority boundaries and may include an increase in the baseline target although the scheme has remained unchanged in 2019/20.

It is likely that further changes will be implemented post 2020 although NHB is not currently included as an element of the FFR. It is this Council's belief that NHB in its current format, does not equate to the needs of the authority and the Council will continue to lobby on this front.

Council Tax

I believe we have a serious responsibility to protect services not just in 2019/20 but beyond. There is no doubt that any additional council tax income, will strengthen the council's finances substantially and reduce our dependence on reserves. It will directly benefit Cheltenham residents by reducing the budget gap we have to bridge in future years and thereby protecting services from cuts.

With increased pressure for the cap on public sector pay to be lifted and the need for inward investment in the Borough through specific events and marketing of the Town, the Cabinet has had to consider what level of increase in council tax is sustainable, without creating an increased risk of service cuts and/or larger tax increases in the future.

Therefore, the Cabinet is proposing a 2.99% increase in council tax in 2019/20 ; an increase of £6.07 for the year for a Band D property.

I am not minimising the significance of any tax increase, but we need to keep this in perspective. The County Council and the Police tax increase this year is far greater than we are proposing. I think our proposed 18 pence a week increase is a price people will be prepared to pay for their services and their quality of life.

It is very clear that the Government in future financial settlements will assume we have made this increase. Therefore not doing it will affect our funding for years to come.

The uncertainty surrounding the future of New Homes Bonus, the fair funding review and the reset in the business rates post 2020 which represents a significant proportion of our income, places a greater reliance on council tax as our main source of income.

Collection fund In accordance with the Local Authorities Funds (England) Regulations 1992, the Council has to declare a surplus or deficit on the collection fund by 15th January and notify major preceptors accordingly. This Council's share of the collection fund surplus for 2018/19 is £110,500 which will be credited to the General Fund in 2019/20. Collection fund surpluses arise from higher than anticipated rates of collection of the council tax collection rates, my thanks to the team for all their efforts.

Roundup

In the current exceptionally difficult national funding situation, the Cabinet's overriding financial strategy has been, and is, to drive down the Council's net costs via a commercial mindset. This

Cabinet's aim is to hold down council tax as far as possible, while also protecting frontline services, identify savings through reorganization of service delivery or raising additional income, an immensely challenging task in the present climate.

How have we done that,

This budget has been prepared under a general philosophy of no growth,

Firstly a major focus for the longer term is closing the gap as set out in the MTFS, The MTFS indicates broadly how the Council will close the projected funding gap over the period 2019/20 to 2022/23. In future years, it includes targets rather than necessarily specific worked up projections of cost savings and additional income to allow the Executive leads autonomy and flexibility. Engaging with stakeholders will be crucial when it comes to developing a sense of ownership in local decision-making and service delivery. Working with stakeholders will allow the council to fine tune services based on actual needs. Holding adequate information upon which to base the allocation of scarce resources is essential to address under-met needs.

The commercial strategy was adopted by Full Council in February 2018 with the vision "to become an enterprising and commercially focused Council which people are proud to work for and which others want to work with. We will use our assets, skills and infrastructure to shape and improve public services and enable economic growth in the Borough. We shall generate significant levels of new income for the Council working towards the objective of enabling it to become financially sustainable by the financial year 2021/22".

it includes the relocation strategy, sharing management and staff costs where possible, commercial asset rationalization which includes the depot. The MTFS indicates broadly how the Council will close the projected funding gap over the period 2019/20 to 2022/23. It is based on the building blocks of place and economic growth; organizational change; and finance and assets. The detailed schedule of target savings is provided in greater detail within Appendix 5.

The cabinet believes that the longer term approach to closing the funding gap is fundamentally through economic growth and investment together with the effective use of our assets to this end cabinet worked with the executive finance officer and introduced last year a commercial strategy which sits alongside the MTFS, in addition resources will be geared towards supporting and delivering major benefits to the Town in North West and West Cheltenham.

I am also proposing that we make full use of the New Homes Bonus of £1.468 million to support this revenue budget,

A budget support reserve was created in 2015 for the specific purpose of providing more resilience, should short term challenges be faced, today my proposal is to draw on this reserve, having been successful with some major redevelopments that in the long term will benefit our Towns economy enormously Because these are short term challenges the use of £256 thousand of this reserve I would suggest is preferable to cuts in service.

Given the expectations on councils to make a significant contribution to reducing the national budget deficit, this Council faces a significantly more challenging financial position in the early years of the MTFS. The latest projections indicate a gap of £2.787m for the period 2020/21 to 2022/23, primarily as a result of the baseline funding allocation reset proposed in 2020 whereby the growth generated from business rates since 2013/14 will be redistributed based on need under the fair funding review.

This council is aspirational and horizon scanning in the approach it takes to delivering its services, and supporting those it works with in partnership to ensure Cheltenham is a vibrant and desirable place to live, work and invest.

However, recognising the change in the council's short to medium term finances has required an alternative approach to be taken over the next ~~four financial~~ **Page 36** years with a focus on delivering services within approved budgets and enhancing the services to ensure it is able to meet any unforeseen costs in the future and also mitigate known risks and forecast cost pressures, particularly those arising from changes in the way local government is financed post 2019/20.

Capital programme

The proposed capital programme for the period 2018/19 to 2020/21 is at Appendix 7.

The strategy for the use of the council's capital resources is led by our corporate priorities. The existing programme includes sums for infrastructure investment to be funded from capital receipts and the purchase of new vehicles through Ubico. It also includes the allocations agreed by the Council in April 2015 to facilitate the redevelopment to the Town Hall and the Crematorium, and an earmarked contribution to public realm works within the Town Centre.

In addition the capital programme sets aside an allocation for enhancing our property portfolio with the aims of delivering economic growth and regeneration.

Supporting the artistic, heritage and cultural life of the town as economic drivers will remain a core focus, it all helps to show that Cheltenham is a town with a vision, backed up with a new Place Strategy.

Investing in our services that contribute to our income is imperative, the proposals for the new crematorium is one example, of a commitment to provide a facility, that is fit for purpose to deliver a first class service to our residents and the businesses that use it.

Pay Policy

Before I conclude, Section 38 of the Localism Act requires local authorities to produce pay policy statements which should include the authority's policy on pay dispersion, we are also required on an annual basis to reaffirm our support for the Living Wage and for paying the supplements necessary to implement it. I am proposing that we do so now in these budget resolutions.

Mayor, may I pause here to reflect on where we have come from, got to and a plan for the future.

Since 2010, CBC like other councils has faced unprecedented fiscal challenges with:

- A double-dip recession
- Stunted economic growth
- Government cuts in funding
- Rising demand for services, with increased costs
- Welfare reform and stagnant wage growth

The negative experience of CBC's Icelandic Bank investments and double dip recession meant the financial environment was challenging; core funding was cut by £5.7m, from £8.8m to £3.1m, with further reductions through to 2019/20.

In addition, during 2013/14, £11m investments performed at 0.4% return which was poor; the base rate was 0.5%.

All of those events could have seen this authority shrink to providing the very bare minimum of services to the residents of our Town, this administration did not consider that was an acceptable option, and I believe the majority of members would agree.

How could we change for the future ?

Our finance and assets department initiated an audit of assets, worked with Grant Thornton and treasury advisers to develop a sound roadmap that fostered financial structuring and investment options planning. Options were defined into three categories: continuing as we are, take a commercial approach, or seek greater collaboration to secure the council's future.

To continue as we were would mean CBC would have had to rely heavily on fees and charges, further streamlining, or significant service cuts, including reducing our staff and skills base. we were keen to explore alternatives delivering growth, income and revenue streams, together with tangible

improvements. A bold shift to collaboration and commercialisation was needed to deliver expectations.

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I would like to highlight some of the changes and outcomes achieved

Treasury Management

With investment and interest rates remaining low in the medium-term, CBC demonstrated skilled treasury management and cash-flow performance. Returns from traditional fixed-term cash deposits are minimal, so growth was met through diversification into alternative investment sources, such as pooled property funds, multi-asset funds, including bond and equity markets, which alongside LGPS up-front payments has generated half a million in additional revenue.

Debt restructuring and minimum revenue provision reviews have enabled CBC to make significant savings on debt repayments. For example, in 2018 CBC arranged 38 loans, receiving £41.867m from the Public Works Loan Board to finance four commercial property acquisitions. In the business case, the annuity loans rate to borrow funds over 40yrs was 2.81% and on the day the loans were agreed the annuity rate stood at 2.78%. However, a decision was made to take out a basket of maturity loans from 3yrs to 40yrs, resulting in interest savings of £937k against taking out a 40yr annuity loan and achieving an average borrowing rate of 2.57%.

Our commissioned services have made significant savings for this authority

Since 2011/12 to date Ubico contributions on waste and recycling is over 1 million

The Cheltenham Trust since 2013/14 savings stand at £832,300

Go shared services now known as Publica have since 2012 given savings of £433,900

Turning to our shared services

South West Audit Partnership delivered savings of £73,400

One Legal savings of £113,500

Investments in our Public realm in partnership with the County Council & European Structural & investment fund supported by the BID and Development Taskforce brought in almost 1 million pounds to support the High Street revitalization.

February 2018 saw the introduction of our commercial strategy that is at the heart of our mindset to be more commercially focused and financially sustainable, CBC is in the top 10 local authority property acquisitions ratings for 2018 and its net income from its property investment portfolio is £1.7m per annum, projected to rise to £2m by 2022/23 all of it invested in Cheltenham.

So turning to the future with just a small bite of things to come,

Our commercial journey continues, with initiatives including:

- Making Cheltenham the 'Cyber Capital' of the UK, through the creation of the UK's first cyber park.
- Building three new industrial units to meet demand with projected net yields of 6%.
- Community Lottery: launching 2019.
- Options review for new depot provision - current site is at saturation point, so it's key to ensure waste and recycling services continue efficiently into the future. Current site re-development has a potential yield of 5%-6%.
- Working with Professor Paul Courtney from the University of Gloucestershire, to optimise social value from procurement spend.

• A new £8.5m crematorium, provided through borrowing on an 'invest to save' basis opening on-time and on-budget in March 2019; investment underpinning a long term revenue stream and valued local service.

• Car parking – strategic consultancy review by Ove Arup Ltd completed in 2017, resulting in tariff restructuring to help secure objectives, such as modal travel shift and investment in infrastructure. This has seen CBC off-street parking income rise by £680k (17.7%) to £4.5 million in 2018, whilst bus travel is up by 5,000 journeys per week (4%) against a national average decline of 2%.

• Vacant Municipal Offices space, available for small business lets from August 2019.

• Leading Public Sector commercial consultant, David Elverson providing training, mentoring and coaching for staff, to foster new commercial initiatives to fruition through a 'bottom up solutions' approach.

• Working with our ALMO, Cheltenham Borough Homes, implement an approved £100m housing investment plan, creating affordable homes and support wider regeneration. National press coverage - Inside Housing.

• Expansion of 'Marketing Cheltenham' in 2019 (established in 2017), a growing service led by CBC, Cheltenham BID and Cheltenham Tourism Partnership to further boost the visitor economy.

The Minster Box Park provision creative arts small business hub.

In summary Mayor I believe that rather than have cuts we need to be brave and bold to achieve what I have just said, this is a –

balanced budget, despite a huge cut in Government grant.

The local economy strengthened.

Car parks Invested in

Front line services protected

More efficiency savings.

Skilled Treasury Management,

Commercial investment

I have heard it said from the other side of the chamber that this administration has no vision for Cheltenham whilst the opposition may say this, there is never a suggestion of meaningful alternatives, I believe I have set out today that we very much do have a vision and have led the way.

We as Liberal Democrats have aspirations for the long-term future of Cheltenham, a festival spa town, to deliver and maintain the very best quality of life for its people. Cheltenham was named by the Telegraph as the best place to raise a family in the UK and the New York Times dubbed it as a destination enjoying cultural renaissance. CBC prides itself as being the custodian and provider of local services, enabling the town to continue developing its compelling marketplace offer.

"Success is not final there is always more to do, caution leads to mediocrity, an appetite for risk allows for growth: it is the courage to continue that counts."

Mayor, I have pleasure in proposing the general fund revenue & capital budget for 2019/20