



## Notice of a meeting of Cabinet

**Tuesday, 7 July 2020  
6.00 pm**

**Virtual WEBEX video conference via YouTube -  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/cheltenhamborough>**

<b>Membership</b>	
<b>Councillors:</b>	Steve Jordan, Flo Clucas, Chris Coleman, Rowena Hay, Alex Hegenbarth, Peter Jeffries and Andrew McKinlay

## Agenda

<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</b> Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2020.	(Pages 3 - 10)
<b>4.</b>	<b>PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS</b> These must be received no later than 12 noon on Wednesday 1 July 2020	
	<b>SECTION 2 :THE COUNCIL</b> <i>There are no matters referred to the Cabinet by the Council on this occasion</i>	
	<b>SECTION 3 : OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b> <i>There are no matters referred to the Cabinet by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this occasion</i>	
	<b>SECTION 4 : OTHER COMMITTEES</b> <i>There are no matters referred to the Cabinet by other Committees on this occasion</i>	
	<b>SECTION 5 : REPORTS FROM CABINET MEMBERS AND/OR OFFICERS</b>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>SOCIAL VALUE POLICY</b> Report of the Leader of the Council	(Pages 11 - 26)

6.		<b>PAYMENT ACCESS REVIEW - THE FUTURE</b> Report of the Cabinet Member Corporate Services	(Pages 27 - 44)
7.		<b>HOUSING &amp; HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2018-23 - ACTION PLAN UPDATE 2020</b> Report of the Cabinet Member Housing	(Pages 45 - 70)
8.		<b>COVID-19 RECOVERY STRATEGY</b> Report of the Chief Executive	(Pages 71 - 94)
9.		<b>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - ACQUISITION OF 320 SWINDON ROAD SITE</b> Report of the Cabinet Member Housing	(Pages 95 - 120)
10.		<b>PARTITION SCREENS IN LICENSED VEHICLES</b> Report of the Cabinet Member Development and Safety	
		<b>SECTION 6 : BRIEFING SESSION</b> • Leader and Cabinet Members	
11.		<b>BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS</b>	
		<b>SECTION 7 : DECISIONS OF CABINET MEMBERS</b> Member decisions taken since the last Cabinet meeting	
		<b>SECTION 8 : ANY OTHER ITEM(S) THAT THE LEADER DETERMINES TO BE URGENT AND REQUIRES A DECISION</b>	

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### Cabinet

**Tuesday, 9th June, 2020**  
**6.00 - 6.45 pm**

Attendees	
<b>Councillors:</b>	Steve Jordan (Leader of the Council), Flo Clucas (Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles), Chris Coleman (Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment), Rowena Hay (Cabinet Member Finance), Alex Hegenbarth (Cabinet Member Corporate Services), Peter Jeffries (Cabinet Member Housing) and Andrew McKinlay (Cabinet Member Development and Safety)
<b>Also in attendance:</b>	Gareth Edmundson, Sarah Farooqi, Harry Mayo, Beverly Thomas and Paul Jones

### Minutes

1. **APOLOGIES**  
There were none.
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
There were none.
3. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**  
The minutes of the meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020 were unanimously approved and signed as the correct record.
4. **PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**  
There were none.
5. **ALLOCATION OF HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION FUNDING**  
The Cabinet Member Housing presented the report, which set out how the council intended to allocate the homelessness prevention funding of £107,284 received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. He explained that changes to the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2008 significantly changed how the council undertook its work in this area. He emphasised the benefits of collaborative working to benefit the whole county, since homelessness and rough sleeping were not Cheltenham-specific issues. He noted that £44,000 had been allocated to the recruitment of a specialist Domestic Abuse Officer, while residual funding would assist with outreach service across the county, and added that the report aimed to take into account the many Covid-19 related challenges, and allowed some flexibility to help cope with this.

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles asked for clarification regarding the domestic abuse officer position. The Cabinet Member Housing responded that it was a countywide post, but one that sits within the borough council team.

The Cabinet Member Development and Safety added that the funding was both vital and well-timed, with street homelessness expected to rise in the coming months as a consequence of the Covid-19 crisis.

The Leader of the Council added that homelessness had always been a high priority of the council, and that working in partnership with other authorities across the county was essential. The council's pre-Covid groundwork stood it in good stead, and it was able to help both those who were already homeless and those who had become homeless as a result of the crisis. He congratulated those involved, but emphasised that work needed to continue, so that those who are temporarily housed could find permanent accommodation after the crisis is over.

The Cabinet Member Housing placed on record his thanks to both council officers and Cheltenham Borough Homes, whose ongoing work to house rough sleepers had been invaluable. The council was able to temporarily house 36 rough sleepers, and as of 9<sup>th</sup> June, had found permanent accommodation for 18 of them. He added that all of these individuals continued to be supported and engaged with by the council.

### **RESOLVED THAT**

- 1. The transfer of £107,284 to Cheltenham Borough Homes' Housing Options be approved; this being a windfall MHCLG homelessness prevention funding allocation made to the council during 2019.**
- 2. The transfer of £44,000 to Cheltenham Borough Homes' Housing Options Service be approved, subject to the council receiving this funding allocation from MHCLG during 2020; this being MHCLG's funding allocation to support survivors of domestic abuse.**
- 3. The allocation of an additional £14,000 funding (to be spread over 3 years) be approved to support the recommissioning of our county-wide, jointly commissioned Assertive Outreach service for rough sleepers; and that it be noted that this funding represents the remaining unallocated element of the MHCLG's Flexible Homelessness Support Grant funding allocation to the council for 2019/20.**
- 4. Authority be delegated to the Lead Commissioner – Housing Services, in consultation with Cabinet Member – Housing, to make any changes to these spending plans, if required; noting that the indicative expenditures detailed within Appendix 2 of the report may need to be flexible, depending upon demands of the service, and particularly in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.**



5. **Authority be delegated to the Lead Commissioner – Housing Services, in consultation with Cabinet Member – Housing and Executive Director – Finance & Assets, any future allocations of MHCLG homelessness prevention funding (including the MHCLG funding allocation for 2020/21).**

**6. JOINT CORE STRATEGY AFFORDABLE HOUSING PARTNERSHIP:  
REVIEW OF PREFERRED REGISTERED PROVIDERS**

The Cabinet Member Housing presented the report, and reminded members of the council's work in leading the Affordable Housing Partnership in line with the Joint Core Strategy since 2015. He advocated a collective approach and outlined some key contextual points, including changes to Universal Credit and the Homelessness Reduction Act, which needed to be taken into account. He added that a third outcome had been added to the framework, namely to support local authorities' aims of reducing homelessness.

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles asked whether the fact that a number of the suppliers were part of the same consortium would affect the situation. The Cabinet Member Housing responded that he was aware of this and did not believe it would cause any issues.

**RESOLVED THAT:**

1. **It be noted that the Affordable Housing Partnership with Gloucester City Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council, which was set up to oversee the delivery of affordable homes across the Strategic Allocation Sites within the Joint Core Strategy area, will continue for the duration of the JCS Plan Period (currently 31<sup>st</sup> December 2031).**
2. **The Authority's review of the current list of Preferred Providers of affordable housing, which will include inviting existing Preferred Providers and other Registered Providers to bid to become a Preferred Provider across the Strategic Allocation Sites within the Joint Core Strategy area, jointly with Gloucester City Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council, be approved.**
3. **Authority be delegated to the Lead Commissioner, Housing Services to:**
  - 3.1 **evaluate and select Preferred Providers for the delivery and/or management of new affordable housing on the Strategic Allocation Sites, noting that the selection will be carried out jointly with Gloucester City and Tewkesbury Borough Councils,**
  - 3.2 **agree changes to the Terms of Reference of the partnership and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Councils and Preferred Providers (which shall take effect from November 2020) and to note that these documents shall be updated annually,**

**3.3 undertake any future reviews of the Preferred Provider arrangements within the triggers as detailed in sections 3.3 to 3.5 of this report; whilst noting that these triggers may be updated from time to time as part of the annual review of the Memorandum of Understanding.**

**7. DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS GRANTS FUND**

The Cabinet Member Finance presented the report. She thanked officers for their hard work against considerable time pressure, and emphasised the importance of responding proactively to a quickly evolving situation.

She welcomed the additional support to Cheltenham's businesses that had missed out on the first round of grants. She explained that central government had provided the council with £1,128,750, which equated to 5% of the funding allocation for the estimated number of businesses eligible for the Small Business Grants Fund and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants as of the 4<sup>th</sup> May. The 5% funding was being made available from any residual unspent balance of the initial grant allocation. Additional funding would be provided by central government, where the remaining unspent balance was insufficient for the 5% allocation. She acknowledged that at present, the government was not allocating funding above the 5%, so any grants awarded above this allocation would have to be funded by the council.

She added that as funding was limited, the actual level of grants to businesses was to be decided once applications had been received and it was known how many businesses were entitled. New burdens funding would be provided for the administrative costs of the scheme.

She clarified that the grants were to be primarily aimed at small and micro-businesses, as well as the following:

- businesses with relatively high ongoing fixed property-related costs
- businesses which could demonstrate that they had suffered a significant fall in income due to the COVID-19 crisis
- businesses which occupy property or part of a property with a rateable value, annual rent or annual mortgage payments below £51,000

She acknowledged that although the council was able to exercise some discretion when allocating the fund to support business types most relevant to the local economy, the government had prioritised the following types of businesses to be included in schemes:

- small businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces, e.g. units in industrial parks, science parks and incubators which do not have their own business rates assessment
- regular market traders with fixed building costs such as rent, who do not have their own business rates assessment

- bed & breakfasts which pay council tax instead of business rates
- charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates relief which would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief

She reported that in designing the scheme, the four councils included an additional local priority to support certain businesses in the hospitality sector which were likely to remain closed for a longer period due to the COVID-19 restrictions and were not eligible for support in the previous scheme. This additional priority group was intended to benefit many local independent local businesses, including bars, restaurants, cafes nightclubs, pubs and boutique hotels that have a rateable value of between £51,000 and £105,001.

She proposed that the following grants would be awarded to the following groups, all subject to demand:

- market traders – up to a maximum of £5,000
- bed and breakfasts – up to a maximum of £5,000
- charities – up to a maximum of £10,000
- small and micro businesses in shared office space – up to a maximum of £10,000
- Local Priority Businesses, as defined in section 7 and meeting the criteria in sections 3 and 4 of the scheme – up to a maximum of £25,000

She reminded members that funding for the grant scheme was limited, and therefore the scheme would only be open for businesses to submit applications during a short period between 9<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> June via an online application form on the Council's website. All applications were to be assessed once the window was closed. The maximum level of grant for each category of business type would then be determined based on demand, before grant payments began from the 25<sup>th</sup> June.

She emphasised the importance of working collaboratively, noting that Gloucester, Stroud and Tewkesbury district councils, Gloucestershire County Council, GFirst LEP, Cheltenham BID and the Cheltenham MP's office had all been consulted to ensure the scheme provided consistent support to priority businesses across the county.

She added that the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee had waived the right to call-in, and therefore that the application process would be made live as soon as Cabinet approved the report.

The Leader of the Council added that business grants were of great importance, and that he hoped they would help keep businesses going in a difficult time.

**RESOLVED THAT:**

1. **The Local Discretionary Business Grant Scheme in Appendix 2 be approved.**
2. **Authority be delegated to the Head of Revenues and Benefits to take decisions relating to applications made under the Local Discretionary Business Grant Scheme and to delegate authority to the Executive Director Finance and Assets, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Finance, to consider and determine any reviews requested in respect of such decisions.**

**8. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS**

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles informed members about upcoming announcements regarding Cheltenham General Hospital, as well as a recent safeguarding incident in Regent's Arcade. She also reported that the food network would meet later in the week to discuss bringing partners together to form a network that would be both effective and long-lasting. She praised support from Springbank, Charlton Park and the Big Local in particular. Cultural partners have met, and approved submission of the recovery document prepared by the council. She also reported that the council had been asked to take part in a number of international events, including a UN meeting in July regarding how Covid-19 affects sustainable development goals, and a European Business Summit on June 10<sup>th</sup>. She emphasised that these events offered an opportunity to gain international recognition for the work done in Cheltenham, and also to learn from international partners.

The Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment added to his remarks at the previous Cabinet meeting, particularly regarding green waste, recycling, parks and gardens, and the cemetery and crematorium. He emphasised that there had been no great change since then, which was good news, and thanked everybody involved for ensuring that services were still running. He reminded members that at the last Cabinet meeting, they had celebrated the opening of the household recycling centre. The centre made sure to allow only a carefully limited number of people inside at once, which had now increased in line with the relevant health and safety advice. He added that collection of bulky items had restarted on the morning of the 9<sup>th</sup> June, and thanked residents for their patience. He also updated members on the situation regarding the number of mourners permitted at the cemetery and crematorium. This had been under constant review, and he announced that they were now able to increase it to 20. He expressed sympathy for bereaved families and thanked them for the sacrifices they had made for public safety.

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services praised the work of officers under his portfolio, and added that as the council slowly moved towards a 'new normal', it needed to approach both new and old problems in the most effective way possible.

The Cabinet Member Housing echoed this, and placed on record his thanks to Cheltenham Borough Homes.

The Cabinet Member Development and Safety updated members on the situation with the West Cheltenham development. He reported that the council had recently changed planning and licensing rules to allow an easier application process for temporary structures, in order to aid recovery from the lockdown. Rules around street trading were relaxed in order to allow socially distanced operations, and applicants would find the process to be simpler and more streamlined going forward. From this month, car parking regulations were to be formally enforced again, tying in with the reopening of the retail sector. He also praised the hard work of environmental health staff, and noted that some staff were likely to be seconded to the countywide scheme for up to 18 months, as attempts to tackle Covid-19 continue.

The Leader of the Council discussed the Black Lives Matter protest in Pittville Park on the 8<sup>th</sup> June, which he welcomed as a peaceful and dignified gathering. He added that he was pleased that BLM would be debated at the full council meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> June, as it was important for the council to be constantly looking at what it can do to ensure that black lives matter. On the topic of that same council meeting, he noted his disappointment that the council would not be able to consider the Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Document. He reported that this item would be considered at the July meeting instead. He also referred to the upcoming reopening of the High Street, and suggested that this needed to be done in both an economically sensible and safety-conscious way.

The Cabinet Member Development and Safety outlined the two Cabinet Member decisions he had made since the last meeting, both pertaining to the council's taxi policy.

## 9. CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING

Decision	Cabinet Member	Date	Link
To reject the Cheltenham Taxi Drivers Association's request that, in light of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the licensed trade, the implementation date of the adopted wheelchair accessible (WAV) policy for hackney carriages be reviewed.	Development and Safety, Andrew McKinlay	21 <sup>st</sup> May 2020	<a href="https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1362">https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1362</a>
To approve the 'Partitions or screens in Hackney Carriages or Private Hire Vehicles' policy for consultation.	Development and Safety, Andrew McKinlay	1 <sup>st</sup> June 2020	<a href="https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1363">https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1363</a>

**Chairman**

## Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet – 7 July 2020

## Social Value Policy

## Report of the Leader of the Council

<b>Accountable member</b>	Leader of the Council, Cllr. Steve Jordan
<b>Accountable officer</b>	Strategy and Engagement Manager, Richard Gibson
<b>Accountable scrutiny committee</b>	All
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	All
<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Executive summary</b>	<p>The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 (the Act) provides a legal obligation on public bodies to consider how the services they commission and procure, over the thresholds provided for in the Public Contracts Regulations, might improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area</p> <p>The aim of the Act is not to alter the commissioning and procurement processes, but to ensure that, as part of these processes, councils give consideration to the wider impact of the services delivered. This also includes encouraging staff to talk to providers and the local community and users of the service to design better services, and explore finding new and innovative solutions.</p> <p>The Council spends around £23m annually on a range of services and goods. The Act provides a significant opportunity to think creatively about how the Council can secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits from this spend.</p> <p>But the Council also wants to use the social value policy to be the start of a conversation about how we use our wider processes, resources and influence to support social value in Cheltenham.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>To agree the social value policy attached as appendix 2</b>
<b>Financial implications</b>	<p><i>None as a direct result of this report. The social value policy will bring in additional resources to help the council deliver its priorities</i></p> <p><b>Contact officer: Martin Yates Business Partner Accountant Martin.Yates@publicagroup.uk 01242 264200</b></p>

<b>Legal implications</b>	<p>The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 came into force on 31 January 2013. It requires public bodies who commission services to consider how what is proposed to be procured might improve the wider social, economic and environmental well-being of the area. This duty only applies to the procurement of services above the threshold for the advertisement of the procurement across the EU. This threshold is currently £189,330. The Council's policy goes beyond the statutory duty as it covers all procurements.</p> <p>Before starting the procurement process for above threshold services contract, commissioners must think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area.</p> <p>The Government has issued procurement policy note 10/12 to its departments with advice for commissioners and procurers about the duties under this Act. Whilst not legally binding on other public bodies, it will be of use to the Authority when procuring services covered by the Act.</p> <p><b>One Legal: <a href="mailto:legalservices@tewkesbury.gov.uk">legalservices@tewkesbury.gov.uk</a></b></p>
<b>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</b>	<p>HR will work closely with the service to ensure the objectives within our CBC People Plan and values are aligned to the social value commitments, that our staff training, induction, recruitment and HR policies commit to, support and develop the culture.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Corry Ravenscroft</b>  <b>HR Business Partner</b>  <a href="mailto:Corry.Ravenscroft@publicagroup.uk">Corry.Ravenscroft@publicagroup.uk</a>  <b>07827 895624</b></p>
<b>Key risks</b>	<p>There is a risk that social value commitments will be made but not delivered upon. To mitigate this it will be important that the Council effectively monitors contracts and uses a range of tools available to secure Social Value</p>
<b>Corporate and community plan Implications</b>	<p>With the introduction of the council's new corporate plan in March 2019 and subsequent policy decisions, there is much greater clarity on CBC's most important priorities which include delivering the cyber central project, delivering the £100m housing investment plan, committing to a carbon neutral Cheltenham by 2030 and tackling child poverty.</p> <p>Our social value policy will enable the council to both maximise social, economic and environmental benefits from any procurement activities being undertaken whilst also leveraging in additional resources to help us deliver our corporate priorities</p>
<b>Environmental and climate change implications</b>	<p>The social value policy identifies the environment as one of the four social value priorities.</p>



## **1. Background**

- 1.1** The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires public sector staff who commission and procure services to think about how they can secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits.
- 1.2** The Government introduced the Act as a means to help the public sector get better value for money out of procurement. It also encourages public sector staff to talk to their local provider market and community to design better services, and explore finding new and innovative solutions.
- 1.3** The Act does not define social value nor set out how the council should consider social value – just that it needs to do so. It also restricts those contracts to which the Social Value Act applies to public contracts for services which are fully regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015).

## **2. Why social value is important**

- 2.1** The council spends circa £23m annually. Although the current procurement and contract management strategy (2015) refers to Social value, the council is not actively exploring the social value opportunities from its current spend.
- 2.2** With the introduction of the council's new corporate plan in March 2019 and subsequent policy decisions, there is much greater clarity on CBC's most important priorities which include delivering the cyber central project, delivering the £100m housing investment plan, committing to a carbon neutral Cheltenham by 2030 and tackling child poverty.
- 2.3** In 2020, we have seen the Covid-19 pandemic wreak havoc across the globe. In Cheltenham, we have witnessed significant impacts on our communities and our local economy. Over 1,000 people who were made vulnerable by the crisis were referred into the council's help hub for additional support. Community food banks scaled up their supply and were providing 1,500 food parcels each week to people who were no longer able to access food. Unemployment has risen significantly, the claimant rate (claiming Job seekers allowance and Universal Credit) which was at 2.0% before the crisis has now risen to 5.1%, with some areas seeing a claimant rate of over 8%. As a result, the council has prepared a draft recovery strategy that will address the negative impacts of the crisis whilst also building on the many positives that we have seen.
- 2.4** We have also seen a significant acceleration in our understanding of the impacts of racism in our society thanks to the work of the Black Lives Matter campaigners. On 15 June, the council committed its support for Black Lives Matter and its total opposition to any kind of racism and agreed that we should work to challenge bias, both deliberate and unconscious, and racism in all its forms.
- 2.5** In the first instance, our social value policy will enable the council to maximise social, economic and environmental benefits from our procurement activities to help us deliver our corporate priorities and our recovery plan.
- 2.6** But the intention is that our social value policy will also provide a framework for how we use our processes, resources and influence to support our communities; and work with them to help build their resilience and to tackle inequalities and disadvantage.
- 2.7** Our social value policy will therefore:
  - Define what we mean by social value;
  - Set out what our social value priorities are (including our priority communities) and provide examples of the support we are looking for;
  - Explain how we will deliver social value.

### **3. Our proposed definition of social value**

- 3.1** The Social Value Act does not define social value nor set out how the council should consider social value – just that it needs to do so.
- 3.2** The council has taken the opportunity to set out its proposed definition of social value that links back to the Cheltenham place vision:
- Social value is the wider social, environmental and economic benefits that we will secure from our procurement activities and wider activities to ensure that Cheltenham is a place:*
- *Where all our people and communities thrive*
  - *Where culture and creativity thrive*
  - *Where businesses and their workforces thrive*
  - *Where everyone thrives*

### **4. Our suggested social value priorities**

- 4.1** The council is proposing a set of four social value priorities and outcomes that describe the themes where we wish to secure social value where relevant and proportionate.
- All our people and communities have the opportunity to thrive.
  - Cheltenham is a place where culture and creativity thrive.
  - Cheltenham is a place where businesses and their workforces thrive
  - Cheltenham's environment enables everyone to thrive

### **5. Identifying our priority communities**

- 5.1** Although Cheltenham remains a relatively affluent town where the majority of our residents are thriving and are able to lead good lives, not all our residents are in a position to thrive and these are broken into four groups:
- Children and young people growing up in poverty;
  - Adults and older people that are vulnerable due to their health or care needs or their social circumstances
  - Residents facing inequality and disadvantage due to their employment or education circumstances
  - Residents facing inequality, disadvantage or discrimination.

### **6. How we will deliver social value**

- 6.1** The Council procures a wide range of goods and services, and it is recognised that there can be no 'one size fits all' model. This policy will, therefore, need to be applied in a proportionate manner and be tailored to reflect the service, goods or works to be procured. It is the role of commissioners and procurement leads to consider, on a contract by contract basis, the potential social value outcomes that could be delivered through the procurement process and the most appropriate procurement strategy to achieve these. We will apply this policy in a way to ensure that it is fair to all providers.

- 6.2** The council has recently amended its constitution whereby officers can seek three quotes for contracts with a value up to £25k, rather than the previous value of £10k. Above £25k a full competitive tender process will be required. Therefore, our approach to social value is split into the following:

**Informal - all procurement below £25k**

- 6.3** Officers will ensure that the specification takes account of our social value priorities and that all bidders are given the opportunity to contribute to social value regardless of size of procurement.

**Formal – larger procurement opportunities £25k and above**

- 6.4** Officers will ensure that the specification takes account of our social value priorities and includes relevant and proportionate social value outcomes that we wish to see from the procurement. Officers may wish to include consultation with community groups to ensure that any practical support is not prescribed but co-created with that community. In addition, bidders will also be expected to set out how they will meet our strategic intentions
- 6.5** Officers will also consider making social value a contractual obligation within the specification where it is appropriate to do so. Examples could include cutting CO2 emissions by a certain percentage, recruiting x number of apprentices etc.
- 6.6** Social value priorities and outcomes will then be included in all procurement documents so that bidders complete Price, Quality and Social Value sections which can then be scored.
- 6.7** The suggested minimum weighting given to social value considerations is 10%
- 6.8** We will also communicate the Social Value policy to all internal staff, providers and partners and develop a programme of training and development to improve understanding of social value and our approach and practice.

**7. How we will deliver social value - processes, resources and influence**

- 7.1** Whilst the focus will be on applying social value consideration to new procurement activity, the council will also ensure that we use our processes, resources and influence to help deliver our social value priorities. This might include the following:
- 7.2** Processes – making sure that social value priorities are considered in our organisational change activities including those applying to how we assess services that are delivered directly by CBC.
- 7.3** Resources – how we use our council volunteers to support social value priorities
- 7.4** Influence - how we incorporate social value within existing management arrangements with The Cheltenham Trust, Ubico, Publica and CBH.

**8. Measuring the impact of our social value policy**

- 8.1** We will produce an annual review of the benefits secured through the Social Value Policy which will be reported to the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This will provide an opportunity to adjust our approach as we learn from practice and feedback.
- 8.2** The following information will be made available as part of the annual review:
- Performance monitoring information about all contracts delivering practical support across our four social value priorities in the relevant financial year.
  - An assessment of the total spend with local businesses inc the voluntary and community sector through using local supply chains.

- Evidence of how local people and communities have been involved in determining social value outcomes.
- Minimum one case study of a procurement process where the social value policy has been applied.

## 9. Consultation and feedback

- 9.1** The draft social value policy was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny committee on 13 January 2020. The committee was generally supportive in recognition that the policy would benefit the town.
- 9.2** It is important that local communities are engaged in shaping and deciding what is important to them, as well as engaging with the market to understand their ideas for how they can contribute to our social value priorities. In order to ensure our proposed ideas really do add social value we need to engage with communities to understand their existing assets and then use this information to build the social value requirements of our procurement activity. This way we can be sure we are adding and not simply duplicating the value already existing within a community, as this could have an adverse impact. It is important to evidence the co-creation activity and how this has been used to identify social value.

## 10. Next Steps

- 10.1** If Cabinet are happy with the updated strategy, the social value priorities and outcomes will then be included in all procurement documents so that bidders complete Price – Quality - Social Value sections which can then be scored.
- 10.2** We will also communicate the Social Value policy to all internal staff, providers and partners and develop a programme of training and development to improve understanding of social value and our approach and practice.

<b>Report author</b>	Richard Gibson Strategy and Engagement Manager 01242 264280 richard.gibson@cheltenham.gov.uk
<b>Appendices</b>	1. Risk assessment 2. Draft Social Value Policy

## Risk Assessment

## Appendix 1

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk			
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	I	L	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer
	There is a risk that social value commitments will be made but not delivered upon.	Darren Knight	20.1.20	3	3	9	Reduce	To mitigate this it will be important that the Council effectively monitors contracts and uses a range of tools available to secure Social Value	Ongoing	Richard Gibson

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## **Draft Social Value Policy**

### **Background**

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 (the Act) provides a legal obligation on public bodies to consider how the services they commission and procure, over the thresholds provided for in the Public Contracts Regulations, might improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area and how, in conducting the procurement it can secure that procurement

Whilst the obligation only applies to above threshold procurements for services (or mixed contracts where services is a large part of the contract) the Council has made the decision that all officers need to consider social value in all the Council's procurements when it is proportionate and relevant to do so.

The aim of the Act is not to alter the commissioning and procurement processes, but to ensure that, as part of these processes, councils give consideration to the wider impact of the services delivered. This also includes encouraging staff to talk to providers and the local community and users of the service to design better services, and explore finding new and innovative solutions.

The Council spends around £23m annually on a range of services and goods. The Act provides a significant opportunity to think creatively about how we can secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits from this spend.

But the Council also wants to use the social value policy to be the start of a conversation about how we use our wider processes, resources and influence to support social value in Cheltenham.

### **Why social value is important**

With the introduction of the council's new corporate plan in March 2019 and subsequent policy decisions, there is much greater clarity on the council's most important priorities which include delivering the cyber central project, delivering the £100m housing investment plan, committing to a carbon neutral Cheltenham by 2030 and tackling child poverty.

In 2020, we have seen the Covid-19 pandemic wreak havoc across the globe. In Cheltenham, we have witnessed significant impacts on our communities and our local economy. Over 1,000 people who were made vulnerable by the crisis were referred into the council's help hub for additional support. Community food banks scaled up their supply and were providing 1,500 food parcels each week to people who were no longer able to access food. Unemployment has risen significantly, the claimant rate (claiming Job seekers allowance and Universal Credit) which was at 2.0% before the crisis has now risen to 5.1%, with some areas seeing a claimant rate of over 8%. As a result, the council has prepared a draft recovery strategy that will address the negative impacts of the crisis whilst also building on the many positives that we have seen.

We have also seen a significant acceleration in our understanding of the impacts of racism in our society thanks to the work of the Black Lives Matter campaigners. On 15 June, the

council committed its support for Black Lives Matter and its total opposition to any kind of racism and agreed that we should work to challenge bias, both deliberate and unconscious, and racism in all its forms.

In the first instance, our social value policy will enable the council to maximise social, economic and environmental benefits from our procurement activities to help us deliver our corporate priorities and our recovery plan.

But the intention is that our social value policy will also provide a framework for how we use our processes, resources and influence to support our communities; and work with them to help build their resilience and to tackle inequalities and disadvantage.

Our social value policy will therefore:

- Define what we mean by social value;
- Set out what our social value priorities are (including our priority communities) and provide examples of the support we are looking for;
- Explain how we will deliver social value.

### **Our definition of social value**

The Social Value Act does not define what is meant by 'social value'. Therefore the Council will has proposed the following definition of social value that links back to the Cheltenham's place vision:

*Social value is the wider social, environmental and economic benefits that we will secure from our procurement activities to ensure that Cheltenham is a place:*

- *Where all our people and communities thrive*
- *Where culture and creativity thrive*
- *Where businesses and their workforces thrive*
- *Where everyone thrives*

### **Our social value priorities**

The council is proposing a set of four social value priorities and outcomes that describe the themes where we wish to secure social value where relevant and proportionate.

The Council has also identified a set of indicators that can be used to measure and track the amount of social value delivered through contracting arrangements. When commissioning goods and services, commissioners and procurement leads must consider the indicators for inclusion into the award criteria or as a performance obligation, where appropriate. These indicators are not an exhaustive list, and commissioners and procurement leads may wish to consider additional indicators.

<b>Social value priorities</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance indicators</b>
<b>All our people and communities have the opportunity to thrive.</b>	We have improved the health, wellbeing and life chances of local residents with a focus on our priority communities	Number of local community groups and projects supported from the supply chain



<b>Cheltenham is a place where culture and creativity thrive.</b>	Cultural organisations are able to deliver more cultural activities that will support local communities with a focus on our priority communities	Number of local cultural groups and projects supported from the supply chain
<b>Cheltenham is a place where businesses and their workforces thrive</b>	<p>Young people are supported into apprenticeships</p> <p>Local residents are able to gain and retain employment with a focus on our priority communities</p> <p>Local residents are able to maximise their education, knowledge and skills with a focus on our priority communities</p> <p>Promotion of opportunities to work with local voluntary and community sector organisations / social enterprises and SMEs</p> <p>There is progression towards paying a living wage to employees</p>	<p>Number of employers within the supply chain operating apprenticeship schemes</p> <p>Number of local residents accessing apprenticeships / employment within the supply chain</p> <p>Number of local residents accessing training / skills development / qualifications within the supply chain</p> <p>Number of contracts within the supply chain that are awarded to local VCS / social enterprise / SMEs</p> <p>Number of employers within the supply chain paying a living wage</p>
<b>Cheltenham's environment enables everyone to thrive</b>	<p>We have reduced our carbon emissions as part of our commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030</p> <p>There is practical support for enhancing the natural environment and promoting bio-diversity.</p>	<p>Carbon emissions generated / offset as a result of the procurement.</p> <p>Number of local environmental groups and projects supported from the supply chain</p>

### Identifying our priority communities

Although Cheltenham remains a relatively affluent town where the majority of our residents are thriving and are able to lead good lives, not all our residents are in a position to thrive and these are broken into four groups:

- Children and young people growing up in poverty;
- Adults and older people that are vulnerable due to their health or care needs or their social circumstances
- Residents facing inequality and disadvantage due to their employment or education circumstances
- Residents facing inequality, disadvantage or discrimination.

The council will be looking to make sure that our social value investment benefits our priority communities.

More information about the latest data on needs was discussed at our overview and scrutiny committee in [October 2019](#)

### **How we will deliver social value - procurement**

The Council procures a wide range of goods and services, and it is recognised that there can be no 'one size fits all' model. This policy will, therefore, need to be applied in a proportionate manner and be tailored to reflect the service, goods or works to be procured. It is the role of commissioners and procurement leads to consider, on a contract by contract basis, the potential social value outcomes that could be delivered through the procurement process and the most appropriate procurement strategy to achieve these.

We will apply this policy in a way to ensure that it is fair to all providers.

We will also apply social value consideration to any new procurement / commissioning activity, but also explore how we can incorporate social value within existing management arrangements with The Cheltenham Trust, Ubico, Publica and CBH.

In addition, the council aspires to ensure that the concept of social value is considered in all our organisational change activities including those applying to how we assess services that are delivered directly by the Council.

The council has recently amended its constitution whereby officers can seek three quotes for contracts with a value up to £25k, rather than the previous value of £10k. Above £25k a full competitive tender process will be required. Therefore, our approach to social value is split into the following:

#### **Informal - all procurement below £25k**

Officers will ensure that the specification takes account of our social value priorities and that all bidders are given the opportunity to contribute to social value regardless of size of procurement.

#### **Formal – larger procurement opportunities £25k and above**

Officers will ensure that the specification takes account of our social value priorities and includes relevant and proportionate social value outcomes that we wish to see from the procurement. Officers may wish to include consultation with community groups to ensure that any practical support is not prescribed but co-created with that community. In addition, bidders will also be expected to set out how they will meet our strategic intentions

Officers will also consider making social value a contractual obligation within the specification where it is appropriate to do so. Examples could include cutting CO2 emissions by a certain percentage, recruiting x number of apprentices etc.

Social value priorities and outcomes will then be included in all procurement documents so that bidders complete Price, Quality and Social Value sections which can then be scored.

The suggested minimum weighting given to social value considerations is 10%

We will also communicate the Social Value policy to all internal staff, providers and partners and develop a programme of training and development to improve understanding of social value and our approach and practice.

### **How we will deliver social value - processes, resources and influence**

Whilst the focus will be on applying social value consideration to new procurement activity, the council will also ensure that we use our processes, resources and influence to help deliver our social value priorities. This might include the following:

Processes – making sure that social value priorities are considered in our organisational change activities including those applying to how we assess services that are delivered directly by the Council.

Resources – how we use our council volunteers to support social value priorities

Influence - how we incorporate social value within existing management arrangements with The Cheltenham Trust, Ubico, Publica and CBH.

### **Measuring the impact of our social value policy**

We will produce an annual review of the benefits secured through the Social Value Policy which will be reported to the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This will provide an opportunity to adjust our approach as we learn from practice and feedback.

The following information will be made available as part of the annual review:

- Performance monitoring information about all contracts delivering practical support across our four social value priorities in the relevant financial year.
- An assessment of the total spend with local businesses inc the voluntary and community sector through using local supply chains.
- Evidence of how local people and communities have been involved in determining social value outcomes.
- Minimum one case study of a procurement process where the social value policy has been applied.

### **Consultation**

It is important that local communities are engaged in shaping and deciding what is important to them, as well as engaging with the market to understand their ideas for how they can contribute to our social value priorities. In order to ensure our proposed ideas really do add social value we need to engage with communities to understand their existing assets and then use this information to build the social value requirements of our procurement activity. This way we can be sure we are adding and not simply duplicating the value already existing within a community, as this could have an adverse impact. It is important to evidence the co-creation activity and how this has been used to identify social value.

### Example questions

In order to achieve Social Value outcomes, the Council has developed a number of questions for use during the procurement process.

The questions below are provided as examples and may be tailored, or new questions created, to meet requirements of the contract and ensure compliance with the Act in being relevant and proportionate to the procurement.

Social value priorities	questions
<b>Over-arching</b>	Please explain what your social value offer will be in relation to this contract and how it will be of benefit to Cheltenham and its residents. This could include social, economic or environmental wellbeing and should demonstrate added value
<b>All our people and communities have the opportunity to thrive.</b>	<p>How will you improve the health, wellbeing and life chances of local communities with a focus on our priority communities</p> <p>How will your organisation work to help others? For example local charities, local community groups, local resident engagement, supporting local culture and heritage. This could include funding specific events and groups, sponsorship or sharing expertise, knowledge or facilities and equipment.</p>
<b>Cheltenham is a place where culture and creativity thrive.</b>	How will you support cultural organisations to deliver more cultural activities that will support local communities with a focus on our priority communities
<b>Cheltenham is a place where businesses and their workforces thrive</b>	<p>What apprenticeship opportunities will you provide for local young people?</p> <p>How you will support the recruitment of people from Cheltenham</p> <p>How will you support local people from our priority communities to gain and retain employment</p> <p>How will you support local people from our priority communities to maximise their education, knowledge and skills.</p> <p>What education engagement will you offer? For example with schools, colleges or training providers and how will this be achieved? For example, through site visits, careers talks, work placements etc</p> <p>What support will be provided to the local supply chain through this contract, including activities, information, resources and organisations? For example, promoting supply-</p>

	chain opportunities to local voluntary and community sector organisations, social enterprises and small and medium-size enterprises or allowing access to and use of facilities.
<b>Cheltenham's environment enables everyone to thrive</b>	<p>What are the CO2 emissions associated with delivering the contract?</p> <p>How will these CO2 emissions be offset or reduced.</p> <p>What are the other main environmental impacts associated with delivering the contract?</p> <p>How will you reduce waste and promote recycling as part of the contract</p> <p>How will you provide practical support for enhancing the natural environment and promoting bio-diversity?</p>

**For further information, contact**

Richard Gibson

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**Cheltenham Borough Council****Cabinet 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020****Payment access review – the future**

<b>Accountable member</b>	<b>Councillor Alex Hegenbarth, Cabinet Member Corporate Services</b>
<b>Accountable officer</b>	<b>Judy Hibbert, Customer and Support Services Manager</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Executive summary</b> <p>With advancements in technology and changing customer preferences a review of customer payment access has been undertaken to ensure improved customer access and more efficient working practices. This report recommends a number of changes to meet these objectives.</p> <p>Having reviewed the Council's payment access arrangement, these will now be enhanced by allowing those customers that need to pay bills in cash with the opportunity to do so at Post Office locations within the borough. This will provide our customers with greater flexibility and payment locations.</p> <p>In addition, the review of customer payment data shows that customers are electing to pay by electronic means, increasingly choosing self-service over face-to-face payments in the cash halls located at the Municipal Offices, Hesters Way and Oakley. This mirrors the national trend where there is a general move in society to a growing cashless position. The pressure for this move is coming directly and indirectly from government, financial institutions, and other major businesses, as customers move to safer and easier ways of making payments.</p> <p>The move to increased cashless transactions nationally has been accelerated by Covid-19, with many organisations now only accepting card payments. As part of the Covid-19 lock down arrangements in March, the cash hall facilities at the Municipal Offices, had to be temporarily closed and the majority of customers have now transitioned to other forms of non-cash payment.</p> <p>As the number of cash payers continues to decline year on year it is now recommended to offer a convenient alternative method for cash payers and permanently close the Council's cash office. This ensures efficiencies can be made but customers still have the option to pay by cash if needed.</p> <p>The Council's data also shows the use of cheques continues to decline and cheques are now the least used method of payment. Cheques involve a significant amount of manual processing and many organisations and other</p>	

local authorities no longer accept cheque payments. Customers with bank accounts are able to migrate to other methods of payments and, if required, customers can telephone to make payments by debit or credit card.

The permanent closure of the cash office at the Municipal Offices and the phasing out of payments by cheque, will realise savings and will enable investment into increasing payment access and improving the customer experience when making payments to the Council.

## Recommendations

**Cabinet is recommended to approve:**

- 1. As demand on the Council's payment office has been reducing year on year, it is now recommended to permanently close the cash office located at the Municipal Offices**
- 2. There is a comprehensive communications plan to sign post customers to alternative payment arrangements**
- 3. For those customers that still need to pay bills in cash to offer them the option of paying at Post Office locations within the borough**
- 4. Due to year on year reductions in the number of customers making payments by cheque it is also recommended that this payment option is phased out by December 2021**

## Financial implications

The project would deliver annual ongoing savings against budget of £44,000.

The one-off set up costs of £15,000 would need to be funded from the first year savings, and estimated one-off redundancy costs of £59,600K would be funded from the Pensions and Restructuring Reserve.

The savings result from annual ongoing staff costs savings of £60,500 and annual ongoing non-pay savings of £6,000 although there are additional transaction costs which net to the £44,000 savings.

Payback is achieved covering the implementation costs (including redundancy costs) within 3 years.

It is not currently possible to estimate the impact on this year's budget of the temporary closure of the cash halls due to Covid-19.

**Contact officer:** Martin Yates,

[martin.yates@publicagroup.uk](mailto:martin.yates@publicagroup.uk) 01242 264115



<b>Legal implications</b>	<p>There is no statutory requirement that prescribes the methods under which a local authority can facilitate payments to it from its residents and/or businesses.</p> <p>There is also no statutory requirement to consult residents with regards to this specific issue. Where a local authority is however looking to change the way it provides its services it should assess to what extent the nature of the policy change proposed will impact on residents and/or whether previous public engagement on an issue means that a consultation exercise is necessary.</p> <p>The authority also has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 and its wider PSED obligations to ensure that its decision does not unfairly disadvantage certain groups and in particular it does not discriminate or disadvantage those groups with protected characteristics.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Sarah Farooqi</b></p> <p><b>One Legal – <a href="mailto:legal.services@tewkesbury.gov.uk">legal.services@tewkesbury.gov.uk</a></b></p>
<b>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</b>	<p>This project will result in the ending of one fixed term position and potentially two redundancies if redeployment opportunities are not found. HR will work closely with the Service Manager, affected members of staff &amp; the Unions, consulting on a regular basis &amp; following relevant processes to ensure any impact on the staff is minimised and the situation is handled sensitively.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Corry Ravenscroft</b></p> <p><b><a href="mailto:corry.ravenscroft@publicagroup.uk">corry.ravenscroft@publicagroup.uk</a></b></p>
<b>Key risks</b>	<p>No significant risks have been identified.</p> <p>See attached Risk Assessment - Appendix 1</p>
<b>Corporate and community plan Implications</b>	<p>Reference Legal implications a Community Impact Assessment has been undertaken, please refer to Appendix 2</p>
<b>Environmental and climate change implications</b>	<p>This approach is in line with the Carbon Neutral agenda of the Council reducing the need for many customers to travel to cash halls and reduce the need to organise frequent cash collections by security companies.</p>
<b>Property/Asset Implications</b>	<p>No implications, as less office space will now be needed in the Municipal Offices</p> <p><b>Contact officer: <a href="mailto:Dominic.Stead@cheltenham.gov.uk">Dominic.Stead@cheltenham.gov.uk</a></b></p>

## **1 The need for a review**

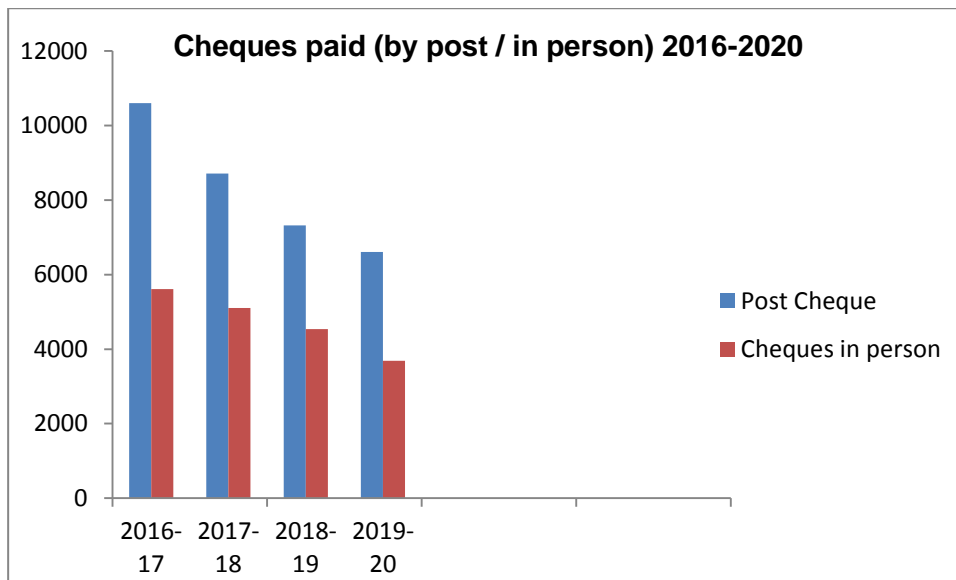
- 1.1** The way that customers pay for goods and services has changed significantly over the past 20 years and change can be expected to continue for the foreseeable future. This has been driven by advancements in technology, customer adoption of new methods of payments and need for organisations to become more efficient.
- 1.2** Whilst Cheltenham Borough Council has embraced electronic payments, these have been introduced alongside the more traditional methods and a review of payment access has not taken place for many years. With customers increasingly moving away from face to face service delivery and there being new opportunities to increase and improve digital access, the time is right for a review to be undertaken.
- 1.3** With CBC and CBH being faced with similar opportunities and challenges, and both using the same corporate payment system, a joint review of payment access was decided upon.
- 1.4** In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused us to consider our services in the new business as normal and the recommended closure of the offices has allowed CBC and CBH to pilot operating without a face-to-face payment provision.

## **2 The National Payments Landscape**

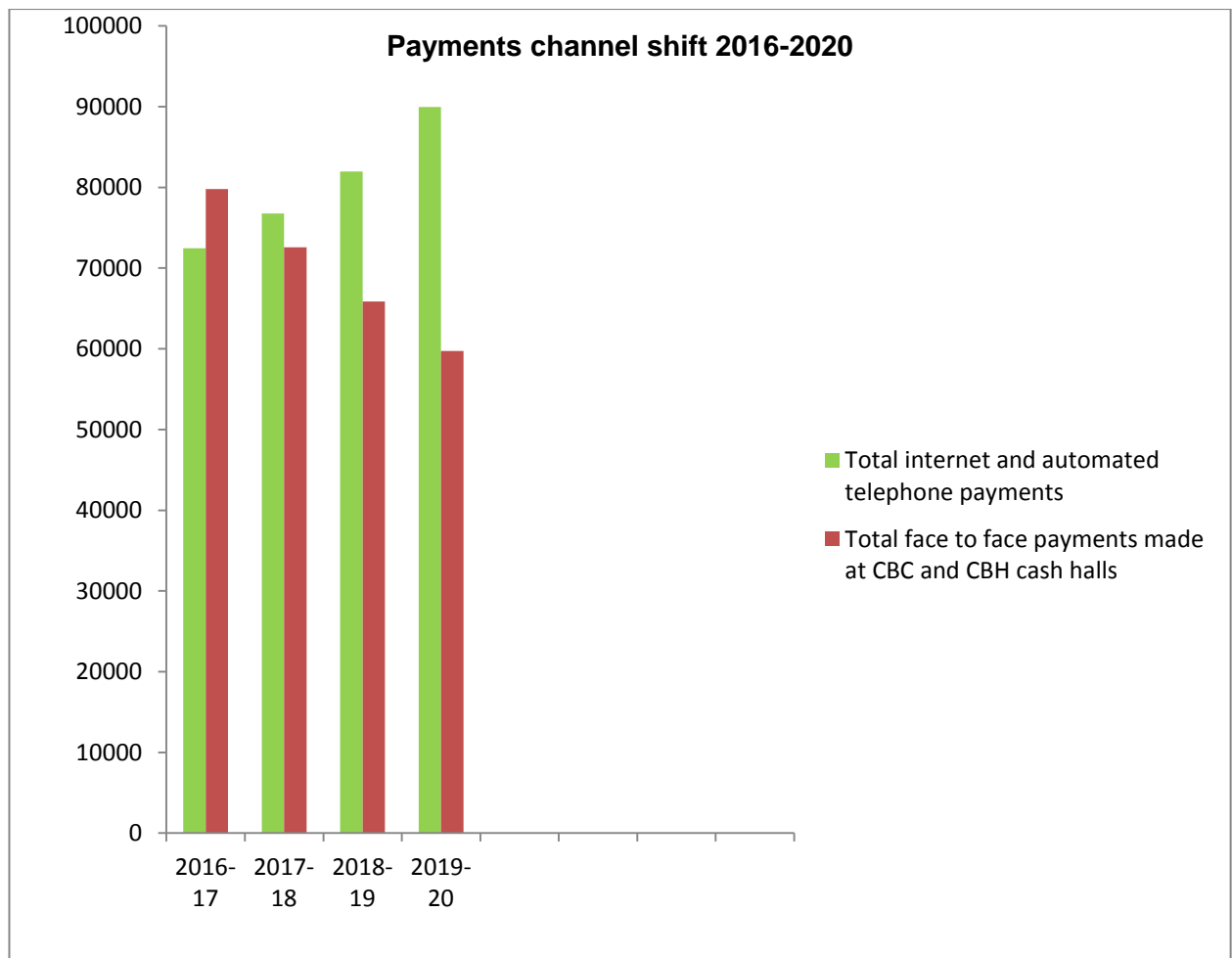
- 2.1** Innovations such as smartphones, online banking and contactless payments have had a significant effect on how we pay for things and how we expect to be able to pay for all things. As per the 2018 UK Payment Markets report, in 2017 debit cards overtook cash as the most frequently used payment method in the UK and 98% of the population now hold a debit card. Over the next decade, debit card payment volumes are forecast to grow by more than any other payment method.
- 2.2** Whilst cash payments continue to decline, in 2017 cash was still used for 34% of all payments and was the second most frequently used payment method behind debit cards. The number of cash payments in the UK is expected to fall over the next decade, as consumers continue to turn to alternative payment methods, most notably debit cards.
- 2.3** The use of cheques continues to decline and cheques are now the least used method of payment. Between 2007 and 2017 in the UK cheque usage dropped by approximately 75% (2018 UK Payment Markets report).

## **3 The Cheltenham Payments Landscape**

- 3.1** With most councils having ceased providing face to face payment facilities at their own premises, CBC and CBH are unusual in still providing a face to face payment service at the Municipal Offices, Oakley and the Hesters Way offices. (Customers also make face to face payments at the Cemetery and Crematorium for bereavement related services but this will be reviewed as part of a wider review of that service area). Customers can pay by cash, cheque and debit/credit card at all four locations.
- 3.2** Other councils in Gloucestershire have made similar changes in terms of cash payment provision, which are well 'tried and tested' and have been rolled out without any significant problems.
- 3.3** The national payment trends equally apply to Cheltenham. Debit and credit card payments were introduced for most council services nearly 20 years ago enabling customers to self-serve using the internet and automated telephone payment line.
- 3.4** In the four years between 2016/17 and 2019/20 CBC has witnessed cheques received in the post fall from 10,599 to 6,604 and cheques paid in person fall from 5,607 to 3,683.



- 3.5** CBC and CBH, like all other organisations year on year have increasing numbers of customers electing to self-serve using debit and credit cards to pay, and reduced numbers of customers visiting the offices to pay in person. Therefore, it is now the right time to review our existing provision to identify any opportunities for further improvement and efficiencies.



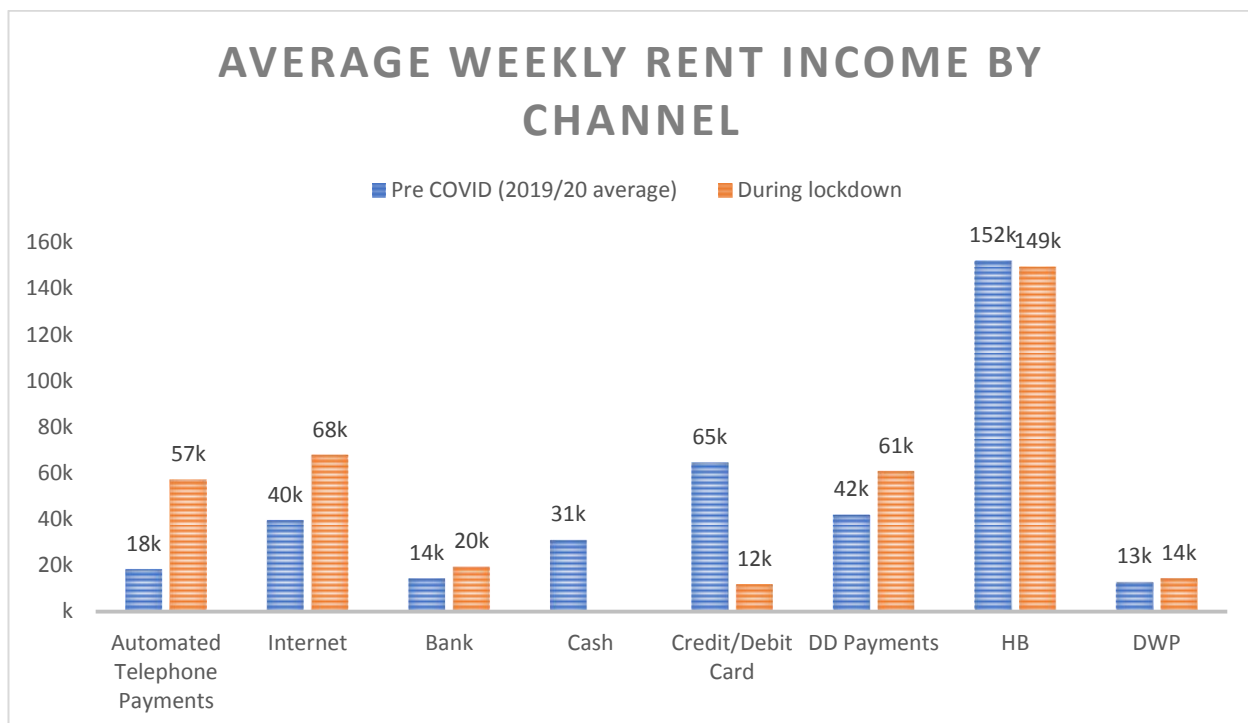
- 3.6** Over the years whilst cashiering staff has been reduced, the face to face service has continued to

be delivered in the same manner during office hours Monday to Friday. Staffing has been reduced to a point where it cannot be further reduced without impacting upon face to face service delivery. Customers' expectations of how they interact with organisations has also changed with greater flexibility and options preferred due to patterns of work, advancements in technology and welfare reform.

- 3.7** The recently renegotiated contract for the Civica payment system for 5+1 years with the inclusion of an Enterprise licence has provided the ideal opportunity to review our current payment channels. The Enterprise licence provides affordable opportunities for CBC and CBH to increase and improve digital access which better meet the current and future needs of our customers.

## 4 Impact of Covid-19

- 4.1** Since mid-March 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the CBC and CBH offices have been closed to the public which has effectively enabled us to pilot the closure of the cash halls. Customers who have previously paid at or sent cheques to the cash halls have had to find alternative ways to pay. Customer feedback indicates that using alternative methods of payment and contact e.g. by telephone, has not been a problem for our customers.
- 4.2** This feedback is supported by CBH findings which identified that the temporary closure of the cash halls due to the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in channel shift away from the cash hall facilities for customers. The graph below shows this shift in payment channels during lockdown. Average weekly income received is approximately £380,000 both pre lockdown and during lockdown however there has been a shift from cash and card usage at cash halls to online and automated payment methods.



- 4.3** With the ongoing management of Covid-19 including social distancing and other safety measures to protect customers and employees, CBC and CBH have to consider how services will operate in a new business as normal environment, and also how efficiencies can be achieved given changing priorities and increasing budgetary pressures.
- 4.4** Covid-19 has had a severe impact on the financial position of all council's including that of CBC.

Therefore, the Council need to continue to identify additional efficiencies to help offset the loss of income.

### **5 Financial Impact**

- 5.1** When all aspects of this project have been finalised, the permanent closure of the cash hall will result in ongoing savings of £44k per annum for CBC. CBH will also realise savings for the Housing Revenue Account.

### **6 Cheltenham Borough Homes**

- 6.1** CBC and CBH have undertaken the review jointly. Whilst CBH focussed on their tenants and the Housing Revenue Account and CBC looked at all payments, the trends in respect of customers channel shifting from face-to face interactions to digital were the same and in line with the national picture.
- 6.2** CBC and CBH are aligned in their ambition to increasingly transition customers to digital payment channels and to support the relatively low numbers of customers who are currently unable to channel shift. CBC will continue to work with colleagues at CBH to align payment options and increase payment methods through the development of the CIVICA payments system.
- 6.3** On 10 June 2020 the CBH Board informally endorsed similar recommendations to those proposed in this report.

### **7 The role of the Post Office**

- 7.1** Given the relatively low numbers of customers who we believe have no means to pay other than in cash, arrangements can be made for those customers to pay at the Post Office where it is likely that they will already be undertaking other business. By using Post Offices in this way also helps to increase footfall for these important community locations.
- 7.2** In Cheltenham there are 9 Post Offices where customers will be able to make cash payments. This means there will be more locations in the Borough for cash payments at a lower cost than the current provision. Post Offices are also more easily accessible than the Municipal Offices.

### **8 Community Impact Assessment**

- 8.1** A comprehensive Community Impact Assessment has also been undertaken as shown in Appendix 2 of this report.
- 8.2** It is important to note that whilst the Council would not be taking cash payments directly, the opportunity for the relatively low number of customers to still pay by cash will remain in place through the Post Office.
- 8.3** CBC will continue to engage with customers to ensure they understand the different options available to make payments and to achieve a positive customer service outcome in the shift to alternative payment methods.

### **9 Reasons for recommendations**

- 9.1** Full closure of the payment offices whilst enabling cash payments to be made at the Post Office for customers who only have access to cash, provides a good alternative solution for cash payers, improves digital payment services for all payers, optimises staffing resource to provide enhanced service delivery to those who require it and releases accommodation at the Municipal Offices to either achieve savings and /or realise development opportunities.
- 9.2** Phasing out payments by cheque optimises resource by reducing staff processing and charges associated with transportation and banking.
- 9.3** The key benefits of this change are summarised as follows:

- Increased payment access options, including self-service options
- More convenient access points in the borough
- Creating capacity to support customers who need additional support
- Improved customer satisfaction as current customer expectations are better met
- No customers will be adversely affected as set out in the Community Impact Assessment
- Releasing resource to deliver added value services
- Optimising use of the available resource, both financial and staff
- Supporting CBC's wider digital strategy
- Demonstrates that the Council and CBH keep up with the times and enable customers to make payments in ways that they can pay for other services
- Actively responding to the Climate Emergency

**9.4** Given the current closure of the payment facilities due to Covid-19 it would appear to be the optimum time to assist customers in transitioning to other payment methods.

**9.5** Cashable savings will be delivered without impacting on the customer's ability to still pay by cash.

## **10 Alternative option considered**

**Do nothing – re-open all 3 cash offices and return to the pre-Covid 19 operation.**

**10.1** Do nothing is not a feasible option. As part of its modernisation CBC needs a cost effective option to increase and improve electronic payment channels. Customers increasingly self-serve and use digital channels in everyday life and doing nothing will mean that we will fail to meet current customer expectations. As face to face transactions continue to decrease so the cost per face to face transactions will increase. Financial, property and staff resources will not be freed up and we will not be in a position to achieve savings or provide an enhanced service to those who require it.

**10.2** Due to Covid-19 the offices are likely to be closed to the public on a drop in basis for the foreseeable future. It would now be a backward step to reopen the cash halls, and also a missed opportunity to realise the channel shift benefits resulting from Covid-19.

**10.3** Customers will still be able to pay by cash when needed at their local Post Office.

## **11 This initiative contributes to the corporate plan and the Council's strategic objectives as follows:**

**11.1** It contributes to the **Corporate plan 2019 – 2023** by 'Delivering services to meet the needs of our residents and communities' priority - through increased payment options to allow customers to transact with the Council 24/7

**11.2 Modernisation case for change:** Services will be designed around a digital by design method with capacity created being used to support those customers with greatest need and with alternative access channels where appropriate. It will deliver an improved positive customer experience.

**11.3 Customer & Digital Strategy:** It supports the requirement to recognise the digital age we live in and how we can make the best use of technology for the benefit of our customers and employees. In line with the national trend, CBC and CBH are finding that their customers are increasingly choosing to self-serve to pay by using the internet and automated telephone. This growth in self-service has been organic with no influence from CBC or CBH. Many customers like to pay at a time of their choosing.

**11.4 Cheltenham recovery strategy:** CBC and CBH have to consider how services will operate in a new business as normal environment, and also how efficiencies can be achieved given changing

priorities and increasing budgetary pressures and the requirement to ensure financial sustainability. It increases the use of technology to make services more responsive and efficient. It supports the ongoing management of Covid-19 including social distancing and other safety measures to protect customers and employees.

**11.5 Medium-Term Financial Strategy:** The initiative will deliver ongoing annual savings of £44,000 which will contribute towards the Council's MTFS savings target.

## 12 Performance management – monitoring and review

**12.1** The project will be underpinned and managed by a joint CBC/CBH implementation plan with timescales and responsible officers.

<b>Report author</b>	Contact officer:  Judy Hibbert, Customer and Support Services Manager  judy.hibbert@cheltenham.gov.uk,  01242 264113
<b>Appendices</b>	1. Risk Assessment  2. Community Impact Assessment
<b>Background information</b>	None

## Risk Assessment

The risk			Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likeli- hood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
ICT don't have capacity to assist with the Recurring card payment implementation and other required upgrades to the Civica Payment system	JH	Dec 2019	3	2	6	Accept	ICT have confirmed they can support deployment and have prioritised CBC ahead of CDC and WO for payment system upgrades		Phil Martin	No
Civica are unable to meet CBC's required timescales	JH	Dec 2019	3	3	9	Accept	Phil Painting, Civica's account Manager has been made aware of CBC's proposed requirements		Judy Hibbert	
Failing to identify the ancillary functions currently undertaken at the cash hall at the Municipal Offices and if/how these will be undertaken in the future.	JH	Dec 2019	4	2	8	Accept	Work is underway to identify all tasks and future owners		Judy Hibbert	
Resource identified to undertake systems administration and ancillary functions is	JH	Nov 2019	4	2	8	Accept	Suitable training and handover arrangements will be factored into the project		Judy Hibbert	



insufficiently knowledgeable and skilled.										
Failure to channel shift sufficient customers to self –service leading to demand upon other more expensive resources eg mediated telephone payments	JH/MW	Nov 2019	2	3	6	Accept	The internet payment system is being upgraded to become more user friendly and device responsive to encourage payments on mobile devices. It is proposed that alternative digital payment channels are introduced and customers will be encouraged to self serve.		Judy Hibbert	
The enabling of payments at the Post Office facilities could lead to increased and uncontrolled transaction costs	JH	May 2020	2	3	6	Accept	It is proposed that cash only transactions can be made at Post Offices and other digital channels will be promoted as a payment channel of choice.		Judy Hibbert	
Failure to properly communicate changes could result in issues for service areas and our external customers	JH	May 2020	3	2	6	Accept	A communications plan will be developed for internal services and external customers		Judy Hibbert	
Failure to properly manage the project could negatively impact upon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collection levels</li> <li>Customer satisfaction levels</li> <li>Customer experience</li> </ul>	JH	May 2020	3	2	6	Accept	A full implementation plan will be developed and affected staff will be kept informed throughout		Judy Hibbert	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reputation</li> <li>• Staff morale</li> </ul>										
Key staff could leave the council before completion of the project before knowledge transfer has taken place and impacting upon resource availability.	JH	May 2020	3	2	6	Accept	Key staff have been kept informed and have expressed their willingness to support the various activities required to deliver this proposal.		Judy Hibbert	
<b>Explanatory notes</b> <b>Impact</b> – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-5 (1 being least impact and 5 being major or critical) <b>Likelihood</b> – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6 (1 being almost impossible, 2 is very low, 3 is low, 4 significant, 5 high and 6 a very high probability) <b>Control</b> - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close										

## Community Impact Assessment – for services, policies and projects

### What is a community impact assessment?

A community impact assessment is an important part of our commitment to delivering better services for our communities. The form will help us find out what impact or consequences our functions, policies, procedures and projects have on our communities, as well as employees and potential employees.

By undertaking an impact assessment, we are able to:

- Take into account the needs, experiences and circumstances of those groups of people who use (or don't / can't use) our services.
- Identify any inequalities people may experience.
- Think about the other ways in which we can deliver our services which will not lead to inequalities.
- Develop better policy-making, procedures and services.

### Background

<b>Name of service / policy / project and date</b>	<b>Payment Access Review</b>	Page 39
<b>Lead officer</b>	<b>Judy Hibbert</b>	
<b>Other people involved in completing this form</b>		

## Step 1 - About the service / policy / project

<p><b>What is the aim of the service / policy / project and what outcomes is it contributing to</b></p>	<p>A joint review by CBC and CBH of existing payment provision to identify opportunities for improvement for all service users and efficiencies; to include an assessment of current methods of payment and in particular the customers who continue to visit the three cash halls to make face-to-face payments.</p> <p>Covid-19 has changed the landscape and rapidly accelerated the need for this review and has resulted in the temporary closure of the cash halls since mid-March 2020. Customers who have previously paid face to face at the cash halls have had to find alternative ways to pay.</p> <p>The proposal is that the cash halls do not reopen and that alternative arrangements are made available for customers to pay by other means. For those only able to pay by cash, it is proposed that these customers will be able to pay at one of the nine local Post Offices in Cheltenham.</p> <p>The project is aligned to the Council's Strategic Objectives as set out in the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate plan 2019 – 2023: 'Delivering services to meet the needs of our residents and communities' priority - through increased payment options to allow customers to transact with the Council 24/7</li> <li>• Modernisation case for change: Services will be designed around a digital by design method with capacity created being used to support those customers with greatest need</li> <li>• Customer &amp; Digital Strategy: Our approach must recognise the digital age we live in and how we can make the best use of technology for the benefit of our customers and employees</li> <li>• Modernisation Workstream Initiation Document - Organisational Design: Finding new ways of working that balance the goals of providing improved customer experience whilst maximising business efficiencies</li> <li>• Cheltenham recovery strategy: Increase the use of technology to make services more responsive and efficient</li> </ul>
<p><b>Who are the primary customers of the service / policy / project and how do they / will they benefit</b></p>	<p>The main customers visiting the cash halls to make face to face payments are Cheltenham residents paying council tax or tenants of Cheltenham Borough Homes paying rent.</p> <p>Customers who can only pay by cash will benefit from being able to pay at a local Post Office and all other residents with bank accounts will have a range of self service options available and also a mediated service where staff can take telephone payments.</p> <p>As part of this project the internet payment solution will be upgraded to a more user friendly version and recurring card payments will be implemented. These service improvements will benefit the increasing majority of our customers who increasingly want to self-serve and expect the council to have modern technology in place when undertaking payment transactions with the council.</p>

<b>How and where is the service / policy / project implemented</b>	The cash halls will remain closed and this will be communicated to residents as part of the Covid-19 recovery process. Customers have already been advised regarding alternative ways to pay and this will continue as part of the implementation. We will also be seeking to significantly reduce payments received in the post and will proactively contact customers regarding alternative ways to pay. The main implementation activities will take place over the next nine months and this will include a communications plan. The current arrangements with the Post Office enabling cash customers to pay will be revisited jointly with CBH
<b>What potential barriers might already exist to achieving these outcomes</b>	Given that the cash halls are already closed and that most customers will already have transitioned to other methods of payments no significant barriers are anticipated.

## Step 2 – What do you know already about your existing / potential customers

<b>What existing information and data do you have about your existing / potential customers e.g. Statistics, customer feedback, performance information</b>	<p>The existing data shows that face to face payments by all methods are decreasing year on year.</p> <p>Nearly 40 % of the customers who visit the offices pay by debit or credit card and are therefore easily able to access the other payment methods already available.</p> <p>Most of the customers who send in payments via the post have bank accounts and can easily transition to another payment method.</p> <p>Most councils ceased to provide a face to face payment service many years ago.</p>
<b>What does it tell you about who uses your service / policy and those that don't?</b>	Year on year less customers are visiting cash halls to make face-to-face payments across all payment types. Digital payments are increasing. Customers are electing to self-serve using digital channels.
<b>What have you learnt about real barriers to your service from any consultation with customers and any stakeholder groups?</b>	The closure of the cash halls due to Covid-19 has demonstrated that most customers can easily transition to other payment methods.
<b>If not, who do you have plans to consult with about the service / policy / project?</b>	<p>CBH will engage with their tenant group.</p> <p>CBC will support and advise the few customers who currently only operate in cash in finding an alternative way to pay.</p>

### Step 3 - Assessing community impact

How does your service / policy / project impact on different groups in the community?

Group	What are you already doing to benefit this group	What are you doing that might disadvantage this group	What could you do differently to benefit this group	No impact on this group
People from black and minority ethnic groups				No Impact
People who are male or female				No Impact
People who are transitioning from one gender to another				No Impact
Older people / children and young people	Nothing specific for this group – a face to face service provision is currently available	Loss of face to face service. Customers without bank accounts have been used to paying the council directly in cash.	Staff will be targeting older and vulnerable people, particularly those making frequent cash payments to assist them in making alternative arrangements and where appropriate enabling them to make alternative payment arrangements at the local Post Office. There are 9 Post Offices in Cheltenham.  Staff will also be able to support customers over the telephone and when the offices reopen will be able to provide an Assisted Digital Service.	
People with disabilities and mental health challenges	Nothing specific for this group – a face to face service provision is currently available	Loss of face to face service. Customers without bank accounts have been used to paying the council directly in cash.	Staff will be targeting older and vulnerable people, particularly those making frequent cash payments to assist them in making alternative arrangements	

			<p>and where appropriate enabling them to make alternative payment arrangements at the local Post Office. There are 9 Post Offices in Cheltenham.</p> <p>Staff will also be able to support customers over the telephone and when the offices reopen will be able to provide an Assisted Digital Service.</p> <p>Disabled access at the Municipal Offices is poor and, where a face to face service is required, access via local Post Offices will benefit these customers.</p> <p>Estore2 will improve the user experience when making payments online.</p>	
<b>People who have a particular religion or belief</b>				No Impact
<b>People who are attracted to their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.</b>				No Impact
<b>People who are married or in a Civil Partnership</b>				No Impact
<b>People who are pregnant or who are on maternity leave</b>				No Impact
<b>Other groups or communities</b>				No Impact

## Step 4 - what are the differences

Are any groups affected in different ways to others as a result of the service / policy / project?	No
Does your service / policy / project either directly or indirectly discriminate?	No
If yes, what can be done to improve this	
Are there any other ways in which the service / project can help support priority communities in Cheltenham?	Help to maintain local Post Office service

## Step 5 – taking things forward

What are the key actions to be carried out and how will they be resourced and monitored?	An implementation plan will be developed and progress monitored against it.
Who will play a role in the decision-making process?	CBC Cabinet initially Thereafter operation decisions will be made by Darren Knight, Director People and Change and Judy Hibbert, Customer and Support Services Manager
What are your / the project's learning and development needs?	To understand the options regarding Allpay
How will you capture these actions in your service / project planning?	It will be an activity in the Implementation Plan.



**Cheltenham Borough Council**  
**Cabinet - 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020**  
**Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2018-23**  
**Action Plan Update 2020**

<b>Accountable member</b>	<b>Councillor Peter Jeffries, Cabinet Member - Housing</b>
<b>Accountable officer</b>	<b>Martin Stacy, Lead Commissioner – Housing Services</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<p>The council's Housing, Homelessness &amp; Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-23 was approved by Cabinet in July 2018. This is a five year strategy that sets out both our vision and priorities in order to achieve our outcomes.</p> <p>This strategy is a living document. For this reason we are updating our action plan annually to reflect the challenges and opportunities that have arisen, and will continue to arise, since the strategy was published.</p> <p>Our updated action plan is at Appendix 2 of this report.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>Cabinet:</b></p> <p><b>Approves the Housing, Homelessness &amp; Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan Update for 2020.</b></p>

<b>Financial implications</b>	<p>None as a direct result of this report.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Martin Burke,</b>  <b>martin.burke@publicagroup.uk, 01594 812544</b></p>
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<b>Legal implications</b>	<p>The applicable legislation is the <b>Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977, Housing Act 1996 - Homelessness Act 2002</b>. The <b>Homelessness Reduction Act 2017</b> places a new emphasis on early intervention and the prevention of homelessness. Authorities must now provide structured advice and assistance to everyone who is homeless or threatened with homelessness, not just those who are considered to be vulnerable and in “priority need”. The Council is required to have a strategy in place and ensure that this complies with the relevant legislation. The Council should also have regard to the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998 when applying their strategy.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: vikki.fennell@teWKesbury.gov.uk, 01684 272015</b></p>
<b>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</b>	None as a direct result of this report
<b>Key risks</b>	<b>Please see Risk Register – Appendix 1</b>
<b>Corporate and community plan Implications</b>	This action plan update supports the council's corporate priority: ‘Increasing the supply of housing and investing to build resilient communities’, and the council's place vision: ‘Cheltenham is a place where people and communities thrive’.
<b>Environmental and climate change implications</b>	None as a direct result of this report
<b>Property/Asset Implications</b>	<p>None as a direct result of this report</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Dominic Stead@cheltenham.gov.uk</b></p>

## **1. Background**

- 1.1** The Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-23 was approved by Cabinet in July 2018. This is a five year strategy that sets out both our vision and priorities in order to achieve our outcomes.
- 1.2** This strategy is a living document. For this reason we will continue to update our action plan annually to reflect the challenges and opportunities that have arisen, and will continue to arise, since the strategy was published. Our updated action plan is at Appendix 2 of this report.
- 1.3** Whilst we must look forward, this report also provides us with an opportunity to look back at some of our most notable achievements during the second year of our strategy. These are summarised below:

## **2. Progress against our Housing & Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2018/23**

### **2.1 Outcome 1 – Increasing the provision of affordable housing.**

- 79 new affordable homes were provided during 2019/20; of which 41 homes (i.e. 52%) were delivered over and above what would have been delivered through market forces alone. This 'additionality' – a key aim of our housing strategy - is made up of 27 new council homes delivered via Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH), along with a further 14 new affordable homes provided by Rooftop, with the help of Homes England grant funding.
- Significant progress has also been made over the last 12 months to identify a wide range of sites for the potential delivery of council-owned affordable housing across the Borough. What's more, the scale of our ambition is clear: in February 2019 our Housing Revenue Account projected a £95m spend on the provision of new affordable housing over the 4 years from 2019 to 2023. This investment has the potential to create a pipeline of up to 500 new council-owned affordable homes for the Borough, delivered via CBH.
- In the meantime, and following our successful funding bids to Homes England, the development of two affordable housing schemes on council-owned land is now underway: one at Monkscroft Villas, Hesters Way (27 affordable homes); the other at Holy Name Hall, Lynworth (8 affordable homes).
- In addition, the council is in the process of acquiring, via CBH, three s.106 affordable housing schemes, which combined are expected to deliver up to a further 33 new affordable homes. Negotiations are also underway for the acquisition of 'land and development' opportunities. These land-led acquisitions will enable the council to have greater control over the design and the timing around when these homes can be delivered. This is particularly important in view of these current uncertain times.
- All the above are in addition to the exciting new opportunities currently underway in West Cheltenham as part of the proposed Cyber Park/Golden Valley development. This will see the provision of up to 3,000 new homes alongside a new cyber innovation hub. Please see the following link for more information:

<https://www.goldenvalleyuk.com/>

### **2.2 Outcome 2 – Making best use of existing housing and improving our neighbourhoods**

- During the last 12 months, nearly 900 homes in the private sector in Cheltenham have been made safer. 8 long term empty homes have also been brought back into use as a result of direct action taken by the council's Enforcement Team, whilst the county-wide, jointly commissioned Warm & Well scheme undertook 36 energy efficiency measures, generating annual savings of over £10,000 for households. All of these have contributed to improving outcomes for the

Borough's existing housing provision.

- In addition, CBH are continuing to roll out their new replacement windows, doors and boilers programme, with over 1,500 replaced this year. All of this has contributed to an improved SAP (energy efficiency) rating of our homes (now 72.8, compared with 72.02 last year).
- Improvements have also been made to our 37 homes at Midwinter and Elmfield Avenue. (These homes were built shortly after the Second World War using non-traditional methods.) These improvements via CBH have extended the life of these properties for a further 40 years and improved their insulation, thereby saving our tenants money in energy bills.
- CBH have also successfully enabled 19 households to downsize from family-sized council accommodation, via CBH's Help to Move Scheme - which provides practical support and assistance to enable older people to move home, thereby releasing larger council-owned accommodation for households who most need it.

### 2.3 Outcome 3 – Tackling Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

- Following the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act, there has been a significant increase in homelessness approaches to CBH's Housing Options Service. As a result, statutory homelessness has increased from 31 households in 2018/19 to 48 during 2019/20 – though this increase was anticipated and within targets, and less than half of the 106 homelessness acceptances reported in 2017/18, prior to the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act. In addition, and following a number of key investment decisions taken by Cabinet using the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) homelessness prevention funding, there has been a significant rise in homelessness prevention and relief outcomes: from 145 households during 2017/18, through to 230 households in 2018/19, increasing further to 394 for the last 12 months.
- Cheltenham's Housing Options Service is one of the few homelessness services that also includes a much valued Benefits and Money Adviser. During the last 12 months alone, our Adviser has generated an additional £1.5m income for low-income households as a direct result of her involvement in supporting residents to resolve their benefits issues.
- In addition, a number of new funding opportunities have been secured from the MHCLG during 2019/20. These can be summarised as follows:
  - Domestic Abuse Funding - £44k has been awarded to the council to lead on work across the county to better understand needs (for future commissioning purposes) and to provide interventions for the more complex domestic abuse cases. This will be implemented via CBH's Housing Options Service.
  - County-wide Private Rented Sector Access Fund. This funding has helped homeless households access private rented accommodation. At the time of writing this report, CBH's Housing Options Service had secured by far the most accommodation, in that of the 96 households that have been accommodated across Gloucestershire and West Oxfordshire, close to half (i.e. 44 households) have been accommodated by our Housing Options Service within this Borough. This is equivalent to approximately £49,000 in funding secured for Cheltenham.
  - Rough Sleeper Initiative & Rapid Response Funding – a further £1m has been secured for the county to continue the Somewhere Safe to Stay hubs across Cheltenham and Gloucester, in conjunction with a number of Navigator posts, whose role is to connect those with complex needs to appropriate support services.
  - Cold Weather Funding (£2,352). This was used to extend the provision of emergency accommodation for rough sleepers during periods of cold or severe weather up until

March. We continue to work hard to find appropriate support and accommodation solutions for those who are either on, or who face, returning to the streets.

### 2.4 Outcome 4 – Improving the health and wellbeing of our communities

A lot of work has been undertaken by the council and our partners, including CBH, to help improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and to support independent living. Here are a few highlights:

- CBH have continued to tackle antisocial behaviour (ASB) successfully – with all 120 cases being successfully resolved, and with 100% tenant satisfaction in the way the cases were handled.
- To support tenants back into work, CBH's Employment Initiatives Service has enabled 99 people to access training locally, and a further 61 people into work. Satisfaction levels are high too, with 99% of those attending CBH's work-clubs stating they were satisfied with the help, and 97% reporting an increase in employability skills.
- CBH have now completed year one of a two year Community Investment Plan across the Borough to support social sustainability and community cohesion. During this time over 1,800 project activities have been delivered by CBH and external partners, and over 4,000 volunteer hours have been delivered across the community, generating an estimated £10m of Social Value throughout the Borough.
- Working with our partners in Health and Social Care, we have been supportive of the implementation of a new Home-sharing Scheme, which brings together older people who have spare rooms with people who need affordable accommodation, and who are happy to chat and lend a hand if needed. This scheme is at its early stages, but initial feedback is very positive, with more pairing expected during 2020/21.
- The council's Lifeline Alarm service has carried out 221 new installations over the last 12 months, with a further 91 key safes being fitted to allow for ease of access to both care and emergency services, all of which contribute to our collective aims of supporting independent living.
- Finally, the council has continued to work collaboratively with our partners across the county to develop greater consistency in the delivery of disabled facilities grant services. In fact, 76 major DFG adaptations were delivered this year, enabling disabled or frail people to remain in their homes.

### 3. Next steps for the year ahead

3.1 Appendix 2 of this report provides a detailed breakdown of the range of activities that will be undertaken during 2019/20 and beyond in order to support our strategy. Highlights include:

- Creation of a new Development and Regeneration Strategy to prioritise and help shape future standards, having regard to our carbon neutrality aspirations;
- Continued focus on creating a pipeline of up to 500 affordable homes over the next few years.
- West Cheltenham/Cyber Park – progression with the Golden Valley project that will lead to the creation of a new cyber innovation hub and potentially 3,000 new homes.
- Renewed focus on reducing long term empty homes, using compulsory purchase powers and working in collaboration with CBH.
- Further investment in the Housing Options Service, utilising MHCLG homelessness prevention grant funding, to create a deeper, more resilient service that will enable

greater emphasis on tackling rough sleeping, particularly following the covid pandemic, as well as supporting people more generally to be able stay in their homes.

- A broader review of rough sleeper pathways as we continue to adapt to the challenges arising from the covid pandemic.

#### **4. Reasons for recommendations**

**4.1** It is important that our strategy remains a living document by way of annual updates to our action plan. Issues around housing, both nationally and locally, will continue to emerge; and so the activities that support our outcomes need to be responsive and flexible to meet new challenges and embrace emerging opportunities as they arise. For instance, nationally a number of key announcements have been made over the last 12 months. These include:

- At the March budget, the government announced there would be a new, 5 year Affordable Housing Programme, providing grant funding to the value of c.£12bn for the delivery of new affordable housing. Further details are to follow, though it is anticipated this funding will continue to be used to support Social Rented homes, in addition to other affordable housing products.
- The government have consulted on plans to set out a new national model for shared ownership, bringing down the initial stake that households can purchase from 25% of the value of the home to 10%. This is combined with plans to enable owners to increase their share of their home in 1% tranches rather than the current 10%.
- The government have also consulted on the introduction of a First Homes Scheme, which could potentially cut the cost of new homes by a third, with the discount being locked into the home in perpetuity.
- In addition, the government have consulted on the potential for tougher building regulations to pave the way for a Future Homes Standard on homes built after 2025 – the aim being to cut carbon emissions in new homes by up to 80%.
- The government have also set out a Renters Reform Bill which could see the security of tenure being improved for tenants renting in the private sector, by abolishing ‘no fault evictions’.
- The new Domestic Abuse Bill is currently going through parliament. It is proposed that this will include a statutory duty on tier 1 local authorities to commission services based on a robust assessment of need, with a view to ensuring that the most appropriate accommodation and support services are available locally for survivors of domestic abuse, and their children.
- During this year, the government have announced £433m of funding to help rough sleepers into accommodation. Following Covid, and the efforts councils have taken to bring everybody in, £116m will be made available over the next 12 months to support the provision of around 3,300 homes for rough sleepers. Further details about this funding are expected shortly.
- Whilst we continue to experience the Covid pandemic, the government have placed a temporary ban on eviction hearings. This has now been extended to 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2020, and is coupled with legislation that has extended the notice period (that landlords are required to give to their tenants if they wish to end the tenancy) from 2 months to 3 months. It is hoped this extension will provide more time for households who have been adversely affected by the covid pandemic to resolve any financial challenges they may currently face; nevertheless we are anticipating an increase in demand on our homelessness service in the autumn, once these restrictions are lifted.

- 4.2** The above examples illustrate the complexity and breadth of 'housing' – sometimes a decision taken in one area can have unintended consequences in another. As such, national policy will continue to evolve. The current Covid pandemic has also shone a light on rough sleeping and the hidden homeless. These are challenging times, and they are likely to continue over the next 12 months and beyond as we continue to adapt our services to the current pandemic and plan ahead for future.

### **5. Alternative options considered**

- 5.1** To agree not to update the Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2018-23 action plan. It is proposed this option is rejected for the reasons given above. Our action plan needs to remain responsive to changes nationally and locally, and as illustrated above, 'housing' is a fast-changing world.

### **6. How this initiative contributes to the corporate plan**

- 6.1** The council recognises the importance of increasing the supply of housing and the need to build strong, resilient communities – indeed it is one of our top 5 priorities within our corporate plan. Our updated action plan supports this priority.

### **7. Consultation and feedback**

- 7.1** This action plan has been updated in collaboration with key officers within the council, CBH and our other partners. It has also been circulated for feedback to a range of organisations within our Housing & Support Forum, and updated accordingly.

### **8. Performance management –monitoring and review**

- 8.1** Progress against our action plan will be reviewed and updated annually and brought to Cabinet for approval.

<b>Report author</b>	<b>Contact officer: Martin Stacy, martin.stacy@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264171</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	1. Risk Assessment 2. Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan Update 2020
<b>Background information</b>	

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
	If the council does not regularly monitor progress against the activities and outcomes identified within the Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-23, then the effectiveness of the strategy will be unclear, and the opportunity to review activities in light of any emerging issues could be missed.	Martin Stacy	8.6.20	3	4	12	Reduce	Ongoing annual review and monitoring of the Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy, as approved by Cabinet.	7.7.20	Martin Stacy	
<b>Explanatory notes</b> <b>Impact</b> – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-5 (1 being least impact and 5 being major or critical) <b>Likelihood</b> – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6 (1 being almost impossible, 2 is very low, 3 is low, 4 significant, 5 high and 6 a very high probability) <b>Control</b> - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close											





## Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-23



## Action Plan Update 2020

## Outcome 1: Increasing the provision of affordable housing

ACTION	TARGETS OR MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	LEAD/ PARTNERSHIPS
We will use our housing supply working groups to oversee progress towards identifying sites and evaluating their suitability for acquisition and the delivery of affordable housing and private rented (PRS) accommodation	Pipeline of potential 106 acquisitions and land led schemes identified	Ongoing through 2020/21 and beyond	Lead Commissioner – Housing Services and Cheltenham Borough Homes via the following partnership arrangements:  Cabinet Member Working Group Strategic Housing Delivery Group Operational Working Group
	New Development & Regeneration Strategy in place to help inform priorities for delivery of new homes	2020/21	
	Target 25-50 Private Rented Homes delivered (currently on pause while impact on the market is understood following COVID-19 pandemic)	Review target during 2020/21	
	Delivery target of 70 affordable homes of which it is anticipated that <u>all</u> will be 'additionality' (i.e. homes delivered over and above market forces alone).	2020/21	
We will identify use of commuted sums and Homes England grant funding to enable delivery of affordable homes that might	Identification of land and property that would not be viable for the delivery of affordable homes without the injection of commuted	Regular review and allocation during 2020/21	Lead Commissioner – Housing Services  Cheltenham Borough Homes

otherwise be unviable.	sums		Other Registered Providers
We will ensure that appropriate governance arrangements are in place to enable delivery	Cabinet Approval of any changes to CBC-CBH Management Agreement and Articles of Association, if required.  Review/clarify roles and responsibilities across CBC-CBH to support agility	2020/21  2020/21	Lead Commissioner – Housing Services  Cheltenham Borough Homes
We will actively monitor development and show how CBC is delivering against housing requirement targets.	Via annual housing monitoring report	Winter 2020	Planning Policy
We will undertake a new Joint Core Strategy Housing Review	Draft Plan (reg.18)  Pre-Submission (reg. 19)  Submission to SoS  Adoption	Winter 2020  Summer/Autumn 2021  Winter 2021  2022	Planning Policy  Tewkesbury Borough Council  Gloucester City Council
Member training on planning, and engagement activities identified which will be carried out on an annual basis	Timetable agreed Delivery of activities (NB - monthly member training schedule arranged but Covid-19 has made this challenging)	Start in Summer 2020, ongoing training	Development Management
We will keep under review the Leader's Allocations of Executive Functions to ensure it provides sufficient agility to enable the acquisition of homes for affordable housing purposes	Review	2020/21	Lead Commissioner – Housing Services  Property Services  Cheltenham Borough Homes
We will ensure we have an up to			Housing Strategy & Enabling

date understanding of housing needs across the Borough, including the needs of older and/or frail people to help inform future planning policy	Housing with Care Strategy	Summer 2020	Planning Policy
	Housing with Care District-focused Place-based Plans	2021/22	Other district authorities Gloucestershire County Council/NHS
We will increase transparency for developers regarding our expectations over the delivery of affordable homes, thereby speeding up the negotiation process on s106 agreements	Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document:	2021-22	Affordable Housing Partnership (CBC lead)
	Consultation Adoption – full council	2021 2021/22	
We will explore opportunities for increasing provision of student accommodation to meet the anticipated growth in population	Policy position captured; now awaiting adoption of Cheltenham Plan	Summer 2020	Planning Policy

## Outcome 2- Making best use of housing and improving our neighbourhoods

ACTION	TARGETS OR MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	LEAD/ PARTNERSHIPS
We will roll out a programme of identification and inspection of HMOs across the borough to ensure that any remediation works are carried out, and to ensure that the management standards meet the regulatory requirements	Data collection completed and commencement of St Peter's Ward survey	2020/21	Enforcement Manager
	Prepare for St Pauls Ward Survey and associated data collection in connection with article 4 direction requirements.	2020/21	Enforcement Manager
We will seek to implement an Article 4 direction in the St Pauls Ward regarding HMOs	Adoption	Summer 2020	Planning Policy
We will reduce the number of homes with Health & Safety Hazards by	We will aim to increase the safety of more than 700 homes during	March 2021	Enforcement Manager

identifying properties and ensure appropriate action is taken	2020/21		
We will improve standards in the private rented sector through the council's accreditation scheme 'Fit for rent'	The Enforcement team will continue to make accreditation inspections on request in 2020/2021. The charge for inspection will be kept at £300 for 2020/2021.	Ongoing	Enforcement Manager
We will reduce the number of empty homes in the Borough	We will establish joint protocol arrangements with CBH over the potential acquisition of long term empty homes for use as affordable housing.	Summer 2020	Enforcement Manager
	We will review internal resourcing with a view to increasing our focus on reducing the number of long term empty homes.	Summer 2020	Enforcement Manager
	Options for use of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) will continue to be explored on bringing the most difficult properties back into use in conjunction with formalised negotiation procedures.	Ongoing	Enforcement Manager
We will regularly monitor and review performance of the jointly commissioned Warm & Well scheme	Aim for c.40 energy efficiency measures to be implemented, with potential savings estimated to be c.£10,000 to those households benefiting	Spring 2021	Enforcement Manager
We will install new more thermally efficient windows and doors throughout all of our council homes	Completion of door renewal programme	2020/21	Cheltenham Borough Homes – Head of Technical & Investment Services
	Completion of window replacement	Spring 2022	

	programme		
We will improve the energy performance of our council homes	<p>c. 1000 remaining homes to have boilers replaced.</p> <p>We will provide individual support to tenants in relation to their energy usage, bills and savings where they are referred by their Tenancy Management Officer or the Benefits and Money Advisor to ensure that their properties are effectively insulated</p> <p>SAP rating target 73</p> <p>All homes will have a minimum SAP rating of 60</p>	<p>Spring 2021</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Spring 2023</p> <p>Spring 2024</p>	Cheltenham Borough Homes – Head of Technical & Investment Services
We will implement an Asset Management modelling toolkit to understand the Net Present Value of our council homes, to enable the council to make more informed decisions about future investment options of our council homes.	Re-testing following installation of new QL Housing Management system – implementation now 2021	Spring/Summer 2021	Cheltenham Borough Homes – Head of Technical & Investment Services
We will maintain compliance with the Decent Homes Standard and consider potential options for the remaining non-traditional builds with a view to progressing with the most appropriate solutions	<p>Identified as part of Capital Investment Programme</p> <p>% of dwellings deemed non-decent target: 0.25%</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Spring 2021</p>	Cheltenham Borough Homes – Head of Technical & Investment Services
We will undertake a commissioning review to help inform future investment decisions regarding our	Options appraisal of the poorest performing two or three sheltered schemes	timeline under review	Cheltenham Borough Homes – Head of Technical & Investment Services

sheltered housing dwellings	Implementation of a new warden call system	Spring 2021	
	Implement a programme for the upgrade of communal finishes on remaining schemes.	Spring 2021	
We will review our Help to Move Scheme to incentivise downsizing	Pilot relaunched April 2020 for a further 12 month period.	March 2021	Cheltenham Borough Homes – Head of Housing Services

### Outcome 3A - Tackling Homelessness

ACTION	TARGETS OR MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	LEAD/ PARTNERSHIPS
We will work with CBH's Housing Options Team, and partners across the county, to keep under review emerging pressures and identify potential solutions to the increase in homelessness arising from COVID-19	Regular analysis of needs via county wide homelessness cell  Potential allocation/Reallocation of funding	Ongoing – to be kept under review during 2020/21	Lead Commissioner – Housing Services  CBH – Housing Options Team District Authorities across Gloucestershire  Gloucestershire County Council  Public Health
We will create 2 new posts within the Housing Options Service to deepen the early intervention homelessness prevention offer for residents at risk of homelessness	Funding allocation agreed (using MHCLG windfall funding) via Cabinet	June 2020	Lead Commissioner – Housing Services  CBH – Housing Options Team
We will work with CBH's Housing Options Team to ensure any additional MHCLG funding	Approval of new funding arrangements	Winter 2020/21	Lead Commissioner – Housing Services

opportunities are directed into homelessness prevention initiatives	Target: 70 homelessness acceptances 340 positive homelessness prevention and reliefs  23 households in Temporary Accommodation (of which no more than 5 will be in B&B).	2020/21  31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021	CBH - Housing Options Team
We will continue to work in partnership with other districts to support homeless households access PRS accommodation through the PRS Access Fund	Partnership Agreement in Place	Autumn 2020	Housing Strategy & Enabling  District Authorities across Gloucestershire  CBH – Housing Options Team
We will review the Homeseeker Plus Choice Based Lettings Allocations Scheme	Consultation with stakeholders Approval of changes to policy	2020/21	Lead Commissioner – Housing Services/Housing Strategy & Enabling  CBH - Housing Options Team  Other district authorities across Gloucestershire
We will work with CBH Housing Options and low-level accommodation based support providers to ensure the implementation of fair and effective pathways to independent living.	Review of working practices against agreed KPIs	Ongoing	Lead Commissioner – Housing Services/Housing Strategy & Enabling  Accommodation Based Support Providers  CBH – Housing Options Team
We will regularly monitor the outcomes of the grant funded	6 Monthly Monitoring Meetings	Ongoing throughout term of 3 year grant (2018-21)	Housing Strategy & Enabling



Gloucestershire Nightstop service in terms of its provision of emergency accommodation for young people.			
We will review grant funding arrangements with Gloucestershire Nightstop prior to the end of the current grant funding period	Review conditional offer of grant and associated KPIs and ensure any necessary approvals are in place for its continued funding, if appropriate.	March 2021	Housing Strategy & Enabling
We will monitor Cheltenham Borough Homes' delivery of the council's Housing Options Service to ensure it is supporting key outcomes and increase its transparency/accountability	Quarterly performance meetings  Agreed reporting format for dissemination to agencies within the council's Housing & Support Forum	Ongoing  Ongoing	Housing Strategy & Enabling Lead Commissioner – Housing Services CBH - Housing Options Team  Housing & Support Forum
We will tackle debt and benefit issues and support financial and digital inclusion, and the provision of independent housing rights advice	We will monitor, review and consider future delivery options for debt, benefits and housing rights advice	Autumn/winter 2020	Lead Commissioner – Housing Services
We will seek to ensure agencies comply with the new Duty to Refer requirements	Review via the quarterly Housing & Support Forum meetings	2020/21	Housing Strategy & Enabling CBH – Housing Options Team Members of Housing Support Forum
We will ensure that we make best use of Discretionary Housing Payments to support households who are in a short term crisis	Review outcomes from new protocol arrangements agreed between CBH – Housing Options Team and CBC – Revenue Benefits Team  Ongoing awareness raising and sharing of outcomes/expenditure to date via Housing Support & Forum	Quarterly performance meetings   Quarterly partnership meetings	Housing Strategy & Enabling  CBH – Housing Options Team  CBC – Revenue Benefits Team
In the event of our MHCLG allocated DHP funding running out, we will apply for the MHCLG for approval to allocate funding from the council's	Regular review of spend against budget	Ongoing	s.151 officer/ Head of Revenues and Benefits  Housing Strategy & Enabling

Housing Revenue Account to top up Discretionary Housing Payments for our council tenants			Cheltenham Borough Homes
We will develop alternative accommodation options for care leavers and ensure consistency for care leavers across the six districts	<p>We will review the Southwark Protocol (joint working arrangements between the county and district councils for homeless 16-17 year olds)</p> <p>Clarity of offer via updated Homeseecker Plus Policy</p> <p>Review of working practices generally, following Care Leavers Conference in Spring 2020.</p>	<p>2020/21</p> <p>2020/21</p> <p>2020/21</p>	CBH – Housing Options Team District Authorities Gloucestershire County Council
We will ensure we remain compliant with the Chartered Institute of Housing's 'Making a Stand' initiative to support victims of domestic abuse	Key initiatives implemented, as part of the pledge	ongoing	CBH – Community Services
We will work with Housing Options and other partners to ensure delivery of the MHCLG 2020-2021 funding 'to support victims of DA and their children within safe accommodation'		Autumn 2020	CBH – Housing Options Team  Housing Strategy & Enabling  Gloucestershire County Council  District Authorities
We will continue to work with ex-offenders who are homeless to help explore alternative housing solutions balancing risks and taking account of the needs of the local area	Review of existing pathways	2020-21	CBH – Housing Option Team
We will build positive relations with quality care mental health services		ongoing	CBH – Community Services

to support a joined-up approach to safeguarding.			
Cheltenham Housing Aid Centre will actively seek funding to ensure their Doorway Project (which offers specialist housing advice to vulnerable people ) can continue	Funding opportunities identified	Spring 2021	CHAC
Cheltenham Housing Aid Centre will deliver life skill workshops to people who are ready to live independently and who currently live in supported housing.	Funding secured	March 2021	CHAC/Supported housing providers
Cheltenham Housing Aid Centre will seek to identify other partnerships that may benefit from the life skill workshops	Secure key partners	March 2021	CHAC/Other potential users of the service.

### Outcome 3B – Tackling Rough Sleeping

ACTION	TARGETS OR MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	LEAD/ PARTNERSHIPS
We will work with CBH's Housing Options Team, and partners across the county, to keep under review emerging pressures and identify potential solutions to the increase in risk of rough sleeping arising from COVID-19	Weekly analysis of needs via county wide homelessness cell	Ongoing – to be kept under review	Lead Commissioner – Housing Services
	Allocation/Reallocation of funding	Summer/Autumn 2020	CBH – Housing Options Team
	Agreement with Registered Providers for potential Housing Led model, using social housing.	Summer/Autumn 2020	District Authorities across Gloucestershire
	Other pathways and opportunities explored via county-wide housing	Ongoing through 2020/21	Gloucestershire County Council
			Public Health

	supply cell and complex case cell.		
<p>We will work collaboratively with partners to ensure previously awarded funding is implemented effectively across the borough, by reviewing outcomes. This includes the rolling out of additional funding for:</p> <p>Somewhere safe to stay and navigator funding (Safe places to bring people off the streets and undertake assessments to connect to correct housing options/support services for those with complex needs/co-existing conditions)</p> <p>Assertive Outreach services to support rough sleepers into accommodation</p> <p>ActionGlos – supporting entrenched rough sleepers to live independently and into training, education or employment</p>	<p>Monthly partnership meetings</p> <p>Quarterly reviews</p>	2020/21	<p>Housing Strategy &amp; Enabling</p> <p>District Authorities and County Council</p> <p>Clinical Commissioning Group/health</p> <p>Police and Crime Commission</p> <p>CHIG and CHIG + county-wide partnerships</p>
	<p>Rough sleeper estimate/count: 5 or under</p>	Autumn 2020	
	Regular reviews of outcomes	Ongoing to summer 2021	<p>P3</p> <p>Pivotal</p> <p>Homelessness Coordinator</p> <p>Housing Strategy &amp; Enabling</p>
We will seek to ensure future funding opportunities are actively sourced.	As opportunities arise these will be picked up via monthly partnership meetings	2020/21	<p>Housing Strategy &amp; Enabling</p> <p>District Authorities and County Council</p> <p>Clinical Commissioning Group/health</p> <p>Police and Crime Commission</p>

We will review outcomes from the 2019/20 (severe weather emergency protocol) and agree any necessary adjustments ahead of winter 2020/21	<p>Approach to winter 2019/20 SWEP agreed</p> <p>To incorporate feedback about Homeless Link recommendations.</p> <p>Potential for a summer section to be added</p>	Autumn 2020	<p>Housing Strategy &amp; Enabling</p> <p>District Authorities</p>
We will support the Assertive Outreach Team in coordinating an annual count or estimate of the number of people rough sleeping throughout Cheltenham	Mechanism agreed with partners on this year's street count	Autumn 2020	<p>Housing Strategy &amp; Enabling</p> <p>District authorities</p> <p>P3</p>
We will work collaboratively with partners on the recommissioning of the countywide homeless assertive outreach services and county homelessness coordinator post	Future service model and funding requirements agreed	Winter 2020	<p>County Homelessness Coordinator/Housing Services Districts and County Council Clinical Commissioning Group Police and Crime Commissioners Office</p> <p>CHIG and CHIG + county-wide partnerships</p>
We will review the outcomes of ActionGlos (SIB) to support entrenched rough sleepers to live independently and into training, education or employment	Regular reviews of outcomes	Ongoing to summer 2021	<p>P3</p> <p>Pivotal</p> <p>County Homelessness Coordinator</p> <p>District Authorities</p>
We will support the implementation of Billy Chip, in line with Council's motion of 23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2020	Include BA Hope foundation/relevant partners within Cheltenham's Housing & Support Forum for the sharing of new ideas	Ongoing	Housing Strategy & Enabling

	Increase Billy Chip's profile by providing space on the council's website listing venues and other relevant information	Reviewing timing in light of covid-19	
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## Outcome 4 – Improving the health and wellbeing of our communities

ACTION	TARGETS OR MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	LEAD (in bold) / PARTNERSHIPS
We will ensure that future communities established on the strategic urban extensions are cohesive and sustainable.	Review and new evaluation of Preferred Registered Provider arrangements	Autumn 2020	Lead Commissioner – Housing Services  Tewkesbury & Gloucester District Authorities  Preferred Registered Providers
We will review viability options for the potential regeneration of homes in the west of Cheltenham	Development & Regeneration Strategy  More detailed financial appraisals to follow	Summer 2020  under review	Lead Commissioner – Housing Services  Cheltenham Borough Homes
We will review existing lettings plans to ensure that an appropriate balance is being achieved between meeting housing need and ensuring communities are cohesive and sustainable	Lettings Plans reviewed and updated	Autumn 2020	Housing Strategy & Enabling  CBH – Community Services
We will support the implementation of 'Welcome to the Future – A local model for building socially sustainable communities' as a model	We will explore how we can incorporate this model within a future Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document	2021/22	Housing Strategy & Enabling  Planning Policy

for social sustainability			
We will, through our emerging growth plan, identify ways we can support skills and training across the borough	Creation of a Growth Board for Cheltenham and its development of a Business Plan	2020	Director of Planning
We will implement a suite of initiatives for our tenants to: - reduce social isolation and improve overall health & wellbeing, - improve access into education, training and employment, - ensure residents feel safe in their community, and - ensure tenants are involved and engaged both in CBH and in the community	6 monthly Community Investment Impact reports	2019 - 2021	CBH – Community Services
We will be the district housing representative on the Gloucestershire Mental Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board. This will support the implementation and awareness of the Gloucestershire Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategies and action plans including the Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat and the Gloucestershire Suicide Prevention Action Plan.	Regular review of outcomes	Quarterly Partnership Meetings	Housing Strategy & Enabling  Gloucestershire County Council  District Authorities
We will promote awareness and take up of the council's Lifeline Alarm Service	Range of promotion initiatives implemented throughout the year.  Promotion of self-installation process enabling the service to	2020/21	Enforcement Manager

	<p>expand its customer base.</p> <p>Move current paper based customer data file to an electronic format within Uniform or other.</p> <p>Introduction of an internet based application process, following initial mapping exercise.</p>	2020/21	Enforcement Manager
We will promote the awareness and uptake of assistive technology to help improve the wellbeing, safety and independence of residents in Cheltenham	<p>New Hospital discharge trials in conjunction with Hospital discharge Teams.</p> <p>Trial of sim only Lifeline units to enable customer without landlines access to the service.</p> <p>Upgrade existing customers from Lifeline 400 units to new digitally compatible units in preparation to the digital switch over.</p>	2020/21	Enforcement Manager
We will work with key partners on a developing a range of initiatives that supports independent living	<p>Evaluation of county-wide Frailty Housing Officer (with a view to quantifying savings to health and social care system)</p> <p>We will work collaboratively with health and social care on continuing to deliver a pilot project, looking at supporting 10 residents with hoarding issues within CBC properties.</p>	<p>2020/21</p> <p>Summer 2021</p>	<p>Gloucestershire County Council/health</p> <p>Gloucestershire County Council/health CBH – Community Services</p> <p>Gloucestershire County Council/health District Authorities Lead Commissioner – Housing Services</p>



	We will explore the potential for Health Impact Assessment Toolkit to be introduced to assist developers in their plans for delivering homes on large sites	2020/21	Planning Policy  Gloucestershire county council/health District Authorities
	We will continue to promote the Home sharing scheme, where an older person can share their house with a young person in return for 10 hours of support a week, with a view to increasing the number of pairs during 2020/21.	2020/21	  Gloucestershire county council/health  District Authorities
	We will undertake research to identify new ways by which active communities can be developed which support people to live independently in line with the Gloucestershire Integrated Care System Aim – i.e. to support people to stay healthy and independent and develop active communities that promote prevention/ self-care.	2020/21 (and ongoing)	
	We will explore the use of Better Care Funding to enable the creation of additional older peoples' community hubs within two of CBC's sheltered housing schemes	2020-2021	Lead Commissioner – housing services Head of Communities – CBH
We will facilitate large scale adoptions through the availability of means tested Disabled Facilities	The DFG Forum will continue to develop a Hub and Spoke approach to bring the 6 districts together	2020/21	District Authorities Gloucestershire county council/health

Grants and work with districts and Gloucestershire County Council to bring about a more consistent approach to how adaptations are provided across the county			
We will invest in improvements to the stock of park homes in the county, including Cheltenham	Insulate 87 homes across the county (10 within Cheltenham) using the additional DFG funds agreed by the DFG forum.	2020/21	District councils, County council, Health, Severn Wye Energy Agency
We will increase support for people receiving treatment for cancer re benefits advice	Ongoing funding and monitoring outcomes of a CAB adviser in Cheltenham General Hospital	2020/21	District councils, County council, Health, CAB

## Cheltenham Borough Council Cabinet – 7 July 2020 Covid-19 Recovery Strategy

<b>Accountable member</b>	<b>Leader of the Council, Councillor Steve Jordan</b>
<b>Accountable officer</b>	<b>Chief Executive, Gareth Edmundson</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Key/Significant Decision</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<p>Covid-19 has presented a challenge to Cheltenham Borough that it has not seen since the Second World War. The impact on our economy, our communities, our Borough and our Council will be significant and long lasting.</p> <p>In May, the Cabinet was presented with a Draft Recovery Strategy. The intention of the draft document was to set a an ambitious framework for Cheltenham's recovery and to support the rebuilding and reshaping of our Borough to ensure that it is an even better place to live, work and visit in the years ahead.</p> <p>The Cabinet agreed that the Draft Strategy should be put forward for public consultation and shared with a range of partners to receive comments and feedback to improve and amend the document so that it represents and reflects the views of our partners and community in our collective approach to recovery.</p> <p>Subject to agreement, the Recovery Strategy will be reviewed by a recovery group of officers - each with dedicated workstreams, led by the Executive Director of People and Change. Other key partners across Cheltenham and Gloucestershire will also be invited and involved in the delivery of the strategy where needed. It is proposed that a report is provided to Overview and Scrutiny on the recovery strategy and other relevant partnership Boards to review progress.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>The Cabinet:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. To note consultation on the Draft Recovery Strategy.</b></li> <li><b>2. To note the changes to the document as a result of engagement and feedback.</b></li> <li><b>3. To agree Cheltenham Borough Council's Recovery Strategy in Appendix A.</b></li> <li><b>4. Delegate review of the Recovery Strategy to the Executive Director People and Change as part of wider recovery group of</b></li> </ol>

**officers and partners under specific workstreams.**

- 5. Provide a report on the Recovery Strategy to Overview and Scrutiny and other local or county-wide partnership boards and meetings where appropriate.**

<b>Financial implications</b>	<p>The full impact of Covid-19 is as yet unknown. So far Cheltenham has received a total of £1.21m in funding from Central Government to cover both the impact of increased expenditure and loss of income that have been identified. Further announcements from the Government are expected on a further funding settlement in July.</p> <p>As a result, the Council's financial sustainability remains uncertain and will require close monitoring and potential intervention to ensure that the Council's short, medium and long term financial security is guaranteed.</p> <p>As a result, the ambitions set out within the Strategy may have to be prioritised or phased to ensure that the Council continues to take a prudent approach to manage and mitigate budget risks in the short and medium term.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: paul.jones@cheltenham.gov.uk,</b></p>
<b>Legal implications</b>	<p>None at this stage but a wide variety of legal powers are available to support the delivery of the priorities set out in the draft Recovery Strategy including s1 Localism Act 2011.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: legalservices@tewkesbury.gov.uk, 01684 272017</b></p>
<b>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</b>	<p>Many employees have been impacted as a result of Covid-19, this includes a reduction in regular duties as well as many staff being re-deployed. This will continue to be the case for an, as yet, undefined period going forward. It is unknown at this stage when the Council will be able to return to business as usual operation, however, significant work is being undertaken to manage and adapt to recovery from Covid-19.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: corry.ravenscroft@publicagroup.uk</b></p>
<b>Key risks</b>	See appendix 2
<b>Corporate and community plan Implications</b>	The Recovery Strategy for Cheltenham aims to complement and support but not replace the existing Place Vision, Corporate Plan and other strategic documents produced by partners.
<b>Environmental and climate change implications</b>	The Covid-19 recovery plan offers a significant opportunity to expedite and invest in projects and other initiatives that may support Cheltenham achieving its climate change targets. This has been reflected by strengthening the theme of responding to the climate emergency within the Recovery Strategy.
<b>Property/Asset Implications</b>	<p>Cheltenham's Recovery Plan may have implications for the use and function of some Council assets. However, this is, as yet, unknown.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Dominic.Stead@cheltenham.gov.uk</b></p>

## 1. Background

- 1.1 Covid-19 has tested Cheltenham's communities, economy and way of life in a way that hasn't been seen since the Second World War. Our Borough has lost loved ones, business has been severely impacted and we've all had to re-learn a new existence that tries to retain our human connections while being apart. We continue to give our grateful thanks to the thousands of workers and volunteers in front-line services and businesses who worked tirelessly to respond to this national crisis and are now supporting the gradual progress of recovery both in Cheltenham Borough and nationally.
- 1.2 At Cabinet held on 14 May, the first ever virtual public meeting held in the Cheltenham Council's history, it was agreed that the presented Draft Recovery Strategy – A Local New Deal for Cheltenham, should be offered for public consultation and that partners would be offered the opportunity to engage and give feedback on the contents of the draft document. After consideration of consultation feedback, it was agreed that an amended strategy would be presented to a future Cabinet meeting to be formally ratified.

## 2. Consultation and Engagement

- 2.1 Following the Cabinet meeting on 14 May, the Draft Recovery Strategy was publicly available on the Council's website and social media channels to allow for public comment. It was also circulated extensively to all key partners and stakeholders across Gloucestershire, regionally and nationally. The circulation to stakeholders included (not an exhaustive list):
  - Commissioned partners (e.g. Cheltenham Trust)
  - Local Economic Partnership
  - Cheltenham BID
  - Local and regional Councils
  - Local Government Association
  - Government departments
  - Gloucestershire Voluntary & Community Network
  - Culture Board
  - Parish Councils
- 2.2 In addition to the document being circulated to partners and being publicly available, a debate was also held at Full Council in June specifically focussed on recovery to allow all Cheltenham Borough Council elected members the opportunities to share views on recovery and to suggest changes and improvements to the draft strategy.
- 2.3 Overall, the draft document has been positively received by consultees with many specifically supporting the ambitious vision and principles contained within the strategy and the collective commitment at Cheltenham Borough to support re-building and reshaping our economy and communities to be better than before. The majority of formal and informal feedback agreed that the Strategy provides a strong platform from which to drive recovery.

We are grateful for the constructive submissions we have received as part of the consultation. As a result, a number of key changes to the final draft have been made.

Key changes include:

- Strengthening our commitment to tackling the climate emergency and becoming carbon neutral. This includes acknowledging the challenging targets the Council has set in this

regard.

- Encouraging greater collaboration between sectors to stimulate greater creativity and ideas to reshape and revitalise our high street and open spaces.
- Recognise the role of culture and the development and implementation of a cultural strategy in recovery.
- Recognise the prominence of culture in supporting the immediate recovery of our borough's spaces and places to boost the economy and increase footfall.

### 3. Cheltenham Recovery Strategy – A Local New Deal for Cheltenham

3.1 The full Recovery Strategy can be found in **Appendix A**. However the document contains the following key principles and priorities:

#### Principles:

- We will ensure our decision making and investment takes into account our ambition for making Cheltenham Carbon Neutral by 2030
- We will achieve inclusive growth so all our communities can benefit and prosper from investments made in the borough
- We will continue to have a strong leadership role in investing for growth
- We will continue to be commercially focused where needed so that we are financially self-sufficient
- We will use data and technology and build on the foundations put in place throughout the crisis, including insight from our customers, residents, businesses and visitors, to help us make the right business decisions
- We will provide strategic co-ordination across Cheltenham's agencies, partnerships and networks to drive social and economic recovery
- We will invest in and develop our people so they can continue to provide excellent services to residents and are prepared to meet the opportunities and challenges ahead
- Action plans will underpin each of the priorities to manage delivery and to achieve the performance

#### Priorities:

- Revitalising and re-shaping our economy
- Improved wellbeing and creating strong communities
- A modern, efficient and responsive Council
- Working with our direct service delivery partners
- A secure financial future

#### 4. Recovery Strategy Agreement and Implementation

- 4.1** The Executive Director for People and Change is the lead for Cheltenham's Recovery Strategy work-streams. The Executive Director will continue to coordinate officer meetings as needed to progress and implement measures as part of Cheltenham Borough's on going response. The officer group governance and structure is regularly reviewed to ensure the membership and work streams are fit for purpose and responsive to the changing demands of Covid-19 recovery.
- 4.2** The Leader of the Council is responsible for Cheltenham's Recovery overall and it is expected that at least one further report to Cabinet will be brought forward in the next year to provide a more detailed update on challenges and progress.

It is also proposed that a report on the recovery strategy is presented to Overview and Scrutiny for periodic review. The frequency of reporting will be agreed in consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It is also expected that the Recovery Strategy will be reviewed as part of wider partnership meetings across Gloucestershire with a focus on recovery from Covid-19.

<b>Report author</b>	<b>Contact officer:</b>  Gareth Edmundson, Chief Executive  Gareth.edmundson@cheltenham.gov.uk
<b>Appendices</b>	1. Draft Recovery Strategy 2. Risk Assessment
<b>Background information</b>	None

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
1	<p><b>Risk of not having a recovery strategy:</b> The severe impact Covid-19 had on residents, communities and businesses means the Council must have a clear strategy and plan to ensure its efforts have the maximum of impact to support recovery efforts of the borough and Gloucestershire.</p> <p>Having a clear focus on the approach to recovery will mean valuable and limited resources will be deployed on initiatives that will make the biggest difference.</p> <p>A clear strategy helps to inform decision making and alignment of resources</p>	GE	April 2020	5	1	5	<p>SMART Action Plan and managed via Clearview</p> <p>Senior Cabinet &amp; Officer Sponsorship</p>	<p>Develop strategy Seek political support Gain feedback from strategic partners Once approved develop SMART action plan</p>	May 2020	GE	No
2	<p><b>Recovery Strategy Implementation</b></p> <p>If the Council and its partners do not have effective governance then it is likely that recovery from Covid-19 will not be joined up and will risk duplication</p>	DK	June 2020	4	4	16	<p>Reduce:</p> <p>Clear internal governance and workstreams to monitor delivery.</p>	<p>Governance and workstreams established and regularly reviewed by the Executive Director for People and Change in partnership with other Executive</p>	June 2020	DK	No



	and inefficiency.						These are regularly reviewed. Regular engagement and joint working with wider partners. Senior sponsorship with Cabinet	Directors, Chief Executive, workstream leads and Cabinet Members.			
3	<b>Financial risk</b> The current uncertainty relating to the Council's short and medium term budgets as a result of Covid-19 may impact the delivery of some measures in the recovery strategy.	PJ	June 2020	4	4	16	Reduce:  Regular review and engagement by Executive Director for finance. Identification of actions and measures in partnership with Cabinet Members to mitigate risk	Regular reviews of finances undertaken and submitted to MHCLG.  Engagement with LGA and wider sector on financial challenge of Covid-19.  Regular review with Cabinet Members	July	PJ	Forms part of wider financial risk on risk register.
<b>Explanatory notes</b> <b>Impact</b> – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-5 (1 being least impact and 5 being major or critical) <b>Likelihood</b> – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6 (1 being almost impossible, 2 is very low, 3 is low, 4 significant, 5 high and 6 a very high probability) <b>Control</b> - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close											





# Cheltenham Recovery Strategy

A Local New Deal for Cheltenham



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# ***Now is the time to lead recovery***

Unique challenges require a unique response. Covid-19 has tested Cheltenham's communities, economy and way of life in a way that hasn't been seen since the Second World War. Our Borough has lost loved ones, business has been disrupted and we've all had to re-learn a new existence that tries to retain our human connections while being apart. We give our grateful thanks to the thousands of key workers and volunteers across health and front-line services both in Cheltenham and nationally that have responded so selflessly to keep the country going and to care, protect and shield us from Covid-19. We are proud to witness the strength and resilience of our town in the face of this challenge

Overcoming Covid-19 involves more than finding a medical cure. There will be difficult decisions to make and it will take time so we must also focus on how we can rebuild our economy and communities to be stronger than before. In Cheltenham, we remain just as committed to making our Borough the Cyber Capital of the UK and helping our town to continue to thrive. But the challenge of this global pandemic requires a response that is more innovative and ambitious and one that will be built on new foundations.

Following the Great Depression in 1933, Franklin Roosevelt famously launched a 'New Deal' to reignite the economy, improve national infrastructure and enhance wellbeing and growth in communities across America. We need a similarly bold vision to rebuild after Covid-19. In Cheltenham, we firmly believe we have the people, skills and local solutions to deliver a recovery that won't just repair the damage, but will deliver renewal, improvement and strong, sustainable communities for the future. Locally driven investment in projects, spaces and places will allow us to collectively deliver tailored responses to challenges and seize the opportunities in our town as part of the national effort to rebuild.

This document does not replace our Place Vision or Corporate Plan but compliments these strategic documents, which further underpins our ambitions for Cheltenham.

This is our proposal for a 'Local New Deal' for Cheltenham and we encourage all of our public, private, voluntary and government partners to join and invest in a positive future for our Borough.

***Cllr Steve Jordan***

*Leader of Cheltenham Borough Council*











# ***Our principles that guide our approach to recovery:***



We will ensure our decision making and investment takes into account our ambition for making Cheltenham Carbon Neutral by 2030



We will use data and technology and build on the foundations put in place throughout the crisis, including insight from our customers, residents, businesses and visitors, to help us make the right business decisions



We will achieve inclusive growth so all our communities can benefit and prosper from investments made in the borough



We will provide strategic co-ordination across Cheltenham's agencies, partnerships and networks to drive social and economic recovery



We will continue to have a strong leadership role in investing for growth



We will invest in and develop our people so they can continue to provide excellent services to residents and are prepared to meet the opportunities and challenges ahead



We will continue to be commercially focused where needed so that we are financially self-sufficient



Action plans will underpin each of the priorities to manage delivery and to achieve the performance

# Key priority

## REVITALISING AND RESHAPING THE ECONOMY



Re-launch our plans to make Cheltenham the Cyber Capital of the UK and work with partners to ensure this remains an internationally recognised opportunity for investment and driver for economic growth and green infrastructure



Present investment opportunities to partners to expedite and bring forward the development of the site to create jobs. This includes expanding land ownership to maximise its potential and work with county and national partners on fast tracking infrastructure projects such as improvements to Junction 10



Encourage collaboration across sectors to ensure that culture, hospitality and creativity is interweaved into our economic recovery plans particularly in enhancing our cyber investment plans, supporting the creative revitalisation of the High Street, and the imaginative use of our open spaces.



Work with the Culture Board and the wider cultural sector to develop a new Culture Strategy that will make Cheltenham a place that fuses culture, creativity, inclusivity, and digital innovation better than anywhere else in the country.



Recognise the need for immediate action through cultural activities to re-boost the local economy and encourage footfall by looking at how Cheltenham can be a 'town in a park'



Allow greater flexibility for local borrowing/ investment for the Council to take a greater ownership role in the high street such as supporting the development of Workshop Cheltenham to help small cyber businesses grow



Provide capacity and support for bids to Arts Council, Sport England and other national bodies for capital investment and to deliver creative projects that will increase footfall and support the local economy



Work with the creative and arts sector to creatively activate retail units and other spaces to encourage footfall and support the local economy



Work with Government to create the framework to enable a more creative use of high street premises

### HOW SUCCESS WILL BE MEASURED

- *Securing the investment to take forward Cyber Central and supporting infrastructure*
- *Through the Culture board the Culture Strategy & action plan created*
- *Increase in the jobs sustained and created in the borough*
- *£ Value of inward investment achieved*
- *Growth in visitor numbers and overall footfall to help support Cheltenham's retail, leisure and cultural offer*
- *Reduction in potential CO2 emissions*









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# Key priority

## IMPROVED WELLBEING AND CREATING STRONG COMMUNITIES



Expedite and lobby government to bring forward significant investment in new and affordable homes to tackle the national shortage and to provide more funding and powers to support climate change initiatives



Review our partnership with Cheltenham Borough Homes to see how more effectively we can take forward the £100m housing investment plan to support wider regeneration



Invest in and develop the strength and presence of our voluntary sector in our communities to help support the most vulnerable, including tackling child poverty, inequality, climate change, and build upon how well communities have come together



Explore ways to further develop walking and cycling as primary modes of transport to improve air quality, reduce carbon footprint and reduce car ownership



Work with our cultural and leisure partners to deliver programmes that support re-connecting with our communities, building resilience and improving mental and physical health



Further encouraging use of public transport, walking and cycling to support a cleaner green Cheltenham and to find ways for enhancing the natural environment



### HOW SUCCESS WILL BE MEASURED

- *No. of new homes directly delivered*
- *No. of new green homes built*
- *Value of social value achieved from spending and investments*
- *Participation in programmes and ongoing participation in leisure and /or cultural activities*
- *Achieve resident satisfaction of 85% or more*
- *Progress against our 2019 climate change baseline*

# Key priority

## A MODERN, EFFICIENT AND RESPONSIVE COUNCIL



Increase the use of technology to make services more responsive and efficient



Increase flexible and smart working and build on the use of innovative ways to keep our staff, partners and customers connected



Maximise shared use of council buildings and assets to unlock value and deliver efficiencies



Review how we work and the resource needed to deliver the recovery plan and the future needs of our borough



Capitalise on innovative solutions to make sure that every resident has the opportunity to access services and support



### HOW SUCCESS WILL BE MEASURED

- Value of efficiency savings made
- Resident satisfaction with the Council will meet the Local Government Association benchmark
- Increased satisfaction of residents, communities and businesses with the way the Council communicates
- Increase in the number of digital and self-service transactions
- High staff satisfaction levels











# Key priority

## WORKING WITH OUR DIRECT SERVICE DELIVERY PARTNERS



Encourage all partners funded by the Council to produce recovery plans that focus on creative opportunities to deliver commercial income, efficiency and improved services



Review existing partnership arrangements to ensure they will deliver the future ambitions of the Borough.



Encourage more apprenticeships and local employment opportunities



**PUBLICA**

### HOW SUCCESS WILL BE MEASURED

- Partners operate at a surplus
- New income streams created
- Reduction in Council subsidies
- Progress partners make against carbon reduction targets



# Key priority

## A SECURE FINANCIAL FUTURE



Work with local, regional and national government partners to secure a sustainable financial future for the Council and its commissioned partners



Offer a range of financial and investment opportunities to reignite the local economy, encourage business start-ups and entrepreneurs to help our town to grow and thrive



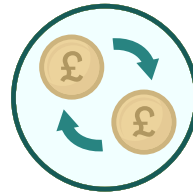
Review and fast track local infrastructure projects to create short and medium term jobs and longer term growth, especially those initiatives that support the climate emergency roadmap



Prioritise investment projects that deliver inclusive growth and opportunities to deprived communities, reduce carbon footprint or support innovation and development of cyber and green technologies



The new recovery environment provides an opportunity for the Council to re-think and re-set its commercial services to enable a greater role in supporting community and economic recovery



Conduct a council wide review of expenditure and service provision to focus resource on recovery



### HOW SUCCESS WILL BE MEASURED

- Increased income from commercial activity
- Balanced budget
- Income benchmarked against pre-Covid-19 levels









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and Entrepreneurship  
Initiative



## Cheltenham Borough Council

### Cabinet – 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020

#### Housing Revenue Account – Acquisition of 320 Swindon Road Site

<b>Accountable member</b>	<b>Councillor Peter Jeffries, Cabinet Member Housing</b>
<b>Accountable officers</b>	<b>Dominic Stead, Head of Property and Assets, Cheltenham Borough Council</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	<b>St Pauls</b>
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<p>Cabinet is asked to approve the acquisition of the site at 320 Swindon Road which will provide between 21 – 28 affordable dwellings, within the parameters outlined at Appendix 2.</p> <p>Development of the site by Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) and Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH) will assist in providing much needed affordable homes to help reduce the housing waiting list, and also improve the wider area through regenerating a derelict site.</p> <p>CBH's independent Red Book Valuation (via JLL) supports the acquisition value for the site based on a wholly affordable scheme.</p> <p>Full Council, at its meeting in February 2019, and in the Treasury Statement October 2019, approved sufficient budget to finance development within the HRA including the acquisition of land. The site will be acquired as unencumbered freehold land and conditional upon securing satisfactory and implementable planning permission. Heads of Terms have been agreed which includes the requirement to conditionally exchange on the site by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>Cabinet is recommended to:-</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. approve the acquisition of the site at 320 Swindon Road on a conditional basis on the terms referenced at paragraphs 1 -5 within Appendix 2.</b></li> <li><b>2. approve the development of the site for affordable housing to be owned by the Authority</b></li> <li><b>3. note that CBH, on behalf of the Authority, will apply for planning permission and conduct procurements to select contractors to carry out the design and construction of the new housing on this site</b></li> <li><b>4. note that subject to the tenders for the construction of the new housing being within the budgets approved by full Council and the receipt of planning permission, the Cabinet Member –</b></li> </ol>

Housing will approve the number of dwellings to be provided and will authorise the award of the contracts to the successful bidders where contracts are in excess of £100,000

5. delegate authority to the Executive Director – Finance and Assets, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Housing to: -
  - a. submit and accept bids to Homes England (HE) for grant funding to support the delivery of new affordable housing and, subject to consultation with the Borough Solicitor, enter into required grant agreements
  - b. agree the tenure of the affordable housing that will be delivered on the site
  - c. approve the disposal of the units on a shared ownership basis, at an initial equity share appropriate to prospective purchasers.
6. delegate authority to the Head of Property, in consultation with the Borough Solicitor, to take all necessary steps and undertake all necessary procedures, including:
  - a. entering into any legal documents for and associated with the purchase of the site and disposal of constructed units on a shared ownership basis; and
  - b. entering into legal agreements and contracts (other than those referred to in paragraph 7(a) which do not exceed £100,000 or other documentation as may be required to implement or facilitate the development

<b>Financial implications</b>	<p>As set out paragraph 5 of Appendix 2.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Paul Jones, Executive Director- Finance and Assets</b></p> <p><a href="mailto:Paul.Jones@cheltenham.gov.uk">Paul.Jones@cheltenham.gov.uk</a></p> <p><b>01242 265154</b></p>
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<b>Legal implications</b>	<p>The Authority has a general duty to act prudently when purchasing land; to this end, the Authority has sought advice from an external valuer to negotiate the purchase price.</p> <p>Due diligence will be required to ensure that the site meets the requirements for development. This includes site inspections to ascertain whether there are any undocumented third-party rights, checking title to the land, undertaking appropriate searches and making enquiries of the landowner.</p> <p>The Authority has the power to acquire land for housing development under Section 17 of the Housing Act 1985 (the Act). Any subsequent disposals, including by way of shared ownership leases will be under Section 32 of the Act and the General Housing Consents issued thereunder.</p> <p>The Authority has powers under Section 9 of the Act to build new housing accommodation on land it owns for that purpose. The Authority's contract rules, and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 will need to be complied with when procuring the design and construction team. Early advice should be sought from Publica Procurement as to the most suitable procurement options. Before the design and construction team commences work on the appropriate legal documentation (prepared or approved) by One Legal must be completed.</p> <p>Please note that the risk register identifies specific legal risks relating to planning permission.</p> <p>Stamp Duty Land Tax will be payable on completion of the purchase. As this date is so far in the future, it is impossible to say with certainty what the figure will be</p> <p><b>Contact officer: One Legal <a href="mailto:legalservices@tewkesbury.gov.uk">legalservices@tewkesbury.gov.uk</a></b></p>
<b>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</b>	There are no direct HR implications arising from this report.
<b>Key risks</b>	Please see risk assessment at Appendix 1 of this report
<b>Corporate and community plan Implications</b>	By increasing the provision of new affordable housing, we will be supporting our key strategic objective of strengthening our communities. The proposed scheme supports the aspirations of the Place Strategy for Cheltenham, approved in March 2018, to focus on housing delivery as a priority with the aspiration to increase the number of affordable, accessible, safe and secure housing, and to build strong, healthy and inclusive communities.
<b>Environmental and climate change implications</b>	The overall environmental performance of the properties will be discussed once the project team has been assembled. We will assess the financial viability of schemes with a view to minimising the carbon footprint, thereby seeking to support the Council's aim to be carbon neutral by 2030.



<p><b>Property/Asset Implications</b></p>	<p>A robust asset acquisition process and procedures framework will need to be in place and executed to ensure that the project runs smoothly. Budgeting of costs for the acquisition of the site, have been established and are within parameters set by CBH. The relationship with external partners such as solicitors, surveyors and engineers must remain close to ensure that the limited resource at CBH and CBC is supported during the acquisition and future development.</p> <p>The paper recommends the acquisition of 320 Swindon Road site which has implications on the property and asset management programme of the council. The report sets out the key considerations.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Dominic Stead, Head of Property and Asset Management</b></p> <p><a href="mailto:Dominic.Stead@cheltenham.gov.uk">Dominic.Stead@cheltenham.gov.uk</a> 01242 264151</p>
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## **1. Background**

- 1.1** The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) of 2017 highlighted key areas for future housing of which strategic allocations (sites over 450 dwellings) provide the largest component, almost 36% of identified housing supply. The remaining component will need to be met from the development of non-strategic sites such as the site at 320 Swindon Road.
- 1.2** The approved CBC Corporate Plan (2019-2023) aims to increase the supply of affordable housing in Cheltenham with a shared CBC and CBH aspiration of working towards a target of 500 additional homes over the next 5 years to meet local demand. There are a number of routes by which CBC and CBH are increasing the number of homes supplied and a significant contribution by volume is the acquisition of land for development either directly or in conjunction with a developer partner.
- 1.3** CBH has also been working with Council officers via the Operational Working Group (OWG) and Strategic Housing Delivery Group (SHDG) to identify suitable sites for new build within the HRA. CBH is currently drafting a New Homes and Regeneration Strategy on behalf of CBC which will explore the potential for further pipeline regeneration and new build opportunities. This work will be complemented by a review of all funding options and sources in order to identify longer term capacity and constraints.
- 1.4** The site at 320 Swindon Road is derelict and represents an unattractive environment. The redevelopment of the site will enhance the St Paul's Ward, delivering much needed affordable homes in an area where there is existing CBC stock. Discussions have been held with Homes England (HE) who are supportive of the proposal to provide a wholly affordable scheme. A formal bid submission will be made in due course.

## **2. Site and Negotiation Details**

- 2.1** The site is accessed off Swindon Road and bordered by both Richards Road and Malvern Street. On site is a dilapidated two-storey dwelling house with a lean-to workshop and a number of outbuildings which have been derelict for circa 15+ years. The site is walled and fenced to the boundaries and covers 0.63 Acres (0.25 Hectares). The land is privately owned and lies outside of the greenbelt as defined in the Joint Core Strategy.
- 2.2** CBH has been aware of the opportunity for several years but has not been able to achieve the land price expectations of the vendor. In April 2020, the site was actively marketed by Bruton Knowles Property Consultants on behalf of the vendor.

An offer has been made and accepted (subject to Cabinet approval and subject to contract) and Heads of Terms have been agreed as set out in the exempt appendix 3.

- 2.3** CBH's independent Red Book Valuation (via JLL) supports the acquisition value for a 21-unit scheme on the site, based on a wholly affordable scheme.
- 2.4** The site does not have the benefit of planning consent; however, CBH has received positive feedback from planners from initial discussions. There is no objection to the principle of residential development of the site given that is the prevailing character of the area and the need for housing, especially affordable housing, in the Borough. There are further discussions to be had around density, mix of houses/flats, landscaping and parking. Through discussions with CBC Head of Planning based on the proposed feasibility, should CBC acquire the site, CBH is confident that planning would be achieved on the site for a minimum of 21 units, or indeed a higher density scheme if supported by planners.
- 2.5** Due diligence will need to be undertaken with regards to surveys, reports and internal approvals within 14 weeks of the heads of terms being agreed and conditional exchange to take place by September 2020. CBH expects to receive planning permission by September 2021, at which point the contract will become unconditional with the acquisition of the site to proceed thereafter.
- 2.6** CBH have raised the impact of COVID-19 with the agent, noting that it may delay the ability to undertake key surveys and reports. CBH have agreed to use its best endeavours to meet the envisaged timetable and this is noted in the Heads of Terms.

### **3. Reasons for recommendation**

- 3.1** CBH's independent Red Book Valuation (via JLL) supports the acquisition value for a 21 unit scheme
- 3.2** One of the 3 key priorities in CBC's approved HRA business plan is to build new affordable homes in the Cheltenham area. Increasing the supply of housing is also a key priority within the council's corporate strategy, also reflected in CBC's Housing and Homelessness Strategy. This development proposal is therefore important in meeting these priorities.
- 3.1** The benefits of proceeding with this development include:
- helping to deliver on the aspiration of a step change in housing delivery for Cheltenham, as set out in the Housing Investment Plan approved by Council in October 2018;
  - helping to support current housing need by providing 21+ new homes;
  - helping to reduce the Cheltenham affordable housing waiting list by providing a mixture of social and affordable rent properties;
  - helping to support first time home ownership by providing a proportion of shared ownership homes as part of the scheme;
  - unlock the opportunity to regenerate a derelict site that sits within existing CBC stock; and
  - strengthening the HRA through a positive return on investment over 40 years.
- 3.2** The new supply aspirations to provide circa 500 new affordable homes over the next 5 years forms a key strand of CBC's COVID-19 'recovery' strategy. Redeveloping this site will contribute towards boosting the local economy, further strengthen the HRA and provide the Council with income generated from New Homes Bonus.



- 3.3** If the site were conditionally acquired within the next three months, it is anticipated that the following 12 months would involve procuring a project team, the submission and agreement of planning permission and procurement of a main contractor. It is anticipated that delivery of the development would then be achieved over the following 2 years.

#### **4. Alternative options considered**

- 4.1** As the site has been tendered competitively on the open market, CBH's offer had to remain in line with the market value of the land and based on a feasibility that is likely to achieve planning, therefore alternative options are limited.
- 4.2** A number of initial feasibility sketches were collated to determine the density for the scheme, which produced a range of between 20-28 dwellings on the site. These density levels were stress tested to ascertain the land value that we are comfortable to support and which has been supported by an independent valuation.
- 4.3** The scheme, as proposed, creates a starting point for the amount of affordable housing the site could accommodate and provides a good mix of accommodation and of tenure types leading to a sustainable community. Further discussions with planners will result in a final scheme, in terms of both density and dwelling type mix.

#### **5. Consultation and feedback**

- 5.1** The details of the schemes have been discussed and are supported by key officers who attend the CBC/CBH OWG and SHDG and the Cabinet Member for Housing.
- 5.2** Prior to the submission of a planning application, the proposed scheme details will be discussed with local residents and stakeholders. In line with other new build developments, prior to the commencement of construction works, all affected residents will be written to and a further drop in information session will be arranged, to include meeting the contractor to give local residents and stakeholders the chance to meet the project team and ask any questions they may have.

#### **6. Performance management - monitoring and review**

- 6.1** For sites to be developed for new build housing, the governance structure for new build schemes would apply, overseen by the joint CBC/CBH SHDG and the CBC/CBH OWG. The Property and Development Teams at CBC and CBH will work closely to manage the acquisition and subsequent redevelopment of the site.
- 6.2** The performance of the appointed contractor will be monitored informally each week at regular site visits and formally each month at the monthly site meetings to ensure compliance with the contractual obligations of a JCT Design and Build contract.
- 6.3** Close financial monitoring of the scheme will continue with costs monitored on a monthly basis to ensure budgets are not exceeded. Should any issues be encountered these will be discussed to ensure appropriate action and mitigation measures are agreed.

<b>Report author</b>	<b>Contact officer:</b> <b>Alison Salter, CBH Head of Development</b> <a href="mailto:Alison.Salter@cbh.org">Alison.Salter@cbh.org</a> 01242 387512 <b>Dominic Stead, CBC Head of Property and Asset Management</b> <a href="mailto:Dominic.Stead@cheltenham.gov.uk">Dominic.Stead@cheltenham.gov.uk</a> 01242 264151
<b>Appendices</b>	1. Risk Assessment 2. Financial appendix (exempt) 3. Heads of Terms (exempt)
<b>Background information</b>	None

## Risk Assessment

## Appendix 1

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
1	If the timetable noted in the agreed Heads of Terms is not adhered to, there is the risk that the vendor will remarket the site and proceed with another partner.	Alison Salter/Dominic Stead	June 2020	4	2	8	Accept and reduce	<p>Ensure legals are instructed ASAP and the required due diligence work is progressed in a timely manner.</p> <p>Impact of COVID-19 may also limit our ability to progress with key surveys as required (staff furloughed/ unable to adhere to social distancing at work). Include in the Heads of Terms a clause stating CBH will use best endeavours to meet the timetable but that COVID-19 may limit our ability to do so.</p>	As noted in the agreed Heads of Terms with the inclusion of a caveat relating to impacts of COVID-19	Alison Salter and Dominic Stead	
2	If significant site abnormalities are identified this may lead to higher build costs and undermine the	Dominic Stead/Alison Salter	June 2020	4	2	8	Reduce	Commission detailed site investigation and procure project team to have detailed cost plan reflecting the site	October 2020	Alison Salter	

	viability of the scheme.							investigation. In the HOT it is noted that an allowance has been made for 'reasonable' abnormals and should any significant deleterious material be found in the ground, negotiations would commence with the agent to review the acquisition price.			
3	If planning consent is not secured for a minimum of 21 units, this may make the scheme unviable to proceed.	Dominic Stead/Alison Salter	June 2020	5	1	5	Accept and Reduce	The acquisition of the site is dependent upon securing satisfactory planning consent for a minimum of 21 dwellings. If consent is not secured, CBC will not acquire the site. To reduce the likelihood of not securing planning consent, work with planning colleagues to review the proposals and submit formal pre-application planning			

								application to ensure proposed scheme is acceptable in planning terms.			
4	If Homes England funding is not secured then alternative funding sources will need to be identified and built into the financial appraisal	Paul Jones	June 2020	5	1	5	Reduce	Continue dialogue with Homes England to have certainty that funding will be secured. Submit a bid for funding as soon as the scheme is a firm scheme and the timetable is known with a degree of certainty.		Alison Salter (CBH) Martin Stacy (CBC)	
5	If market conditions change (as a result of COVID-19 or any other external factor), a contractor partner may not be identified. If there is a short to medium term impact on the costs and availability of materials and supplies as a result of COVID-19, this may increase build costs which will	Alison Salter/Dominic Stead	June 2020	4	2	8	Reduce	Work closely with the project team to ensure that the proposed site layout plan and scheme details are financially viable, amending the proposed mix/elevational treatments etc, to ensure a deliverable scheme. Should future market conditions prohibit the delivery of the proposed scheme, consider disposing of the site to a third		Alison Salter and Dominic Stead	

	have a resultant impact on the viability of the scheme.							party with the benefit of planning consent.			
6	If there is a downturn in the market in the medium term as a result of COVID-19, this may impact our ability to sell properties on a shared ownership basis	Matthew Ward (CBH)	June 2020	3	4	12	Accept and reduce	Keep abreast of market conditions, ensure ongoing dialogue with the RICS registered valuer to ensure the anticipated sales values are achievable and the right property mix is provided on the site. If shared ownership is not deemed to be the best route, look at converting the tenure to a rented product.	Ongoing	Matthew Ward	
7	If the contract is not entered into by 30 September 2020, or if the Council withdraws from the contract as a result of satisfactory planning permission not being received, CBC will have certain liabilities	Alison Salter/Dominic Stead	June 2020	1	1	1	Accept and reduce	Deal promptly with draft documents to ensure exchange and thereafter diligently proceed with the planning application	30 September 2020 and thereafter ongoing	Alison Salter /Dominic Stead	

	(as set out in the appendix 2)										
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