

## Council

Monday, 15th June, 2020  
2.30 - 6.00 pm

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

## Minutes

### 1. APOLOGIES

Councillors Baker, Barnes and Mason.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

### 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Councillor Jordan proposed the following amendments to the minutes :

- Page 3 - 3<sup>rd</sup> para - reference to 'Local Transport Plan' should read 'Local Plan'
- Page 4 - 2<sup>nd</sup> para – '... Councillors have a responsibility to contact ...should read'... Councillors may be asked to help contact ...'

### RESOLVED THAT

**The minutes (as amended) of the meeting held on 23 March 2020 were signed and approved as a correct record.**

### 4. COMMUNICATIONS BY THE MAYOR

The Mayor stated that his role had been very different since lockdown in late March. There had been very few official engagements and the ones that there have been have had very few people in attendance with social distancing rules being observed.

He highlighted that he had been concentrating on the Mayor's Foodbank Fund. The fund received 2 very generous donations week commencing 15/6 from both Leckhampton Parish Council and St Gregory's Church.

He reported that during 2019-20 the Mayor had raised £9,600 for his charities and was very pleased with that amount given that for some weeks of the year we have been in lockdown.

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

The Leader started his address by conveying his sympathies to those who have lost loved ones during the current pandemic.

He also gave thanks to officers for all their hard work during this time.

He highlighted that Cabinet Members would be given the opportunity at this meeting to provide an update on activities under their respective portfolios. He thanked Cabinet Members for their work at this time.

The Leader went on to explain that the West Cheltenham Supplementary Planning Document and the Local Plan were due to be considered at this meeting, however due to the current restrictions in place these have been deferred until the July Council meeting.

The Leader closed his address by congratulating the Mayor on his extended term of office until May 2021.

The Mayor then endorsed comments made by the Leader in thanking officers for going beyond the call of duty during this crisis, by supporting the Help Hub and maintaining the smooth running of the authority.

**6. COMMUNICATIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE CABINET**

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles reported that she had been working with volunteers and wished to pay tribute to staff at GCHQ who have been instrumental in the analysis of how the community help hub was working. The analysis would support the council continuing to work with partners to develop a way forward. She also reported that she had been working with cultural partners to develop the cultural strategy. The virtual schools VE event was a great success. She had also attended a number of virtual meetings with European partners regarding sustainable development goals and local finances and the impact of Covid. She also reported that she had attended meetings in relation to Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and how they are going to treat patients, and which patients they will treat, in the future. In this respect, she requested that the Leader write to Gloucestershire Hospitals regarding Covid red and green hospitals.

The Cabinet Member Housing updated members on the work of Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH) to move their business online, which has been challenging. Their priority has been maintaining critical services and supporting tenants. They have been working closely in partnership with both the Cheltenham Trust and Cheltenham Borough Council on its hub operation. CBH have made calls to their tenants across the board and in some cases have made welfare visits, with the necessary Covid 19 precautions. The pace of change is picking up again as lockdown is lifted and CBH have a 'better normal' project in place to manage the transition of all services to new ways of

operating. In closing, the Cabinet Member Housing drew Members' attention to the work being done in supporting the most vulnerable in our community, the homeless and rough sleepers. At a time when the crisis was at its height, and the pace of activity was ferocious, the effort from the council, CBH and many charity and community partners has been extraordinary. He wished to put on record his thanks to all those involved in a huge team effort. He also thanked the Leader of the council for all his efforts over and above usual business during the pandemic.

Starting with waste and recycling services, the Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment reported that all kerbside collection services have continued throughout the Covid crisis and that subscriptions to the garden waste service have increased. He wished to record his thanks to all staff who have worked extremely hard and also to residents who have contributed to keeping operational employees safe from the virus by adhering to the guidance. The Cabinet Member updated on the household recycling service, which has successfully reopened and is increasing capacity, and on the bulky waste services which was restarted in early June. In terms of parks and gardens, a clear decision was taken early that this service would continue, including regular maintenance and keeping public toilets open. The exception to this, in accordance with government guidelines, was the closure of children's play areas. The Cabinet Member also updated on the early decision to keep cemeteries open, unlike many other councils, despite challenges with limited staffing numbers. In relation to the crematorium, very hard decisions had to be taken in accordance with government guidance and to protect staff, funeral directors and visitors to the site. He wished to place on record that at the forefront of all discussions and decisions were the family members and the friends of loved ones and the understanding that the decisions being taken would have significant and distressing impact. The number of mourners allowed at crematorium services has now risen to twenty and this is being kept under constant review. The Cabinet Member shared his heartfelt thanks to all colleagues and partners across the town who are involved with keeping services running, who should be proud of their contribution.

The Cabinet Member Finance reported that one of the positives to report is that this council was the first in the county, and one of the first in the country, to grant cash to businesses from the council's cash flow, totalling £3.9 million, ahead of any government grant being received. To date £22.2 million has been paid to 1769 qualifying businesses. In addition, working with Stroud, Gloucester and Tewkesbury councils, the county council, Cheltenham BID, the county council and GFirst LEP this council lead the discretionary grants scheme aimed at those businesses which missed out first time around, particularly small and micro businesses including additional local priority to support the hospitality sector. To date, 80 applications have been received. The Cabinet Member was particularly pleased with our approach to working with central government with a clear message of our retained ambitions and confidence in our local solutions for recovery, despite difficult decisions ahead. Business as usual work continues, including the public work realms around the Minster and Workshop Cheltenham. There have been a series of meetings with parish councils who have all done amazing work within communities.

With the hard work and dedication of colleagues, the Cabinet Member Corporate Services reported that within a matter of weeks, 96% of colleagues

were able to work from home and as a result of postponing some non-critical projects, 55 members of staff were redeployed to support mission critical services such as the crematorium and supporting the community hub. As a result of recent investment in our digital platforms, over 600 residents have been able to access our revenues and benefits system online and traffic to our website, particularly to our 'covid support' and help pages, has significantly increased. The new ways of working has contributed to a number of firsts for the council, notably virtual planning, cabinet and council meetings and thanks must go to democratic services for their hard work in getting this set up, and their continued support.

The Cabinet Member Development and Safety particularly highlighted the work undertaken by the planning department for the change in planning requirements for temporary structures to aid Covid 19 recovery plans. Likewise licensing applications have been streamlined to be more effective. Environmental Health officers have been seconded to the county council to help with test and trace, the impact of which on this council in terms of resourcing, will be quite long term. In addition, Cheltenham's sustainable travel plan to aid social distancing and economic recovery, requested by the county council, has been very positively received and will contribute greatly to the county council's final scheme. With regard to M5 junction 10 housing infrastructure fund scheme approved in March, working with the county council, Tewkesbury and Homes England the current the focus is of work is on getting to the contract stage with Homes England working to finalise the design of the scheme which will be subject to consultation, planned for September. As members know, the West of Cheltenham Supplementary Planning Document is coming to the July Council meeting. Developers are already working up a scheme for that site with an anticipated date for submission of outline planning permission in the autumn. The West of Cheltenham Transport Improvement Scheme is underway with work on site to start any day and this will be coordinated with the Highways England work on junction 11 bridge deck. Finally, with regard to the Golden Valley development, the formal EU procurement exercise was launched on 11 May to run for two months. The feedback from the marketing has been very positive and the long term interest in Cheltenham's housing market has remained strong. A recent survey reveals that Cheltenham has the highest concentration of cyber security activity outside of London which puts us in a strong position. 107 registered expressions of interest have already been received since the launch of the marketing. We continue to work with the Department of Trade and International Affairs to promote and support the scheme as a priority investment opportunity.

**7. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS**

There were none.

**8. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Question from Brooke Fisher to the Leader, Councillor Steve Jordan</b>
	After seeing the uncalled for and racist murder of George Floyd, we know that Gloucestershire is aware of what is going on.
	What are you doing to protect and show that the black people whom live in Cheltenham and Gloucestershire are safe, loved and equal ?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are you going to make a significant change ?</li> <li>• What are you doing to make sure black peoples voices are heard ?</li> <li>• How are you going to guarantee that black lives matter?</li> <li>• How are you going to make sure black people are safe ?</li> <li>• What are you doing to make sure that our police are not racist and biased?</li> <li>• What are you doing to make sure that those whom have been stopped, arrested, treated unfairly solely because of the colour of their skin are given justice ?</li> <li>• What is your plan of action when it comes to racism towards not only black people but people of colour ?</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Response from the Leader</b></p>
	<p>Later on this agenda the Council will be debating the following motion which I support and hope will be agreed as it will help us answer the important questions raised.</p> <p>“Following the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis and other brutal activity, Cheltenham Borough Council puts on record its support for Black Lives Matter and its total opposition to any kind of racism.</p> <p>Cheltenham Borough Council believes in action, not just fine words. In conjunction with the Police and Crime Commissioner, Cheltenham Borough Homes, Cheltenham Trust, Festivals and other partners, Cabinet is requested to look at holding a conference for Cheltenham’s BAME community organisations, to discuss how we might work closer together to challenge bias, both deliberate and unconscious, and racism in all its forms.</p> <p>To that end, Council also requests that all policies, the organisational structure, appointments process and working environment of the Council be interrogated by Cabinet to ensure they reflect the Council’s stance on these matters.</p> <p>Council would request the Police and Crime Commissioner, Cheltenham Borough Homes, Cheltenham Trust, Festivals and other partners to work together with the Council, to ensure that effective action is taken.</p> <p>In addition, Cabinet is asked to look at how we can support other councils in less diverse areas through the LGA, by means of exchange programmes and secondment schemes and, for members, unconscious bias training,</p> <p>Further, that Cheltenham's national representative on the Council of Europe, is requested to raise these issues at the Council of Europe; and the Cabinet member to raise issues through Council of European Municipalities and Regions in relation to local government and how, together, we can best fight bias, racism and brutality in all its forms and provide a voice to action, so that in deed and word, Black Lives Matter.”</p>
<p><b>2.</b></p>	<p><b>Question from Dr Jermaine M Ravalier to the Leader, Councillor Steve Jordan</b></p>

	In the light of the tearing down of the statue of Colston in Bristol, I would like to know whether there are any similar symbols of oppression in Cheltenham. Relatedly, what is the council doing to support black people in the Borough, and what plans do you have to further this support in the future?
	<b>Response from the Leader</b>
	<p>I do not believe there are symbols of oppression in Cheltenham and no complaints have been received about statues here. However, the council is undertaking a review of public statues and monuments to ascertain if any might be considered controversial including consulting a local historian. To date we have considered 13 statues / monuments and feel that all are acceptable – though we will keep the situation under review in consultation with local groups. Out of the 13:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three are mythological</li> <li>• Three are royalty</li> <li>• Two are war memorials</li> <li>• Three relate to famous local people – Gustav Holst, Edward Wilson, Captain Skillicorne</li> <li>• Two relate to other famous individuals - Major Charles Gordon &amp; William Shakespeare</li> </ul> <p>The Council always attempts to treat people equally in line with its policies on equality. However, it is important to ensure that is everyone's experience and I support the motion later on the agenda that both confirms our support for Black Lives Matter while agreeing a policy review.</p>

## 9. MEMBER QUESTIONS

<b>1.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Tim Harman to Cabinet Member Housing, Councillor Peter Jeffries</b>
	<p>Since the Coronavirus crisis occurred there has been excellent cross working between Government and Local Authorities on the important issue of finding and both interim and long term housing for Homeless people who have been rough sleeping. Dame Louise Casey is leading the National Effort.</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member update the Council on his plans to ensure that everything is done to prevent those currently in temporary accommodation from returning to the Streets and Doorways?</p>
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>Cheltenham has a history of strong collaborative working across Gloucestershire to tackle rough sleeping. Collectively, we have been hugely successful in securing funding for this region and our town. In recent years we have secured nearly £1.3m to support the delivery of a Housing First-type model for our most entrenched rough sleepers – providing them with independent accommodation combined with wrap-around support. More recently we have secured nearly £1m to create Somewhere Safe to Stay hubs in Cheltenham and Gloucester, again coupled with provision of specialist</p>

	<p>support for those with complex needs. In addition we continue to jointly commission our county-wide Assertive Outreach service that seeks to identify rough sleepers and then work with them so that they can access appropriate accommodation and support-based services.</p> <p>Since the pandemic, extensive work has been carried out to ensure that accommodation has been offered to everyone who is homeless and who has been rough sleeping, this has been a concentrated all district county wide effort. Our Housing Options team, managed by Cheltenham Borough Homes, are working with households placed in emergency hotel accommodation to understand their needs, with a view to finding suitable and sustainable accommodation move-on options.</p> <p>At the height of this crisis Cheltenham had approximately 40 households accommodated in hotels. Since then we have been working hard to find move-on solutions, with the result that from the beginning of May, Cheltenham have found homes for 23 rough sleepers (or would be rough sleepers).</p> <p>As of the 8th June Cheltenham has 18 households accommodated in hotels. Most placements are now within the Cheltenham district with only five clients residing in hotel accommodation outside of the borough. (Please do note, however, that these figures present just a snapshot in time, given that there is inevitably an ongoing movement of households both into and out of the hotel provision.)</p> <p>We are continuing to explore move-on options. Those with very complex needs, where accommodation options are more limited, are referred into a multi-agency 'Complex Cases partnership meeting' where an outcome based, partnership approach is being taken to develop bespoke solutions to meet the individuals' needs and support them to access and maintain accommodation. In addition, we are exploring new housing supply options via our county-wide 'new supply partnership'. Alongside this, we are currently working with colleagues across the county to realign current funding streams from MHCLG (referred to above) to better fit pathways in view of the current pandemic.</p> <p>At this present time, we have 2 rough sleepers in Cheltenham. They are both known to agencies and we continue to work with them to find housing and support solutions.</p> <p>At the start of this pandemic there was a clear message, "everyone in" , I would like to put on record my thanks to all the Cheltenham Borough Council officers and the Housing Options team from Cheltenham Borough Homes who worked tirelessly as part of the all district and county collaboration in making this happen.</p> <p>The hard work continues as we support those residents that have been existing on our streets, continue to exist on our streets or have found themselves homeless in recent times.</p>
2.	<p><b>Question from Councillor Tim Harman to the Mayor, Councillor Roger Whyborn</b></p>
	<p>The Coronavirus crisis has shown the people of Cheltenham at their best. The volunteers that have come forward to help those in need of support have shown an outstanding level of commitment and compassion.</p>

	Will the Mayor consider making a special award to Community groups and possibly individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to supporting those in need across the Town?
	<b>Response from the Mayor</b>
	I recognise that there has certainly been an outstanding level of commitment and compassion shown by Community groups and individuals towards those in need during this present Coronavirus crisis. I therefore think it entirely appropriate that the Borough should recognise this through the vehicle of Mayoral award(s). I will consult widely over the coming months as to how best to do this.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Diggory Seacome to the Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles, Councillor Flo Clucas</b>
	The draft plan for the West Cheltenham Development and Cyber Park has recently been published, but with no mention of Public Art. Can the Cabinet Member tell us if this will be rectified, and if so whether any Public Art will be considered from the start, as an integral part of the plan, or whether it will be tacked on as a late addendum, as so often happens.
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	The Golden Valley SPD currently being finalised, which will be presented to Council for adoption in July, includes references to public art.  Specifically it includes principle C9 which states; Proposals will be devised with partners to develop and deliver an innovative public art programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role and identity of any new public art will help to celebrate the natural setting and assets within the site.</li> <li>• Opportunities for use in wayfinding and in helping to shape the identity of neighbourhoods within the overall area will be explored.</li> <li>• This strategy will be considered in conjunction with informal playful spaces and the CBC Public Art strategy.</li> <li>• Public art projects must also play a role in encouraging community participation and integration during the early build out phases together with helping to tie in cyber tech with everyday engagement of business users, residents and businesses.</li> </ul> <p>In thanking the member for his question, I am mindful of the commitment he has to public art and I am happy invite him to meet with relevant officers and members to discuss this further.</p>
	<b>Supplementary question from Councillor Diggory Seacome to the Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles, Councillor Flo Clucas</b>
	Are there are any time schedules for when the Public Art Panel might be involved
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	As meetings of the Public Art Panel may be some time away Councillor Clucas suggested that she and Councillor Seacome meet separately wiith officers to progress this.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Baker to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman</b>
	I am disappointed at the filthy condition of the litter bins around the town; I



	doubt they have ever been cleaned since being installed. Can I ask that this is reviewed urgently and a programme of cleaning rolled out across the town, including our parks and gardens?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>The litter bins across the borough, including in parks and gardens, have been installed over a number of years and some are much older than others. As part of the trial of the recycling bins in the high street which have been well received, we are reviewing litter bin replacement across the borough, subject to need and budget availability in the current financial climate.</p> <p>The bins in the town centre are regularly jet washed as part of the normal cleansing process and if bins in the rest of the borough are reported as looking in a poor state ad hoc cleansing takes place. A programme of cleaning/jet washing all the town centre bins took place last year and the year before.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Baker to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman</b>
	Plastic Free Cheltenham have been carrying some investigations into the installation of water refilling stations to reduce the use of plastic water bottles and encourage people to top up existing water bottles. This aim accords with our own commitment to reduce the use of single use plastic. These stations can be installed internally, wall mounted for around £1k whilst free standing outside stations are around £3k. Can I ask that we investigate the installation of such stations in The Promenade, High Street and Montpellier and work with the Regent Arcade and The Brewery to encourage them to install similar installations?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>I'm aware of the good work being done by Plastic Free Cheltenham to look at options for the provision of water filling stations. Regrettably, these are likely to present an unacceptable risk to public health whilst there is still a significant risk of Covid-19 transmission from such installations, so it is unlikely that the authority would prioritise this work in the short term.</p> <p>However, I recognise the obvious benefits in terms of providing an alternative to purchasing water in plastic bottles, which aligns with our commitment to reduce single use plastic and therefore undertake to revisit this issue when it becomes practical to implement.</p> <p>There will need for careful consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public health or hygiene risks associated with the use of water refilling stations and how the control measures would be managed and funded - for example, regular sanitisation of hand contact points;</li> <li>- The carbon impact of new water refilling stations compared with encouraging businesses and community premises to join the national 'Refill' scheme;</li> <li>- Any funding or sponsorship opportunities available to help progress this, or any similar initiative, at this time of unprecedented financial pressure on local authority resources.</li> </ul>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Brownstein to Cabinet Member Development</b>

	<b>and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</b>
	In the March budget, the chancellor announced that £500m per year will now be allocated to fixing potholes. This was welcome news in Cheltenham where many roads remain in appalling condition, none worse than in St Paul's. Is the council expecting that funding commitment to remain in place, and if so, what representations will it be making to Gloucestershire County Council to ensure that Cheltenham receives its fair share? On what basis will funding be allocated across the districts, and what is the process for individual members to advise on which roads should be prioritised in their wards?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>Potholes and any associated bids for grant funding made available by central government are the responsibility of Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) in its role as Highways Authority.</p> <p>The Director of Environment has contacted GCC in relation to the national pothole funding and we are expecting the relevant GCC lead commissioner to advise on the prioritisation process and what this might mean for Cheltenham.</p> <p>When a reply is received I will provide a briefing to members, but in the meantime would encourage ward members to route any specific enquiries through their local county councillor.</p>

## 10. NOTICES OF MOTION

### (A) MOTION A

Councillor Clucas proposed the motion, noting that she expected that everyone present had been appalled by the events in Minneapolis in the last few weeks. She stressed that the death of George Floyd clearly showed that action cannot be left just to the USA.

She emphasised that racism occurred everywhere: in housing, employment, education, law, governance and representation, although it often went unnoticed. She added that actions spoke louder than words, and explained that the motion sought to build on the positive momentum of the recent Pittville Park protest. She was proud of Cheltenham residents for making their voices heard, and thanked officers and the police for their help in keeping people safe and the protest peaceful. The council must work together with partners to make a difference and ensure its processes and policies are free of racial bias. The motion asked the council to look at a range of areas, including holding a conference in conjunction with black and minority ethnic partners to review its decision making protocols.

Councillor Willingham seconded the motion, emphasising that if the council failed to act and get its own house in order, it would be complicit. This could only be done through dialogue with communities and proper training for members and officers, and services must be delivered in a just and equitable way. He acknowledged the disproportionate effect of the Covid-19 crisis on black and minority ethnic communities, and warned that difficult economic conditions could be exploited by extremists to stoke fear and prejudice. He

asked members to support the motion, describing it as a positive step on a long road.

One member added that she was disappointed that the phrase 'black lives matter' still needed to be said in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and emphasised the importance of questioning our own assumptions. The journey to a fair and equal society would not be easy, but everyone could contribute towards it.

One member added that as local councillors, they were responsible for everyone in their wards regardless of skin colour. He cited peaceful protest as a hallmark of the democratic process, and praised the recent gathering in Pittville Park as a good example of this. He stressed that peaceful movements should not be hijacked by those who wished to be violent. He acknowledged that it was difficult to identify and combat unconscious prejudice, citing a study which found that a white candidate for a job was three times more likely to be appointed than a black candidate with the same qualifications. Prejudice could not be legislated against, but assumptions could be challenged, and a more equal society built. Another Member thanked Councillors Clucas and Willingham for bringing the motion before the council, and condemned violence at protests as counterproductive.

Several Members emphasised that while it was essential to eliminate conscious discrimination from its procedures, unconscious discrimination was just as important. One Member added that other systemic issues like economic exploitation were part of the problem too, and warned against judging the past by today's standards. He also stressed that it should not have taken the unlawful killing of a black man to finally debate these issues.

One Member expressed his sadness at how familiar the story of George Floyd was. Racism will not just go away on its own, but needs to be actively combatted through proper education. He reported that the council had adopted new equalities policies, which will be continually reviewed to ensure that they do not become complacent. The council must take an active role in combatting discrimination and engaging with affected communities. One Member thanked her colleagues for their work in putting together the motion, and noted that partners including the Council of Europe had advocated protection of minorities for a long time.

Several Members recalled the racism that they saw while growing up, and their despair at seeing that it still existed. One Member added that having attended the Black Lives Matter protest in Cheltenham, he had found it uplifting to see how young many of the attendees were. He stressed that if things were to change, education was needed not just for children but for all of us, and that if the council does nothing, it tacitly condones the situation.

One Member related her experiences with racism as a child, and suggested that some introspection was needed regarding why there were no BAME Members on the council. One Member noted that positive and compassionate police

engagement was important. He also condemned violence at protests but reminded Members that the broader causes of this needed to be taken into account. One Member agreed that there was no 'quick fix' for racism, and while education was key, it could not do it alone. He emphasised the need for smart targets and concrete proposals. He believed however that the underlying issue was not education but culture.

One Member reiterated the earlier point about all 40 councillors being white, and suggested that a lack of diverse experiences on the council affected the level of debate it could offer.

The Mayor agreed that he hoped the events of the last couple of weeks would kick-start a change of culture, and handed over to Councillor Clucas to sum up. Councillor Clucas thanked Members for their contributions to the debate, and responded to a number of points made. She agreed that the council must listen to and engage with communities who were not represented. She added that people cannot be simply instructed to change: instead, the council must look at broader community- and education-based solutions. She accepted that the council was not diverse enough, and should look at working with organisations like Operation Black Vote to support BAME candidates.

#### **RESOLVED (unanimously) THAT**

**Following the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis and other brutal activity, Cheltenham Borough Council puts on record its support for Black Lives Matter and its total opposition to any kind of racism.**

**Cheltenham Borough Council believes in action, not just fine words. In conjunction with the Police and Crime Commissioner, Cheltenham Borough Homes, Cheltenham Trust, Festivals and other partners, Cabinet is requested to look at holding a conference for Cheltenham's BAME community organisations, to discuss how we might work closer together to challenge bias, both deliberate and unconscious, and racism in all its forms.**

**To that end, Council also requests that all policies, the organisational structure, appointments process and working environment of the Council be interrogated by Cabinet to ensure they reflect the Council's stance on these matters.**

**Council would request the Police and Crime Commissioner, Cheltenham Borough Homes, Cheltenham Trust, Festivals and other partners to work together with the Council, to ensure that effective action is taken.**

**In addition, Cabinet is asked to look at how we can support other councils in less diverse areas through the LGA, by means of exchange programmes and secondment schemes and, for members, unconscious bias training,**

**Further, that Cheltenham's national representative on the Council of Europe, is requested to raise these issues at the Council of Europe; and the Cabinet member to raise issues through Council of European Municipalities and Regions in relation to local government and how, together, we can best fight bias, racism and brutality in all its forms and provide a voice to action, so that in deed and word, Black Lives Matter.”**

The meeting was adjourned.

**(B) MOTION B**

In proposing the motion the Leader praised, in particular staff in the health and social care sector, the community support network, and council staff for maintaining services in challenging circumstances. He recognised the huge effort locally in administering business grants and national support for those on the shielding list. The Cheltenham Community Help Hub was working with its partners the Cheltenham Trust (in providing food parcels) and Cheltenham Borough Homes (in collecting prescriptions). He thanked all those involved and also to the Executive Leadership Team for their leadership. 96% of council staff were now home working with thanks to Publica ICT. Those members of staff who had been redeployed to other jobs had done so seamlessly.

In looking to the future the Leader highlighted the need to try and avoid a 2<sup>nd</sup> wave and highlighted the importance of test and trace. As lockdown eased a local plan would be required in accordance with national guidance. Everyone had a role to play and the draft recovery strategy would be discussed at Cabinet. Key to the recovery was the continuation of key projects such as investment in affordable housing and development at West Cheltenham.

The Deputy Leader seconded the motion and stated that the pandemic had touched all of our lives. The loss of life had been devastating and he offered his thoughts to all who have suffered. He noted that the economy of the town was on pause with consequences for all businesses and highlighted that the council was not immune from the financial impact. He welcomed the support to the most vulnerable in the town. There was going to be a new normal and emphasised the need for the town to work collectively to recover.

Members expressed their sympathy with those who had lost loved ones during this crisis and to people who have had the disease.

The significant work undertaken over recent weeks within communities was recognised and the role some Councillors had played in visiting people that the Help Hub couldn't reach and also in identifying businesses which may not have been contacted regarding any available assistance.

Members wished to put on record their thanks to council officers, many of whom had been redeployed to other duties. There was particular recognition of the outstanding work undertaken in assisting local businesses and the work

undertaken by the community help hub. Members also thanked partner organisations, such as Ubico, CBH and the Cheltenham Trust.

It was acknowledged that risks associated with a return to the normal night time economy could be mitigated via Purple Flag work to ensure those employed in that sector were kept safe. It was recognised that more than ever the hospitality sector needed our support.

It was recognised that Cheltenham has the people, skills, willingness and strong sustainable communities to recover and Cheltenham Borough Council needs to play a part in a collective response. There would need to be a council wide review of expenditure and some hard choices would have to be made.

Thanks were given to the Local Resilience Forum and Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group.

It was recognised that the current situation had brought out the best in people and communities. The care shown within the community has shown something positive at a time of adversity.

It was also acknowledged that young people are particularly finding it hard to get jobs and there is a skills shortage which needed to be addressed.

It was noted that young people not at school may have been forgotten during this time and there was recognition for those working from home and home schooling. It was important that through the No Child Left Behind initiative no child goes hungry over the holidays.

A Member requested that the closure of Cheltenham A&E was looked at by Overview and Scrutiny.

A Member highlighted that now, more than ever, was the time for cycling and walking to be encouraged. Recommendations have been submitted to Gloucestershire County Council regarding road closures for cyclists and Cheltenham could be a trailblazer for this. The benefits of exercise on mental health were also highlighted.

The Leader concluded the debate by confirming that Cabinet would consider the contributions made today. He emphasised that ongoing practical support was needed from Government.

## **RESOLVED THAT**

- 1. the extraordinary collective and sustained effort of organisations, communities and individuals across Cheltenham to respond to Covid-19 be recognised.**
- 2. all Council staff be thanked for their flexibility and dedication in responding to the crisis.**
- 3. the Covid-19 Recovery Strategy approved by Cabinet for consultation on 14th May 2020 be welcomed**
- 4. It be noted that the issues raised in debate of this motion will be considered as part of the consultation before a revised Strategy is submitted for approval by Cabinet in July.**

For : 34  
Abstain: 1  
Against: 0

**(C) MOTION C**

Councillor Atherstone proposed the motion as she had been contacted by a local resident and business owner about a new initiative called 'Circle of Kindness' which has proven successful in many towns across the UK and is an excellent example of a locally driven project of benefit to local people. Councillor Atherstone is proposing that as part of Cheltenham's recovery programme can Cheltenham Borough Council facilitate a Circle of Kindness which will benefit both local community organisations and small local business. The scheme will provide an official platform to appeal to local independent donors to bulk purchase goods and services by spending with local businesses impacted by Covid 19. Community support groups have responded so quickly during this crisis to support local residents and thanks go to The Big Local, Springbank Community Food Bank and Cheltenham Food Bank for the incredible work over the past few months. Councillor Atherstone asked Cabinet Members to include developing a Circle of Kindness as part of the recovery strategy for Cheltenham which will significantly benefit many within our local communities.

Councillor Clucas seconded the motion.

**RESOLVED (unanimously) THAT**

**As part of Cheltenham's Recovery Programme, Cheltenham Borough Council facilitate a Circle of Kindness which will benefit both local community organisations and small local businesses. The scheme will provide an official platform to appeal to local independent donors to bulk purchase goods and services to support local organisations by spending with local businesses impacted by COVID-19.**

**Our local high street and independent businesses across Cheltenham are suffering the crippling impacts of COVID-19. The lockdown restrictions have resulted in loss of jobs or reduced income for workers and threatened livelihoods for small business owners.**

**The Circle of Kindness was launched in Banbury by the Visit Banbury CIC initiative. Like Banbury we could use an established online platform ShopAppy to connect local community donation receivers with small business sellers – donations from local residents can be made in sums of £5 - £10 – 20 - £50 - £100 - £150 - £200 - £300 - £500 etc**

**To be led by Cheltenham Borough Council in collaboration with:**

**Visit Cheltenham  
Cheltenham BID  
Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce  
Cheltenham Borough Homes**

**And other business groups, stretching across all significant retail streets in Cheltenham Town Centre e.g:**

**Bath Road  
Winchcombe Street  
Cheltenham Westend Partnership  
St Pauls Residents Association  
Other retail and residents' groups**

**11. URGENT NON-EXECUTIVE DECISIONS TAKEN DURING THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY**

The Chief Executive introduced the report and thanked councillors for their kind comments during Motion B and wished to put on record his personal thanks to all colleagues, partner organisations and volunteers for their work in these extremely challenging times.

At the previous Council meeting held on 23 March 2020, changes to the constitution were made to allow the executive to take urgent decisions in response to Covid 19. The report captures decisions that were taken whilst formal meetings were unable to be held. These were primarily to respond to updated government guidance and regulation surrounding businesses and health protection as well as amendments to hardship funds. Temporary arrangements were also made in respect of taxi licensing.

He recognised that colleagues in democratic services have worked hard to adapt to government regulations to ensure that virtual meetings can be held and therefore democratic decision making has returned and working well in a virtual setting.

**RESOLVED (unanimously) THAT**

**The urgent decisions taken by the Chief Executive and Executive Directors on non-executive functions in the period 23 March-15 June 2020 be noted.**

**12. COUNCIL DIARY 2020-2021**

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services explained that the council diary had been amended to reflect the rescheduling of the borough elections to May 2021, as a result of the Covid-19 crisis. He clarified that as before, all public meetings would be advertised well in advance, and any changes would happen in consultation with the relevant members and officers.

One Member asked whether the word 'full' could be added after each meeting of the full Licensing Committee in the diary, in order to distinguish it from its sub-committees. This was accepted by the Cabinet Member Corporate Services.

**RESOLVED THAT**

**The draft Council Diary of meetings for September 2020 – August 2021 be approved.**



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

None.

Roger Whyborn  
**Chairman**