

Cabinet

**Tuesday, 17th December, 2019
6.00 - 6.50 pm**

Attendees	
Councillors:	Steve Jordan (Leader of the Council), Flo Clucas (Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles), Chris Coleman (Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment), Rowena Hay (Cabinet Member Finance), Peter Jeffries (Cabinet Member Housing) and Andrew McKinlay (Cabinet Member Development and Safety)
Also in attendance:	Councillor David Willingham

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Hegenbarth.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2019 were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

1.	Question from Councillor David Willingham to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman
	A number of roads in St Peter's are blessed with mature street trees. However, in the autumn these trees deposit significant quantities of leaves on the roads and pavements. Recognising that Ubico only have limited resources, and that in some places mechanical street cleansing is prevented by high occupancy levels of on-street parking, could the cabinet member please advise how different roads in the town have been assessed and prioritised for autumn leaf clearance, and whether/what influence ward members can have on this prioritisation process?
	Response from Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment
	I can confirm that all roads are reviewed by Ubico considering factors such as foot fall, traffic and leaf fall which results in a prioritised schedule delivered within available budget and resources, i.e. the availability of manual staff and mechanical sweepers. In addition, Ubico respond to any ad hoc requests from residents or members which result in week by week amendments to the prioritisation schedule. If Members wish to report any areas where there is a build-up of detritus or leaf fall to help

	<p>better prioritise the cleansing schedule please e-mail: Internet.Cleansing@cheltenham.gov.uk</p> <p>As Councillor Willingham points out, deep cleansing of roads involving coning off of roads and restricting on street parking for a few hours enabling mechanical sweepers to gain access to all gullies along with manual staff to dig out and clear any build-up of detritus and fallen leaves requires the assistance of residents. Parked cars need to be temporarily moved and parked elsewhere to enable these operations to take place and maximise the results. Where possible Ubico try to co-ordinate with Gloucestershire Highways to ensure drains can also be cleared and unblocked below the surface.</p> <p>Cleansing activities are normally scheduled in the mornings and the Autumn cleansing operations have already started (leaf fall). As part of the review of street cleansing, full details will be available on the Council's website in the next few weeks and officers will write out to all members when this is complete. I would be pleased to arrange a member briefing if members felt this was useful and a suitable date can be found.</p> <p>Residents will be able to follow us on Facebook, Instagram and twitter to find out what is going on with street cleansing and leaf clearing going forward. The planned street cleansing operations I have referred to are currently publicised in advance by signage and bollards at the location due for deep cleansing.</p> <p>Unfortunately the quality of the end result of the cleansing activity is sometimes diminished by a lack of access where parked vehicles cause obstructions. Ubico have no powers to require the public to move their vehicles and on these occasions cleansing activities cannot be completed or take place at all.</p> <p>I would like to thank all the residents that do assist in ensuring roads are clear of parked cars for cleansing activities to take place and also all those residents who help clear up and bag up leaves from all our wonderful mature trees across the borough.</p>
2.	<p>Question from Councillor David Willingham to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman</p>
	<p>Given the complex entanglement of responsibilities and logistics between Gloucestershire County Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and Ubico for street cleansing, street trees, management of on-street parking and gully drain clearance, could the cabinet member please advise whether there is co-ordination between the authorities on the delivery of these services, and if not what is being done to try to improve that situation?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment</p>

	<p>The point Councillor Willingham makes is well made. I am pleased to say that discussions have already started between Gloucestershire County Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and Ubico to ensure a more efficient and better co-ordinated approach can be identified which builds on the co-operation that currently takes place where deep cleansing in streets is taking place to ensure drains can be cleared and unblocked below the surface.</p>
3.	Question from Councillor David Willingham to Leader of the Council, Steve Jordan
	<p>In the report on the Cyber Central SPD consultation, following the Council's declaration of a climate emergency, the Council rightly discusses ensuring the development is carbon neutral. Given that the climatic impact from anthropogenic carbon dioxide is already destabilising weather patterns and causing extreme weather events to occur more frequently, there is a need for new developments to not just be carbon neutral, but to be carbon negative, and to sequester carbon dioxide. If consultation responses indicate a public desire for this development to be carbon negative, could the leader of the council please ask officers to advise whether current central government planning policies would allow this council to make delivery of a carbon negative development an enforceable planning condition for this site as part of this SPD?</p>
	Response from the Leader
	<p>Sustainability and responding to the broader climate change agenda is a key driver for the Cyber Central SPD. However, in the context of future development proposals all planning matters will need to be assessed in the context of their contribution to the strategic principles and objectives as set out in JCS policies and the SPD. Specific objectives within the SPD include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability • Land use • Landscape • Movement <p>The purpose of the SPD is to guide future planning applications by driving quality, innovation and design. It will be for the development management process to balance demands arising from future proposals and understanding the impact on deliverability, including viability.</p> <p>Current planning policies, both national and local (via JCS and Cheltenham Plan) are positive in encouraging positive interventions through planning to the climate change agenda, but currently do not have the strength in legislation sitting behind them (for example Building Control Regulations). The preparation of the SPD gives the local planning</p>

	<p>authority clear guidance within which to negotiate across future planning proposals and through the consultation on the SPD we can test the appetite to further stretch the sustainability agenda.</p> <p>Rhetoric in the lead up to the general election across all parties highlighted the demands arising from climate change and whilst legislation is currently lagging behind, we fully expect this will change during the coming months and will do all we can to encourage that to happen.</p>
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5. CYBER CENTRAL GARDEN COMMUNITY - DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

The Leader introduced the report and explained that further to the Council acquiring the site at a cost of £37.5 million there was a potential conflict in terms of the CBC land interest and the CBC planning process which this document formed part of. To that end the Leader would now assume responsibility for the Local Plan and already held responsibility for the JCS. The Cabinet Member Development and Safety had Cyber Central within his portfolio.

The Leader explained that this represented a joint piece of work with Tewkesbury Borough Council. The report sought authority to consult on Cyber Central Garden Community Draft Supplementary Planning Document for a period of 5 weeks. It was recommended that consultation commenced on the SPD 13th January 2020.

He reported that the draft SPD had been subject to engagement with key stakeholders and the wider community of West Cheltenham through a series of face to face engagement sessions. It had also been subject to technical review by specialist officers across Cheltenham Borough Council, Tewkesbury Borough Council and Gloucestershire County Council.

The SPD has been informed by The Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy (JCS), the emerging Local Industrial Strategy, Connecting Cheltenham transport strategy, applications for Local Green Space designations and Hesters Way Neighbourhood Plan, together with technical reports and assessment detailing constraints and opportunities for West Cheltenham.

The Leader explained that this was the first formal stage in the preparation of the SPD. Once consultation had been completed, a full report on the consultation together with any subsequent changes to the SPD would be presented to Council. This was scheduled for 22nd April 2020. The amended SPD will be presented to Council for approval, if approved the SPD would become a material consideration to the determination of future planning applications.

The Leader believed Cyber Central was a significant opportunity for the town and therefore it was essential to get it right. It had received central government support and uniquely linked cyber with new homes as well as providing extra entertainment options on site to make a genuine community.

Cabinet Members supported the document and highlighted the importance of quality development whilst also providing flexibility so not to strangle the

potential to come forward of innovative ideas. Continuous engagement with those communities affected was key.

The Leader thanked all officers involved and the Cabinet Member Development and Safety.

RESOLVED THAT

- 1. The Draft Cyber Central Garden Community Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) be approved for consultation in accordance with Regulation 13 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012 for a period of 5 weeks (appendix 2),**
- 2. The consultation arrangements set out at appendix 3 of this report be approved, and**
- 3. Authority be delegated to the Director of Planning to make editorial changes to the draft SPD in terms of formatting, presentation and accuracy prior to publication for consultation purposes.**

6. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT REVENUE AND CAPITAL - REVISED BUDGET 2019/20 AND INTERIM BUDGET PROPOSALS 2020/21 FOR CONSULTATION

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report and explained that the current year marked the successful completion of a four-year plan to mitigate the rent reduction policy imposed by Government. The new social rent policy of allowing annual rent increases of CPI + 1% p.a. for five years and the abolition of the HRA debt cap ensured that additional resources would be available to increase the supply of affordable housing, further improve existing stock and invest in our communities.

The Cabinet Member Finance referred to the following highlights:

- 500 new affordable homes by 2023.
- Completion of the new windows and doors programme for existing stock.
- Installation of showers in all our properties.
- Development of a carbon neutral strategy for new and existing stock and the delivery of housing services.
- Delivery of 5 community investment plans, supported by a diverse range of partners and connecting with over 2,000 residents per quarter. These plans focus on employment and education, community safety, health and wellbeing, financial inclusion and involvement and engagement.

The Cabinet Member Finance explained that the Government's new rent policy would commence in April 2020. Rents would be allowed to increase by CPI (as at previous September) +1% per annum for the next five years before a further review. The CPI for September 2019 was 1.7% giving a rent increase for 2020/21 of 2.7%.

The Cabinet Member Finance reported that after significant delays to the introduction of Universal Credit, the full rollout began in Cheltenham in

December 2017. There were currently 996 claimants (November 2019) with 1,050 being anticipated by March 2020. Under present regulations there could eventually be up to 2,000 claimants, potentially placing considerable pressure on rent arrears. She reported that CBH was conducting a proactive campaign to provide support and information to all tenants affected by these changes. The impact on arrears would be closely monitored and the budget proposals reflected an increasing provision for bad debts.

The Cabinet Member referred to the consultation paper in the summer of 2018 which sought views on introducing more flexibility in the use of Right To Buy receipts to fund new build. Though any relaxation in the conditions of use would be welcome, the suggestions put forward in the document would be limited in their impact and the sector response was to request more wide-ranging reform, including the abolition of RTB. The consultation closed in early October 2018 and a response from the Government was still awaited.

The Cabinet Member Finance reported that the 30 year HRA Business Plan had been updated to reflect:-

- Anticipated revenue outturn for 2019/20.
- The proposed development and acquisition programme for the period from April 2020 to March 2023 which is forecast to deliver 500 new affordable units.
- A contingency budget of £5.5m. for regeneration projects based on the assumption that there will be no additional revenue benefit from the investment.
- A refreshed assessment of the 30 year “need to spend” on existing stock for both capital and revenue expenditure.

The revised capital programme for 2019/20 reflected variations identified during the year, most notably the acquisition of land in West Cheltenham (£11.5m) to enable the future development of new affordable housing.

In terms of existing housing stock, the detailed capital programme for 2020/21 and indicative programmes for the following two years were shown at Appendix 4. These reflected both the investment requirements for existing stock identified via stock condition surveys and a recent review of the 30 year capital programme. The sum set aside for component replacements each year would vary in line with anticipated lifecycles.

The Cabinet Member Finance highlighted that the capital programme also included an ambitious programme of new build and acquisitions delivering a further 500 affordable homes by 2023/24. A range of tenures would be provided with units developed for social rent, affordable rent and shared ownership. The mix and number would be dependent on the financial viability of each site, but an emphasis would be placed on affordability. A contingency of £50,000 had been included in the revenue budget to support the delivery of this enhanced programme.

The proposed funding of the capital programme, together with a statement of balances on the major repairs reserve, was shown at Appendix 3. This reflected the significant increase in new build spend which would be financed by a combination of borrowing, grant, shared ownership sales and capital receipts.

Finally, the Cabinet Member Finance said that the end of rent reduction, certainty on rent policy for 5 years and the lifting of the debt cap all strengthened HRA viability and gave additional capacity to invest in both the existing stock and new build. As anticipated by the Housing Investment Plan approved by Council in October 2018 the budget proposals included an ambitious programme of new build and acquisition. This would complement the resources also made available to CBH to deliver new market rented units. The 30 year HRA Business Plan confirmed the longer term viability of this investment which would provide a significant boost to the stock of affordable housing in Cheltenham.

She wished to put on record her thanks to Cheltenham Borough Homes.

RESOLVED THAT

- 1. The revised HRA forecast for 2019/20 be noted.**
- 2. The interim HRA budget proposals for 2020/21 (shown at Appendix 2) be approved for consultation, including a proposed rent increase of 2.7% and changes to other rents and charges as detailed within the report.**
- 3. The proposed HRA capital programme for 2020/21, as shown at Appendix 3, be approved.**
- 4. Authority be delegated to the Executive Director Finance and Assets, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, to determine and approve any additional material that may be needed to support the presentation of the interim budget proposals for consultation.**
- 5. Consultation responses be sought by 31st January 2020.**

7. GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND CAPITAL - INTERIM BUDGET PROPOSALS 2020/21 FOR CONSULTATION

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report and explained that there was no verifiable evidence about whether the provisional local government finance settlement would be either before or after Christmas.

That said, interim budget proposals for the financial year ahead still needed to be prepared and the consultation process should take place for no less than four weeks prior to finalising recommendations for the Council to consider in February 2020.

The report set out the interim proposals for 2020/21. The assumptions within the interim budget proposals were based on the technical consultation on the local government finance settlement for 2020/21 which was released by MHCLG after the Spending Review 2019 (SR19) was published in September 2019. The council's response to the technical consultation was submitted on 31st October 2019.

The Cabinet Member reported that the council's approved Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was predicated on the basis that council tax would increase by 2.99% per annum. However, the proposal to retain business rates

growth achieved between 2013 and 2020 for a further year alongside a continuation of the removal of negative revenue support grant should have a positive effect on the councils funding in 2020/21.

The MTFs assumed legacy payments for new homes bonus (NHB) would be honoured, however, a continuation of the same methodology for a further year could equate to an additional £301k funding in 2020/21.

The projections for additional new homes in the Borough were estimated to be 350 per annum and this figure was used to calculate NHB. The actual number delivered over the last 12 months was an additional 423 new homes for occupation. With a baseline target of 0.4% this meant CBC would only receive NHB for 215 additional new homes.

The Cabinet Member Finance reported that in previous years, budgets have been prepared under a general philosophy of no growth in services unless there was a statutory requirement or a compelling business case for an 'invest to save' scheme. However, the Council's aspirations to modernise its offer, become financially sustainable and be carbon neutral by 2030, required realignment of resources to deliver the outcomes.

She reminded Members that an allocation was agreed by Council in April 2015 to facilitate the redevelopment to the Town Hall. She referred to the briefing note attached to this Cabinet agenda which outlined the progress made to date but which concluded that all of the options identified were currently outside the financial envelope of affordability available for the Council to progress.

She explained that of the original allocation, £1.6m was still available and the Cabinet was recommending the following reallocation:

- Invest a sum of £1m to pump prime the commercial opportunities identified by The Cheltenham Trust including investment which both sustains and grows income at the Town Hall);
- Allocate £50k to fund 2 full-time documentation officers to ensure the collection receives accreditation status,
- Allocate £200k in a contingency fund to fund the associated costs of the investment in leisure@ in respect of the splash-pad;
- Allocate £350k to a climate emergency fund to help facilitate the Council's ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030.

The Cabinet Member referred to the Climate Emergency declared by Cabinet in July 2019 in response to a motion agreed by Council. As part of the motion, Council requested that a report be presented back within six months, with the local actions the Council could take to help address this emergency. A report was presented to Full Council in October 2019 outlining the actions needed and an indicative timetable, as well as recommending the initial resources required for the authority to effectively gear up to delivering the scale of actions required by 2030. There was widespread public support for addressing climate change issues with more than four in five Cheltenham residents agreeing that the Council should play a role in tackling air quality issues (83%), enabling people to walk/cycle more (82%) and enabling public transport use (81%).

The report recommended initial 'seed funding' of £150,000 per year, to fund additional staffing resources in order to create the capacity and capability to develop the business cases for the initiatives outlined in the roadmap and to

identify and secure external funding to enable climate emergency projects to progress. She therefore proposed that Cabinet allocate £350k from the original Town Hall allocation to address the resources required. In addition she proposed to allocate £75k from the planned maintenance reserve (originally allocated to the restoration of Pilley Bridge) on the grounds that it needed to prioritise its resources to the delivery of corporate plan priorities.

The Cabinet Member Finance then referred to the need to ensure that the technology which supports the delivery of services provided by Ubico, particularly domestic and trade waste collections, was in place and can integrate with other business systems as necessary including any Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system CBC may purchase going forward. The Cabinet therefore proposed to allocate £200k, subject to a business case, for the purchase of an 'In Cab' technology system. She reported that it was anticipated that the implementation of this system would offer a number of financial, service related and carbon reduction benefits to the council and its residents.

The future provision of public conveniences report was presented to Cabinet on in November 2019. Recognition for redeveloping the toilets at Sandford Park was identified within this report, with a recommendation to set aside funding for a new facility within the 2020/21 budget proposals to be considered by Council in February 2020. In order to satisfy that commitment, the budget proposals included a sum of £143,500 in the proposed capital programme for 2020/21.

Finally, the Cabinet Member Finance wished to put on record her thanks to all officers who had contributed to bringing the report forward. She paid particular thanks to the Executive Director Finance and Assets who as Acting Returning Officer was also occupied with the general election.

The Cabinet Member Finance referred to the proposal for the Town Hall which would enhance the performance space and attract a bigger audience on a regular basis. Additional income would be reinvested into the Trust to ensure its sustainability. She wished to put on record her thanks to the Director of Corporate Projects for his significant contribution to this work.

The Leader acknowledged the difficult circumstances in which this budget was being proposed, both in terms of timing with the general election and lack of the formal settlement and money available.

RECOMMENDED THAT

- 1. The interim budget proposals be approved for consultation, including a proposed council tax for the services provided by Cheltenham Borough Council of £214.08 for the year 2020/21 based on a band D property (an increase of 2.39% or £5.00 a year for a Band D property).**
- 2. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) projection, outlined in section 3 and Appendix 3, be approved.**

3. **The growth proposals, including one off initiatives at Appendix 4 and outlined in section 4, be approved for consultation.**
4. **The proposed capital programme at Appendix 6, as outlined in Section 7, be approved.**
5. **Authority be delegated to the Executive Director Finance and Assets, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, to determine and approve any additional material that may be needed to support the presentation of the interim budget proposals for public consultation which will include any changes arising from the provisional settlement.**
6. **Consultation responses be sought by 20th January 2020.**

8. INDEPENDENT RESIDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY 2019

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report and explained that residents' surveys were frequently carried out by local councils in order to collect statistically robust views from a representative sample of residents.

The benefits of undertaking such a survey allowed the Council to:

- Compare the views of residents to national data sets;
- Explore priorities at a local level;
- Set baselines/track perceptions of service quality;
- Collect insight to inform strategy
- Collect data on new or emerging issues
- Provide a set of baseline measures for the Council's Corporate Plan and Place Vision

The Cabinet Member reported that a total of 5,500 postal addresses were randomly sampled across all Cheltenham wards and a proportional cross section of households was included in the sampling. This approach guaranteed that the 5,500 households who were invited to complete the survey were representative of the borough as a whole.

The survey was conducted during July and August 2019 and had a response rate of 29%, above the rate now typical in surveys of this type (20-25%).

She reported that to give the geographical analysis in the report a more robust statistical basis, responses have been reviewed using five ward groupings rather than at individual ward level. The composition of these ward groupings were :-

Cheltenham West

St. Peters, St. Marks, Hesters
Way and Springbank

Cheltenham North	Swindon Village, Prestbury, Oakley and Pittville
Cheltenham south west	Benhall, Warden Hill, Park, Up Hatherley
Cheltenham south east	Leckhampton, Charlton Park, Charlton Kings, Battledown

The report showed that overall 84% of Cheltenham residents were satisfied with their local area as a place to live. This score was higher than the Local Government Association (LGA) benchmark (80%) and the BMG urban authority benchmark (80%).

More than four in five Cheltenham residents agreed that the Council should play a role in tackling air quality issues (83%), enabling people to walk/ cycle more (82%) and enabling public transport use (81%).

Three quarters (75%) of residents agreed that Cheltenham Borough Council should try to reduce vehicle emissions in the borough.

The Cabinet Member Finance referred to the decision made by the County Council Traffic regulation order committee to reopen Boots corner which was contrary to what Cheltenham's residents were telling the council through this statistically robust survey.

The Cabinet Member then reported that all residents were also given the opportunity within the survey to select up to three priority issues (out of a total of 15 possible priorities) for Cheltenham Borough Council to focus upon. The priorities that were most commonly selected were:

- Providing more affordable housing (32%);
- Tackling homelessness (30%); and,
- Promoting walking, cycling and public transport (29%).

The full report provided a range of valuable insights that could be used to inform future decision making and priority setting as well as a baseline for the Council's Corporate Plan. She highlighted that the council had already started to take action to address issues highlighted within the report findings with examples including:

- Providing more affordable housing : the Council had announced up to £100m of funding for Cheltenham Borough Homes to increase the supply of affordable housing
- Job Opportunities: 45% of respondents suggested that job opportunities and career progression best explained these moves out of the borough so the Council was looking to increase future job opportunities by working towards making Cheltenham the Cyber Capital of the UK in

West Cheltenham and by supporting other initiatives such as Workshop Cheltenham

- Promoting walking, cycling and public transport: bus travel had increased by 2% against a national decline of 4% due to the Cheltenham Transport Plan.

The Leader welcomed the work and the response rate received. This represented a statistically accurate survey which would inform future decisions.

In light of the Boots Corner decision taken by the County Council TRO committee Cabinet Members felt strongly that the Leader should write formally to Gloucestershire County Council urgently outlining the views of Cheltenham's residents in terms of tackling air quality issues, enabling more walking and cycling and use of public transport.

In response the Leader confirmed that he would do everything possible to encourage a different view prior to the decision at the county council cabinet meeting on Friday 20 December.

RESOLVED THAT

- 1. The 2019 Resident Satisfaction Survey results be acknowledged, along with the baseline they provide for the Council's Corporate Plan and Place Vision**
- 2. The survey be repeated in three years' time to measure the impact of the Council's corporate plan on resident satisfaction levels**
- 3. The results be used to inform Council service plans to address areas in need of performance improvement and/or further investigation**
- 4. The results from the survey be communicated to the Council's partners that have lead responsibilities for areas where further improvement has been identified**

9. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles reported that the council had been working with the Holst museum on plans to commemorate the centenary of the first performance of The Planets. Engaging with partners including the Cheltenham Trust, the Everyman Theatre and Gloucestershire libraries and schools, the aim was to stage an event, to involve children, in October.

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles informed that a new piece of art would be installed at Honeybourne place. Involving local children, the design would be finalised in the new year.

The Cabinet Member Development and Safety reported that the County Council's TRO committee had met on Monday 16 and voted 6-3 to reopen Boots Corner to through traffic. He vehemently regretted this decision.

The Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment advised that the Joint Waste Committee had held its last meeting. CBC was strengthening its in house team and would continue working with the other Gloucestershire districts and the County Council. He highlighted his frustration with the joint waste committee which had not met the targets set out in the action plan and which had not recognised the need to address the waste and recycling requirements for west and north west Cheltenham. He reported that a meeting was scheduled with Tewkesbury BC and others in February to plan how to sensibly deliver services for developments as and when they take place.

The Leader endorsed the comments from his Cabinet Members and questioned whether CBC could work in partnership with the county on tackling climate change in light of the Boots Corner decision. He referred to a meeting of Leadership Gloucestershire whereby the county had requested funding for two climate change posts. It was unlikely that CBC would support this bearing in mind the Boots Corner decision.

Chairman