

Cabinet

Tuesday, 27th April, 2021
6.00 - 6.45 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Rowena Hay (Leader of the Council), Victoria Atherstone (Cabinet Member Economy and Development), Flo Clucas (Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles), Chris Coleman (Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment), Alex Hegenbarth (Cabinet Member Corporate Services), Peter Jeffries (Cabinet Member Housing), Steve Jordan (Cabinet Member Finance and Assets), Andrew McKinlay (Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety) and Max Wilkinson (Cabinet Member Climate and Communities)
Also in attendance:	Gareth Edmundson, Tim Atkins, Tracey Crews, Sarah Farooqi

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets declared an interest in item 7 as a member of the BID, and left the meeting for the duration of the item.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th February 2021 were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

There were three public questions.

1.	Question from Caroline Sherwood on behalf of Clean Air Cheltenham to the Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	<p>CBC has previously set up a Walking and Cycling Scrutiny Task Force which recommended implementing car-free days in Cheltenham. Their final report in 2016 was endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and then endorsed by the Cabinet.</p> <p>Why has no action been taken since then, and in the light of CBC's recent commitments to reducing air pollution and sustainable transport in the 'Connecting Cheltenham' strategy, will CBC now commit to Cheltenham taking part in World Car Free Day on 22 September this year?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member

	<p>Many thanks for your question. The Walking and Cycling Scrutiny Task Force presented 12 recommendations as part of the 2016 report. Action has been taken on the majority of items and they continue to be considered in our steps toward carbon neutrality by 2030, and within the subsequent actions and aspirations arising from the detailed 'Connecting Cheltenham' report. The introduction of 'Car Free Sundays' was a recommendation to 'explore the opportunities'. The last year we have been responding heavily to the pandemic. We are aware of the car free day in September and plan to work with partners to see if there is some activity that can be jointly arranged. This is wholly dependent on the continued decline of the pandemic.</p>
	Supplementary question
	<p>We understand that GCC is proactively supporting Car Free Day this year, under the direction of Philip Williams. Apart from the progress of the pandemic, do you see any other barriers to this going ahead? Is the Council willing to collaborate with Clean Air Cheltenham, as one of the partners, to make the day a success and to inform GCC of the roads and areas that need to be car-free to accomplish this?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>This council certainly wants to support the car free initiative in any way we can, and it is good news that the county council is supporting this. Some details are unclear due to the situation with Covid, but if possible, the council will certainly work with GCC and Clean Air Cheltenham to ensure that it is a success.</p>
2.	Question from Peter Frings to the Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	<p>The council's latest annual Air Quality Annual Status Report confirms that 'the current AQAP will be out of date by the end of 2019'. DEFRA guidelines are that a new AQAP must be in place within 12 months, i.e. the end of 2020.</p> <p>Where is the new Cheltenham AQAP, and when does the council intend to consult with the public about the actions needed to tackle air pollution in the town?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>The AQAP became obsolete when the AQMA was revised in September 2020. Statutory guidance requires a new AQAP to be published within 12 months of the new AQMA being confirmed. This action, and the relevant timeline has been approved by DEFRA. Public consultation on the new AQAP will occur in due course this summer. At this stage, invitations have been sent to key stakeholders to attend initial meetings of a Steering Group on 29th and 30th April which will begin to develop options for consideration in the AQAP. Invitations have been sent to statutory authorities and also to other local relevant groups, including public transport providers and Clean Air Cheltenham. CBC is the only Gloucestershire LA to have updated an AQMA and AQAP to reflect improved levels of air quality in over 10 years.</p>

	Supplementary question
	<p>I challenge the assertion that air quality has improved. Only 8 of the town centre sites monitored continuously since 2011 show a marginal dip in nitrogen dioxide levels between 2011 and 2019, while some town centre sites remain above the legal limit.</p> <p>The new timeline approved by DEFRA changed the AQAP publication deadline to the later date of September 2021. How can the Cabinet be confident that this will be published by September 2021 when the initial meetings aren't until 29th April, and the public consultation is not until summer? The whole process seems to have been condensed into four months.</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Cheltenham Borough Council officers have agreed to the DEFRA timeline and there is no reason to think that it is unreasonable, with the later start date being due to the effect of the Covid crisis on the council's priorities. I have no reason to doubt that the AQPA will be published on time in September 2021, and DEFRA will certainly be on our case if not.</p>
3.	Question from Peter Frings to the Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	<p>Councillor McKinlay announced the imminent installation of 9 new AQ Mesh air pollution monitors at the Cabinet meeting in January 2020. These new monitors should provide continuous monitoring of Nitrogen Dioxide, as well as the first monitoring of particulate matter (PM) undertaken by the council.</p> <p>When will data be published for these new monitors? Specifically, hourly and daily summaries of Nitrogen Dioxide and PM2.5 levels at all 9 locations, and also the comparative data for Nitrogen Dioxide from the long-established reference monitoring site at St Georges Street?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>AQ Mesh monitors were installed in August 2020, after a Covid delay. Results from the months after their installation were not reliable, and all 9 units have now been re-calibrated against reference equipment. Re-calibration of 8 units has recently been completed, with the final unit expected to be complete imminently. The report of results to the end of 2020 will be available when the final unit has been calibrated and will be published to our website. Reports on levels will then be made available quarterly. We are currently exploring the costs and technical issues around making real time data available from this new equipment and existing monitoring equipment. CBC leads the county in air quality monitoring and is the only LA in the county to operate real-time AQ monitoring equipment.</p>
	Supplementary question
	<p>Does the recalibration refer solely to the nitrogen dioxide readings? And if so, when will the particulate readings until now be released?</p>

	Response from Cabinet Member
	My assumption would be that the monitors would be recalibrated for all the various pollutants that they are designed to measure, which constitutes 8 or 10 different indicators, but I will consult officers and provide you with a proper written response.

5. ADOPTION OF REVISED STREET SCENE POLICY

The Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety presented the report, noting that the current street scene policy had been adopted in 2013 and reviewed in late 2020 and early 2021. The report informed Cabinet of the outcome of the consultation and sought approval to adopt the revised policy.

He highlighted section 3 of the report, which listed the key revisions in the revised policy. These included changes to the determination of applications, the lengthening of the period of consultation, formalising the requirement to maintain a 1.8m unobstructed thoroughfare for items on the highway, updating the authority's streamlined approach to reflect changes in the county council's delegations, and maintaining the current policy regarding A-boards.

He also highlighted section 4 of the report, which related to the Covid recovery. The council had adopted various different licensing policies to support local businesses during the pandemic, and these would remain in place until the crisis had ended and the council received instruction from the government that it was appropriate to return to its normal policies. He stressed that the policy changes within this report would not mean the end of the flexible licensing approach employed during the pandemic.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets reiterated the last point about the Covid recovery, praising officers for taking it into account and emphasising the need for a flexible approach until the crisis was over. The Leader of the Council echoed this, and thanked officers for making the proposed changes clear and easy to understand within the report.

The Leader of the Council moved to a vote, where it was unanimously:

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The consultation feedback and changes to the draft policy as a consequence be noted;
2. The revised policy at Appendix 2 be adopted.

6. UBICO BUSINESS PLAN 2021/22 AND 5 YEAR VISION

The Leader of the Council presented the report, describing Ulico as a successful and well-respected local authority-owned company operating across the county. Its priority was to deliver safe and high quality services that met the needs of the authority's shareholders and the residents they serve.

She acknowledged that 2020 had brought a series of considerably different challenges to anything they had faced before, and it had been essential to continue to deliver frontline services. In 2021 and 2022, much ongoing work would still be needed to continue meeting these challenges.

The proposals contained in the 2021/22 business plan were built around four pillars: People, Operation, Climate and Business Development. The plan sought to leverage synergies and economies of scale, harness opportunities to deliver value back to partners, use technology to drive operational efficiency, understand the communities' needs, and inspire its workforce to be committed to providing value for money and carbon neutral services.

She added that Ubico would submit individual business cases to support potential investment proposals within the 2021/22 Business Plan to develop areas of the business that had been identified as having potential to deliver greater value for shareholders. While she as Leader of the Council had the authority to approve the business plan, she was bringing it to Cabinet to be noted in order to support greater transparency and involvement in the future strategic direction of Ubico.

The Leader of the Council moved to a vote, where it was unanimously:

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Ubico 5 year vision and 2021/2022 Business Plan be noted;
2. It be noted that the Leader of the Council, as shareholder representative, proposes to sign the written resolution to approve the Ubico 5 year vision and 2021/2022 Business Plan in due course.

7. CHELTENHAM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID) – RENEWAL BALLOT

The Leader of the Council presented the report, noting that the Cheltenham Business Improvement District (BID) had been established in July 2016 with CBC acting as the billing authority. With the current term due to conclude in July 2021, the board of the Cheltenham BID decided it wished to proceed with a renewal ballot and notified both CBC and the Secretary of State of its intention to do so.

The renewal ballot sought approval for a further operating period of 4 years and 8 months, running from 1st August 2021 to 31st March 2026. A consultation period took place between January and February 2021 with all existing and proposed levy payers, before the Secretary of State was notified in February. The draft BID Business Plan would then be published in May before the ballot opened between 3rd and 29th June. On 2nd July, the ballot result would be announced, before a 28 day challenge period which would expire on 29th July. On 1st August, the second term of the BID would become operational, provided it won a majority on the ballot and was not subject to any successful challenges.

The Cabinet Member Economy and Development added that it was exciting to see the value the BID brought to the growing town centre, and also to see encouraging feedback from local businesses. It was important to provide businesses with the support that they needed.

The Leader of the Council moved to a vote, where it was unanimously:

RESOLVED THAT:

1. It be noted that the Cheltenham BID company has served notice of their intention to seek a renewal ballot to the Secretary of State and the Council;
2. The draft Baseline Agreement at appendix 3 be approved, and authority be delegated to the Director of Planning, in consultation with the Leader, to

complete the Baseline Agreement with the Cheltenham BID company;

3. The draft Operating Agreement at appendix 4 be approved, and authority be delegated to the Head of Revenues and Benefits, in consultation with the Leader, to complete the Operating Agreement with the Cheltenham BID company;
4. The District Council's voting rights for the District premises in the renewal ballot be delegated to the Head of Property, in consultation with the Leader;
5. It be noted that the Executive Director for Finance and Assets will, as Returning Officer, engage the services of a suitable consultancy that provides election services to carry out the renewal ballot on behalf of the Council in accordance with the BID Regulations;
6. The draft BID Business Plan at appendix 5 be noted, and authority be delegated to the Director of Planning, in consultation with the Leader, to agree the final BID Business Plan with Cheltenham BID.

8. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety noted the significant decrease in Covid numbers across the county in the last few months, which was wonderful news for Cheltenham and everywhere else.

The Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment noted that he was not seeking re-election after 16 years as a member and 7 years in the Cabinet, and listed some of the authority's achievements during that time. He was particularly proud of the improvements to waste and recycling in the borough, renewed fleets, improved interactions with the public, the delivery of the new crematorium, upgraded play areas and allotments, the move towards sustainable planting and the retention of Green Flag status. He also thanked officers and members involved in maintaining and improving services during the Covid crisis. He stressed that it had all been the result of a team effort by a wide range of people who were committed and dedicated to the town.

The Cabinet Member Climate and Communities reported that the Cheltenham Zero Community Fund was live and open for bids. Bids were coming in from all over the town for community-driven projects to protect nature, improve green spaces and help fight the climate emergency. He added that since the last Cabinet meeting, the climate change team had added two new officers to contribute to its climate and carbon neutrality goals.

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services added that he would be stepping down from his Cabinet role after the elections, and thanked a number of officers and members for their support, particularly over the last year. A huge number of challenges had had to be tackled head on, both as an organisation and as a town.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets noted that Cabinet had been due to consider a Business Rates Relief report at this meeting, but due to changes made by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government to the business rates system, this would likely have to come to the next Cabinet meeting in June instead. He added that he was also not standing for re-election,

and thanked members and officers for their help over the years. He also emphasised that he was excited about the future of the town due to the ambitious projects that the council was undertaking.

The Cabinet Member Economy and Development reported that the council was seeking to recruit four new apprentices, with further details available on its website. She added that the Cheltenham Economic Recovery Task Force's first skills sub-group had taken place, and that she hoped to update Cabinet on many exciting projects in the coming months.

The Leader of the Council thanked the members who were stepping down for their commitment to the town and hard work over the years.

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles echoed the thanks to the departing colleagues. She noted that the effect of the Covid crisis on individuals, communities and children had been enormous, but so was the way people had come together to support each other. No Child Left Behind now had 61 businesses and other organisations actively participating, which was a tremendous community effort, while the Food Network was continuing to make a huge difference across the town. She thanked council workers for going above and beyond throughout the crisis, and stressed that all change for the better came from people working together. Along with the local community, she was now focusing on developing youth provision over the summer and autumn so young people would not be drawn into criminal activities.

Cabinet Member Decisions

There were a total of 14 Cabinet Member Decisions since the last meeting.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets had taken a decision on 26th February to grant a tenancy for a kiosk at Beeches Playing Fields.

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles had taken two decisions on 25th February to award the works contract for the refurbishment of the Burrows Sports Pavilion to E G Carter, and to award the works contract for the Burrows Playing Fields Pitches Improvements to Carrick Sports Construction Ltd. She added that the football foundation had recently agreed to award funding related to this site, and thanked officers for their work on this.

The Cabinet Member Housing had taken a decision on 8th March to award grant funding of £500 to Gloucestershire Action of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (GARAS) to aid its work supporting both refugees and people seeking asylum within Cheltenham.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets had taken a decision on 16th March to amend the Additional Restrictions – Discretionary Business Grant Scheme, and a decision on 17th March to dedicate CBC land to facilitate a cycle path on a section of the A40 (Gloucester Road).

The Leader of the Council had taken a decision on 19th March to allocate functions regarding shared ownership sales.

The Cabinet Member Housing had taken a decision on 22nd March to award grant funding of £3,000 a year to Gloucestershire Nightstop for a period of 3 years from the 1st April 2021.

The Leader of the Council had taken a decision on 30th March to approve the Publica Group (Support) Ltd Business Plan for 2021-22.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets had taken a decision on 31st March to extend the Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme to 30th June 2021.

The Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety had taken a decision on 6th April to approve consultation on the draft common licensing standards for taxi and private hire licensing, aimed at closing loopholes and applying a shared policy across the county.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets had taken a decision on 9th April to appoint and award Travis Perkins the Materials Supply contract for Responsive Repairs, Empty Homes and Programmed works.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets had taken a decision on 14th April to approve the payment of £60,000 Additional Restrictions Grant funding to GFirst LEP for a grant scheme to support businesses with developing digitised services and online trading platforms.

The Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment added that he had taken a decision on the 24th April to enter into a contractual arrangement with the county council for the disposal of commercial waste for a trial period of 2 weeks, which would be extended to 3 years if the trial was successful.

Chairman