



# CHELTENHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Notice of a meeting of Council

**Monday, 21 March 2022**

**2.30 pm**

**Council Chamber - Municipal Offices**

<b>Membership</b>	
<b>Councillors:</b>	Steve Harvey (Chair), Sandra Holliday (Vice-Chair), Victoria Atherstone, Matt Babbage, Paul Baker, Garth Barnes, Dilys Barrell, Ian Bassett-Smith, Angie Boyes, Nigel Britter, Jonny Brownsteen, Barbara Clark, Flo Clucas, Mike Collins, Iain Dobie, Stephan Fifield, Bernard Fisher, Wendy Flynn, Tim Harman, Rowena Hay, Alex Hegenbarth, Martin Horwood, Peter Jeffries, Alisha Lewis, Chris Mason, Guy Maughfling, Paul McCloskey, Andrew McKinlay, Emma Nelson, Tony Oliver, John Payne, Richard Pineger, Julie Sankey, Louis Savage, Diggory Seacome, Jo Stafford, Simon Wheeler, Max Wilkinson, Suzanne Williams and David Willingham

### Agenda

<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</b> Minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2022.	(Pages 3 - 26)
<b>4.</b>	<b>COMMUNICATIONS BY THE MAYOR</b>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>COMMUNICATIONS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</b>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>TO RECEIVE PETITIONS</b>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>PUBLIC QUESTIONS</b> These must be received no later than 12 noon on Monday 14 March 2022.	
<b>8.</b>	<b>MEMBER QUESTIONS</b> These must be received no later than 12 noon on Monday 14 March 2022.	
<b>9.</b>	<b>CAPITAL, INVESTMENT, TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES 2022/23</b> Report of the Cabinet Member Finance	(Pages 27 - 32)

	(appendices to follow)	
<b>10.</b>	<b>COUNCIL SIZE SUBMISSION</b> Report of the Leader	(Pages 33 - 64)
<b>11.</b>	<b>REVIEW OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND AND PLANS FOR 2022</b> Report of the Cabinet Member Safety and Communities.	(Pages 65 - 72)
<b>12.</b>	<b>COUNCIL DIARY</b> Report of the Leader	(Pages 73 - 90)
<b>13.</b>	<b>NOTICES OF MOTION</b>	
<b>14.</b>	<b>ANY OTHER ITEM THE MAYOR DETERMINES AS URGENT AND WHICH REQUIRES A DECISION</b>	
<b>15.</b>	<p><b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 -EXEMPT INFORMATION</b> The committee is recommended to approve the following resolution:-</p> <p>“That in accordance with Section 100A(4) Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining agenda items as it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, if members of the public are present there will be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3, Part (1) Schedule (12A) Local Government Act 1972, namely:</p> <p>Paragraph 1; Information relating to any individual</p> <p>Paragraph 2; Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual</p> <p>Paragraph 3; Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)</p>	
<b>16.</b>	<b>ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW</b> Report of the Chief Executive	(Pages 91 - 132)

**Contact Officer:** Bev Thomas, Democratic Services Team Leader, 01242 264246  
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**Gareth Edmundson**  
**Chief Executive**

### **FILMING, RECORDING AND BROADCASTING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS**

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If you participate in the meeting you are consenting to the use of those sound recordings for broadcasting and training purposes.

### Council

**Monday, 21st February, 2022  
2.30 - 6.00 pm**

<b>Attendees</b>	
<b>Councillors:</b>	Steve Harvey (Chair), Victoria Atherstone, Matt Babbage, Dilys Barrell, Ian Bassett-Smith, Nigel Britter, Barbara Clark, Flo Clucas, Mike Collins, Iain Dobie, Stephan Fifield, Tim Harman, Rowena Hay, Peter Jeffries, Alisha Lewis, Chris Mason, Paul McCloskey, Emma Nelson, John Payne, Richard Pineger, Julie Sankey, Diggory Seacome, Simon Wheeler, Max Wilkinson, Suzanne Williams and David Willingham

### Minutes

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Baker, Barnes, Boyes, Brownsteen, Fisher, Flynn, Hegenbarth, Holliday, Maughfling, McKinlay, Savage, Stafford and Oliver.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Agenda item 11: Councillor Barrell declared a non-pecuniary interest as her son works for CBH. Councillors Pinegar and Mason also declared a non-pecuniary interest, as non-executive directors of CBH, and Councillor Clucas, as Chair of Big Local, which works with CBC on a number of capital schemes.

Agenda item 12: Councillors Clark and Lewis declared a non-pecuniary interest, as non-executive directors of the Cheltenham Trust.

**3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2021 were signed as a true record, without any amendments.

**4. COMMUNICATIONS BY THE MAYOR**

The Mayor informed Members that he had written to Her Majesty the Queen at the beginning of the year, wishing her well for her Platinum Jubilee year, and trusted that Members would join him in sending best wishes to her for a speedy recovery from Covid.

He also confirmed that he had fulfilled one of his ambitions as Mayor to replace the mayoral car, previously diesel, with an electric vehicle.

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

The Leader thanked all staff for their preparations and involvement in the local resilience forum, and the emergency planning team in covering the recent Storm Eunice.

She also informed Members that Councillor Maughfling had stood down as Chair of Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee, due to pressures of a new job. She thanked him for his time and tenure, and advised that his replacement would be Councillor McCloskey.

**6. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS**

Mr Newman presented a petition of 801 signatures (plus a further 25 on line), requesting improved lighting throughout Sandford Park on both sides of College Road and from Bath Road to Keynsham Road. He said that two studies show that increased lighting reduces criminality, and local people want to feel safer in and around the park after dark.

The Mayor received the petition, and advised that this would be shared with the most appropriate cabinet member and, in view of the number of signatures, would be debated by Council as soon as possible. He said that receipt of the petition would be acknowledged within ten days.

**7. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Question from Peter Frings to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rowena Hay</b>
	<p>In the 2020-2021 CBC Carbon Emissions Report, only the carbon impact of the airport's <u>ground operations</u> is published. The Climate Change Committee's report 'Local Authorities and the 6th Carbon Budget' says: "<i>Local authorities can separate airport and aviation emissions, but should not ignore them in climate conversations.</i>" Although local authorities are not required to include aviation emissions in their local footprint, it is important that local people know what contribution aviation emissions from Gloucestershire Airport are making to the climate crisis – because local people – through the Cheltenham and Gloucester councils – own the airport.</p> <p><i>Will the borough council commit to reporting on aviation emissions and publish annual figures starting from 2019 (the year the council declared a climate emergency)?</i></p>
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>Thank you to Mr Frings for his question. He is right to raise this issue. While news reports tell us that technology in the aviation industry is improving and moves are being made towards low carbon flight, there remains a clear and difficult-to-resolve conflict between aviation operations and our environmental goals. We understand the carbon impact of aviation emissions is often much greater than the impact of emissions from ground operations. We continue to improve the way we calculate our carbon footprint as an authority and strive to lead the way in the accuracy, transparency and thoroughness of our reporting.</p> <p>However, whilst Gloucestershire Airport is owned jointly by Cheltenham Borough and Gloucester City Councils, it is operated by Gloucestershire Airport Ltd (GAL) under a long leasehold interest. As such, we currently include 50% of the airport's Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions in CBC's carbon emissions reports and will continue to do so (these are covered</p>

	<p>under our Scope 3 emissions). This follows current Green House Gas (GHG) reporting guidelines. We will encourage GAL to publish its full carbon footprint, including aviation emissions, over which CBC currently has no direct control.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Question from David Newman to the Chair of the Standards Committee, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b></p> <p>If the House of Commons Select Committee on Standards can enjoy the democracy of membership consisting of 7 MPs and 5 Lay members with full voting rights, why can the Cheltenham Borough Council Standards Committee's 2 Independent members who sit with 7 Councillor members not have voting rights too, which at present they are denied?</p> <p>If it is considered right by Parliament that Lay members have full voting rights surely it is only right that the same rule be enjoyed in Local Government?</p> <p>Please could this matter be raised with the full Council. I would hope it would be considered an essential need to change the present rule in the interests of fairness, democracy and accountability.</p>
	<p><b>Response from Chair of Standards Committee</b></p> <p>Thank you to Mr Newman for asking this important question. Standards of political conduct are a talking point at national level, after recent news events. It is right that we always check our processes and procedures to ensure we are following best practice.</p> <p>Our Standards Committee membership is informed by best practice and legislation. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 at s. 13 makes the initial point that co-opted members have no voting rights and the Localism Act states that Independent Persons have an advisory role when operating within a Standards Committee. Independent members make their views known both through the formal report before the Committee and during the proceedings, by having the option to address the Committee.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, I will refer this matter to the next Standards Committee meeting for discussion.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Question from Tess Beck to the Cabinet Member Safety and Communities, Councillor Flo Clucas</b></p> <p>Does the council carry out any background checks (e.g. DBS, police check) on people who put themselves up as candidates in local elections - either at the nomination stage or once a candidate is elected/ takes up office?</p>
	<p><b>Response from Cabinet Member</b></p> <p>The Council does not carry out background checks on candidates standing in local elections. The nomination paper includes the candidate's consent to nomination in which the candidate must declare that they meet at least one of the qualifications listed in the consent form. This form also includes the disqualifications for election and holding office as a member of the local</p>

	<p>authority. The candidate must sign the consent confirming that they qualify to stand and that they are not disqualified, which must be witnessed. Guidance about standing as a candidate can be found at: <a href="https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-01/Part%201%20Can%20you%20stand%20for%20election%20LGE.pdf">https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-01/Part%201%20Can%20you%20stand%20for%20election%20LGE.pdf</a></p> <p>Upon election, no checks are undertaken by the Council.</p>
	<b>Supplementary question</b>
	<p>Thank you for your response and your helpful link to the Electoral Commission. From the link, it appears that there are fewer background checks on someone standing for - or even taking up - public office than there are for someone wanting to become a taxi driver, for example. The electoral commission rules are determined at national level. Does the local authority have the power to impose its own restrictions, e.g. to prevent someone who is subject to an injunction or ASBO, or with a history of offending from taking up public office?</p>
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>Thank you for your question, you are quite right that background checks are a national issue. If somebody were to apply for a licence, there would be some checks in relation to this to ensure the safety of those using the service they provided. However, the provisions that disqualify persons from holding office are set down in legislation at national level, and local authorities cannot have their alternative provisions at a local level.</p>

**8. MEMBER QUESTIONS**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Chris Mason to the Cabinet Member Climate Emergency, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	For each year 2019, 2020 and 2021. Could the Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency please confirm how many trees the Borough Council has planted either on its own or in partnership?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>Year 19-20    2496 trees  Year 20-21    1655 trees  Year 21-22    1949 trees</p> <p>This reflects the number of trees in each planting season between October and February.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Chris Mason to the Cabinet Member Climate Emergency, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	On a number of occasions the Council has confirmed its desire to support local industry. Duku, a Lansdown based product design agency, is involved in several EV charging projects, including trials with Oxford, Plymouth and Dundee Councils. I believe the company has tried to contact the Borough Council but as yet have not received a reply. Would the Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency agree to talk to Duku?

	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>Thank you to Councillor Mason for his question. He's right to raise this topic.</p> <p>In line with the recent announcement by the Borough Council, we are working towards setting up a process to identify a private sector provider to help install charging points in Borough Council car parks. The appointment of a private sector partner would need to follow the usual rules of the public sector. Notwithstanding this, and without prejudice to any other process, I would welcome an invitation from Duku to find out more about their local operations. For on-street EV charging matters, we would encourage all interested parties to contact the County Council as Highways Authority.</p>
	<b>Supplementary question</b>
	If the director of the company contacts you, would you be willing to speak with him?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	Yes, of course. I would also advise him that there may be some crossover with the county council too in terms of on-street charging points.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Tim Harman to the Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services, Councillor Martin Horwood</b>
	Gloucester City Council has sustained a serious cyber-attack, and there is some suspicion that the origin may be from an overseas source. Can the Cabinet Member outline the steps that are being taken to protect Cheltenham Borough Council from a similar attack and thereby protect our services?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	The Council takes the risks around cyber-attacks seriously. In conjunction with the Council's Chief Technology Officer, we regularly review the monitoring and prevention measures we have in place. I understand all group leaders have received a confidential cyber security briefing from the Council's CTO, which included preventive and security measures, resilience and business continuity. Due to the sensitive nature of the work involved, it would not be appropriate to put that information in the public domain. The Council is also in the process of reviewing all of its business continuity arrangements, which Audit Committee have been briefed on. If group leaders would like a follow up meeting with the Council's CTO that can be arranged.
	<b>Supplementary question</b>
	Would the Cabinet Member agree that considering the current financial situation, it is especially important to be vigilant about potential cyber-attacks? In addition to this, could Group Leaders be updated again as it has been some time since their last briefing?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	Absolutely – resilience and diligence at this council is high, but if the

	<p>current situation deteriorates then a timely update will be offered.</p> <p>The Mayor added that Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee always asked questions of the Publica team and had met with the Head of IT.</p>
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Paul McCloskey to the Cabinet Member Housing, Councillor Mike Collins</b></p>
	<p><b>THE DIGITAL DIVIDE</b></p> <p>I was shocked during a visit to Coopers Court CBH Residential Home in Charlton Kings to discover that there was no Wi-Fi in the lounge.</p> <p>Discussion had turned to loneliness and how residents had managed to keep in contact with family and friends during lockdown. Very few had smartphones or tablets and those that did found the cost of data very expensive.</p> <p>Can I please ask the Cabinet Member:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) How many CBH multi-occupancy buildings in Cheltenham have free Wi-Fi?</li> <li>2) What plans there are for installing FREE Wi-Fi in Coopers Court and other similar homes?</li> <li>3) Given the '<i>No Child Left Behind</i>' and '<i>Levelling Up</i>' Agenda, what plans are there to ensure that ALL CBH tenants have access to fast, reliable and affordable Wi-Fi, so that Digital Exclusion can become history?</li> </ol>
	<p><b>Response from Cabinet Member</b></p>
	<p><i>How many CBH multi-occupancy buildings in Cheltenham have free Wi-Fi?</i></p> <p>CBH's aspiration is to reduce digital exclusion through CBH customers being able to access digital services through provision of digital connectivity where feasible and support and training for customers. At present there are no CBH multi occupancy buildings in Cheltenham that have free WiFi.</p> <p><i>What plans there are for installing FREE Wi-Fi in Coopers Court and other similar homes?</i></p> <p>A project is currently underway following a successful joint bid by CBC and CBH to the Better Care Fund to enhance communal spaces at two sheltered schemes, Coopers Court and Popes Close. This project will convert the current spaces into more dynamic and interactive places and support the aim of increasing independent living by improving health and wellbeing and reducing isolation of older people living at the schemes and the wider community. It is expected that the new hubs will offer a wide range of activities and events with IT equipment with free on-line access in the lounge included as part of the project. Learning from this pilot will support decisions around the installation of wifi across further sheltered</p>



	<p>schemes and the wider housing stock, as there are capital, revenue, procurement and ongoing management implications.</p> <p>CBH offers customers access to digital services through the CBH digi den where equipment, training and support are provided to use the equipment and access online services, in addition to providing training on the CBH Portal to increase the confidence in using and transition to digital services.</p> <p><i>Given the ‘No Child Left Behind’ and ‘Levelling Up’ Agenda, what plans are there to ensure that ALL CBH tenants have access to fast, reliable and affordable Wi-Fi, so that Digital Exclusion can become history?</i></p> <p>Any funding opportunities available to reduce digital exclusion through provision of equipment and/or training and support will be actively followed up. Data indicates that 95% of CBH general needs homes have access to digital services, with occupants accessing digital services and using digital services for varying technical purposes. The risks of digital exclusion were heightened during lockdown when children were unable to attend school. Of the families identified as being at risk of digital exclusion in CBH homes only three were found to not have access to a digital service and device and these were supported as needed. Families were also supported during the pandemic through the CBC led Laptops for Learning initiative.</p>
	<p><b>Supplementary question</b></p>
	<p>This is a very encouraging response, which shows the breadth of things happening in this very important area. Broadband poverty affects around 20% of families in the UK, who have to choose between access to a phone or food.</p> <p>Can I also ask more specifically about the progress of the refugees housed in Cheltenham, for whom we sought IT equipment?</p>
	<p><b>Response from Cabinet Member</b></p>
	<p>Thank you for raising the serious issue of broadband poverty. It is hugely important to bridge the digital divide for the most vulnerable people in our communities, and we will work with partners and providers of social housing to identify funding and address this as effectively as possible.</p> <p>On the question of refugees, we will continue to do what we can to support the town’s new Syrian and Afghan residents. Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (GARAS) is doing fantastic work on this, which we supported with a further grant last week. CBC and CBH are also offering IT help to new residents, using our digital hubs and the Digi-Den at Hester’s Way.</p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Diggory Seacome to the Cabinet Member Culture, Wellbeing and Business Councillor Victoria Atherstone</b></p>
	<p>Can the Cabinet member give us an update of the Wilson refurbishment, along with a potential opening date?</p>

	<p><b>Response from Cabinet Member</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question Cllr Seacome, as you know the Wilson Art Gallery and Museum is managed by the Cheltenham Trust and was closed in March 2020 by the Covid19 pandemic. The council has worked with the Trust to bring forward plans for a major refurbishment to create a new community arts gallery, vibrant arts café and ancillary spaces, and artists' studios.</p> <p>The scheme has been made possible by a significant bequest from the Sir Charles Irving Trust and matched funding from Cheltenham Borough Council.</p> <p>I am pleased that the new Wilson will create a dynamic cultural hub for the whole community and visitors to Cheltenham. It will offer café culture complemented by a comprehensive cultural programme featuring talks, workshops, creative events, local and national exhibitions and shows.</p> <p>The plan is for the Wilson to reopen in conjunction with The Minster Exchange in summer 2022.</p> <p>The investment will enable the blend of culture and commercial to assist the future financial sustainability and credibility of the venue as a major visitor destination. It has been vital that to deliver this vision the refurbishment focused on delivering the right design and functionality and flexible use of all spaces. As is the case with almost all major investment projects, the process has been iterative to ensure that stakeholders and users have had the opportunity to influence the designs and functionality.</p> <p>Delivering a capital investment project during the pandemic has added challenges and has inevitably affected timescales for resource, supplies and works.</p> <p>Pre-works have commenced and as The Wilson is a Grade II listed building it requires planning consent. The planning application is in process and will hopefully be considered at the next planning committee on March 24<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>This is a significant project and, combined with the new Minster Exchange and regeneration of the Minster grounds, will create a new and exciting cultural destination zone for the town embracing and promoting culture, arts and history for all to enjoy and participate in.</p>
<b>6.</b>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Diggory Seacome to the Cabinet Member Culture, Wellbeing and Business Councillor Victoria Atherstone</b></p> <p>What are the plans for finding a suitable venue for the Tourist Information Centre, and re-instating it?</p>
	<p><b>Response from Cabinet Member</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question Councillor Seacome. The specification and requirements of the Tourist Information service in Cheltenham has and continues to be reviewed as part of the management agreement between the Council and The Cheltenham Trust.</p>

	<p>Due to the continued closure and remodelling of the Wilson Art Gallery and Museum and the reopening of our high street since the pandemic, Marketing Cheltenham has been working on a new pilot that seeks to test a new approach to the provision of visitor and community information in Cheltenham. This pilot is being funded through the Council's Welcome Back funding. The new facility in the town centre is scheduled to launch early March ahead of some of the town's major events getting underway. The results of this pilot will then inform our plans going forward for visitor information services.</p>
	<p><b>Supplementary question</b></p>
	<p>Can you be specific about the ways you are approaching this? For example, will it be a physical office or an online information service?</p>
	<p><b>Response from Cabinet Member</b></p>
	<p>As it stands, the pilot will be a pod which can either be manned or unmanned, so that information is available at all times. The key thing for the pilot to test is how people feel about how they're getting the information, and to figure out which approach is preferable as a result.</p>
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Diggory Seacome to the Cabinet Member Culture, Wellbeing and Business Councillor Victoria Atherstone</b></p>
	<p>Can the Cabinet Member provide us with un-massaged figures for the ice rink in Imperial Square this winter.  <b><u>Details should include, please:-</u></b>  Initial Set up/derigging Costs  Extra costs in sorting out the generators' hum to the satisfaction (almost) of the residents.  Paid attendances, week by week.  Comments/figures on the amount of carbon created by the generators would also be appreciated.</p>
	<p><b>Response from Cabinet Member</b></p>
	<p>Thank you again for your question Councillor Seacome.</p> <p>A full report on the Christmas ice rink is to be tabled at the Cabinet meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> March, which includes a full evaluation of the ice rink's performance and impact.</p> <p>I can confirm however that total costs for the build, operation and de-ripping of the ice rink amounted to £378,822, of which £10,005 was attributable to the scoping and installation of noise mitigation measures.</p> <p>The ice rink welcomed a total of 43,563 skaters over its 45 days of operation, generating net revenues of £360,900. When combined with additional advertising and sponsorship, total net revenue came to £384,200, resulting in a modest surplus of £5,377.</p> <p>The use of the generator to provide sufficient power to maintain the ice rink was, as we know, unavoidable due to the insufficient supply of mains power into Imperial Gardens. Whilst the levels of power and usage of the generator varied daily due to the fluctuating temperatures and conditions</p>

<p>of the ice, inevitably, there would have been a greater level of carbon emissions as a result of its use.</p> <p>We do not yet have the information required on the environmental impact of the generators over that 45 day period. The council will however be calculating the environmental impact from the use of generators across all event activities in our town centre parks as part of our interim events strategy and business case for the provision of greener power. This information will be shared in due course.</p> <p>In 2019 Cheltenham Borough Council pledged to become net zero by 2030 and acknowledges generators are not suitable for powering events in our parks. This is why the aforementioned Cabinet report also puts forward a recommendation for the installation of sufficient mains power supply.</p>
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**9. ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2022/23 - 2026/27**

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets introduced the report, noting that the net value of CBC's assets had risen by around £490m since the current asset management strategy was approved in 2015. Their assets ranged from allotments to modern office accommodation, and included 10% of homes in the town. It was clear that a lot had changed since 2015, and a new framework was needed in order to maximise the benefits the assets could provide.

He explained that the new strategy provided a way to assess how each asset was contributing to the council's key priorities, and to help them make informed, transparent and safe decisions. Detailed asset plans would sit underneath the strategy, enabling the council to monitor the performance of its assets on an ongoing basis. These plans would be overseen by the Asset Management Working Group and a new dedicated officer group.

The strategy had been presented for consultation and feedback at the Asset Management Working Group, the Overview and Scrutiny committee, and both informally and formally with Cabinet colleagues. He stressed that the future in terms of property was exciting, and that he was looking forward to seeing the outcomes of doing things differently, enabling more value and enhancing assets for the benefit of residents, communities, and visitors to the town.

Members made the following comments:

- a separate category for potential assets that needed development or regeneration would be helpful;
- the growth in CBC's asset portfolio over six years was a real sign of progress in the town, and its residential and social housing portfolio was promising too.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets noted that the investment strategy took the separate category into account. He thanked Members for their comments, and officers and the Asset Management Working Group for their role in putting together the strategy.

**10. FUTURE PROVISION OF EXTERNAL AUDIT FROM 2023/24**

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets introduced the report, noting that Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA) were responsible for the national scheme to appoint auditors and set fees for local government and police bodies. PSAA oversaw all issues around compliance and the independence of the audit firm for local authorities that opted into the scheme. He emphasised that it would deliver better value for money for the council than going out to secure its own auditor.

The first national scheme covered the audit of statement of accounts from 2018/19 to 2021/22, while the second national scheme would run from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. The Audit, Compliance and Governance had discussed this when it met in January and had been happy to approve it, but the final decision on whether to opt in again was for Council.

One Member added that as a member of the Audit, Compliance and Governance committee, they had shared the opinion of officers that the collective scheme offered value for money. The Mayor agreed with this as a previous Chair of the committee.

**11. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - REVISED FORECAST 2021/22 AND BUDGET PROPOSALS 2022/23**

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets presented his report, telling Members that the focus of the HRA budget proposals was to support Cheltenham's economic recovery and improve the quality of life for tenants and communities. He said the pandemic continued to have a huge impact and, together with the looming cost of living crisis, represented a massive challenge for our customers and neighbourhoods. The council wanted to do all it could to ensure that Cheltenham's recovery was shared as widely as possible.

Specific measures included:

- significant investment in homes and services - £34m in the next three years to improve existing homes, and £67m for new homes;
- the aspiration to make Cheltenham a net zero carbon council and borough by 2030, by improving the quality and energy efficiency of existing homes, and ensuring a significant proportion of new homes will be net zero carbon, starting with the development at 320 Swindon Road;
- high-quality landlord and community services, in collaboration with CBH and other partners, controlling operating costs and delivering value for money;
- advice on benefits and money issues, support in finding work and training, hubs for and delivery of community activities, digital inclusion opportunities, and close collaboration with schools to help students remain in mainstream education;
- focus on sustainable, green investment.

He told Members that the proposed HRA budget would support tenants, help communities to thrive, improve outcomes for young people, reduce inequality and support the economic recovery of Cheltenham through this challenging period. He thanked officers and CBH for all their help in bringing the report together.

All Members echoed thanks to officers, to the Cabinet Member Finance and Assets for a very clear report, and in particular to CBH, who enjoy a well-deserved and positive reputation for their work, quality of their care, and positive contribution across the town. They also commented that:

- the services and support available to the most vulnerable members of the community were invaluable, housing being the biggest and most important council service, a decent home being the foundation for everything else;
- the proposed budget reinforced continual progress and product improvement, thus avoiding problems further down the line;
- CBH doesn't just provide housing, but also helps and supports young people across the borough. The close bond between CBC and CBH was recognised and appreciated, and would hopefully continue to grow;
- CBH also worked with Big Local to regenerate parts of the town, and thanks go to officers in the front line of the community investment team for their work. Some areas of St Mark's ward need additional support and CBH is a key and critical partner for CBC in this;
- CBH's downsizing programme - encouraging people to vacate much-needed 3-4-bedroomed houses and purchasing homes on the open market – deserved recognition, and was important in terms in integrating CBH properties in communities and offering more secure tenancies on decent homes;
- CBH maintains a good level of apprentices, which is to be welcomed.

The Cabinet Member Assets and Finance was pleased that CBH's reputation precedes itself, agreeing that it does a fantastic job. He thanked all colleagues, and hoped that CBH's finance director, who was present at the meeting, would feed back the positive comments and compliments from Members.

**RESOLVED (unanimously) THAT:**

1. **The revised HRA forecast for 2021/22 be noted;**
2. **The HRA budget proposals for 2022/23 (shown at Appendix 2) be approved, including a proposed rent increase of 4.1% and changes to other rents and charges as detailed within the report;**
3. **The HRA capital programme for 2022/223, as shown at Appendix 3 and 4, be approved.**

**FOR: (27): Atherstone, Babbage, Barrell, Bassett-Smith, Britter, Clark, Clucas, Collins, Dobie, Harman, Harvey, Hay, Horwood, Jeffries, Lewis, Mason, McCloskey, Nelson, Payne, Pinegar, Sankey, Seacome, Stafford, Wheeler, Wilkinson, Williams and Willingham.**

**AGAINST (0)**

**ABSTENTIONS (0)**

**12. FINAL GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2023**

The Mayor reminded Members that usual standing orders would be relaxed for this item, and they could speak for more than five minutes should they wish. He asked, however, that they be as brief as possible.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets introduced the budget paper, reminding Members of the unprecedented financial challenges faced by all councils over the last 18 months, in addition to the year-on-year cuts to the council's funding as a result of a decade of austerity. There was still significant uncertainty about the long-term impact of the pandemic on growth, investment and inflation, which currently stood at 5.5%, the highest level for 40 years, and was expected to peak at 7% in April.

He said that with the emergence of the Omicron variant, uncertainty continued to impact customer behaviour, which may in turn have a further financial impact on the council's commercial income and town's economy. The budget therefore needed to be balanced and targeted to ensure adequate revenue resources to continue recovery from Covid-19. The previous budget included a number of growth items in direct response to the Covid-19, providing revenue funding for climate change, economic recovery, and the introduction of an apprenticeship programme. In addition, in November 2020, the council committed £1.5m additional resources to the Golden Valley development.

He reminded Members that the key priorities, set out in the 2019 Corporate Plan, have not changed, and the council remained committed to:

- delivering its ambition to be cyber capital of the UK; inclusion of the Golden Valley development and the council in the government's recent national cyber strategy is testament to this;
- making Cheltenham a net zero carbon council and town;
- revitalising the town centre and supporting sustainable, inclusive growth and recovery for all residents and communities;
- a £180m housing investment plan;
- the No Child Left Behind initiative.

To continue with these priorities in the current economic environment, he proposed a strategy which re-prioritised and re-set the budget from the bottom up, utilising resources, assets, skills and infrastructure in the most effective way, saying that long-term strategic commitments needed long-term financial planning. By working with stakeholders throughout the consultation process, and by fine-tuning services based on actual needs, over £1.5m-worth of efficiencies had been identified, through collaboration and additional revenue generation.

The budget proposal also included:

- an increase in revenue funding for the council's net zero carbon journey;
- reduction in the council's reliance on car parking income to support air quality improvement in the town centre;

- new capital funding of £75k for a pilot EV off-street charging hub;
- continued funding to support apprenticeship programme.

He said the budget proposed a modest council tax increase of 2.28% for the council's proportion of the bill – less than 10p a week for a Band D property. He put this in context by pointing out the real financial challenges arising from:

- inflation currently running at 5.5%;
- our energy bills increasing by 7.5%;
- employers' national insurance contributions increasing by 1.5% in April 2022;
- fuel prices and shortage of drivers placing additional demand on waste and recycling services, with an increase in volume of kerbside collections.

He said the council's recovery from the pandemic continued to be a key priority, and the strategy was focused on revitalising and reshaping the town's economy to ensure that future growth benefits all our communities. The aim was to encourage collaboration across all sectors to ensure culture, hospitality and creativity were woven into our economic recovery plans, in particular our cyber investment plans, the creative revitalisation of the town centre, and the imaginative use of open spaces.

He stated that the plans were financially sustainable to ensure delivery of key priorities, and that the council had the people, ambition and skills to drive the recovery forward. He thanked the council's finance team for working through the ongoing financial challenges, and all council officers who had been involved in bringing the budget together.

The budget proposal was seconded by Councillor Hay.

As no questions had been put forward in advance, the Mayor invited Members' questions to Cabinet Members.

There were no questions regarding the budget, but one Member referred back to an earlier question regarding the pilot scheme for a tourist information hub in the town centre, and asked whether there was sufficient budget provision to implement the outcome if the trial was to be a success. The Cabinet Member Culture, Wellbeing and Business confirmed that part of the pilot was funded by the Welcome Back fund, but that additional funding would be required and that question is at the top of her list, to be discussed with the Cheltenham Trust.

The Mayor then invited group leaders to make their statements on the budget.

Councillor Payne, on behalf of People Against Bureaucracy (PAB), confirmed that his group would not be putting forward any amendments.

Councillor Harman, on behalf of the Conservative group, thanked all staff who had helped during the recent storms, including with refuse collection. He understood that communication had been good and people were well-informed of any changes.

Moving to the proposed budget amendments, he said he was always optimistic that the Conservative group could make an important contribution, with practical



ideas which will improve efficiency and make a real difference. He thanked officers for the preparation of the whole budget, and for helping his group work up their proposals which the S151 officer had confirmed as valid amendments.

The proposed amendments were as follows:

**Recurring revenue: net £21k pa saving, balance to reserves**

- reduced cabinet posts by three - £42k pa saving
- additional bring-site recycling collections at peak times - £11k pa
- free car parking after 6.00pm at Town Centre East car park - £10k pa

**Capital/one-off revenue: net £150k one-off cost, balance from unallocated capital reserve**

- bus station sustainability hub: seed funding for initial feasibility report - £50k one-off
- Platinum Jubilee green space/playground refurbishment fund - £5k per ward, £100k one-off

He said the group had decided not to include their previous proposal for whole council elections, pending the report on the Boundary Commission review at March Council. They still considered this to be a sensible option, however, which would bring Cheltenham into line with other Gloucestershire councils.

Referring to the group's recurring revenue proposals, he said that the size of the Cabinet could be reduced without affecting the performance of the council, with all functions retained and redistributed, and the savings could be put to good use. Additional bring-site recycling at peak times would be a good signal of the council's commitment to recycling, and free car-parking after 6.00pm at Town Centre East – the lowest revenue-raising carpark – would encourage people to Cheltenham and help market the town. His group supported the council's encouragement of alternative modes of transport, but the car will remain important, albeit electric or hybrid.

Regarding the proposed capital/one-off revenue proposals, he confirmed that at this stage his group was just suggesting a feasibility study on the bus station as a sustainability hub, admitting that it would be a complicated but valuable piece of work. The proposal of a Platinum Jubilee fund would provide borough councillors with the freedom to make improvements in their wards and would be open for 12 months.

He hoped that Members would consider the proposed amendments sensibly, and thanked Councillor Babbage for his support in bringing the proposals forward.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Harman, and invited the Leader of the PAB group to comment on the proposed budget.

The Leader of the PAB group welcomed the opportunity to comment on the budget proposals, and thanked officers for the clear narrative. His group was pleased to support the budget, acknowledging Cheltenham's positive position as it emerges from turbulent economic times, as a result of the S151 officer in partnership with the Cabinet – they are to be congratulated for this. He said supporting the budget means accepting all its elements, and present budget is a

partnership between the aspirations of the ruling party and the reality of available resources, which this year have included the added dimensions of changes in working practice, spiralling inflation, and failure of retail and hospitality to meet its full potential.

He approved the continued development of a medium-term strategy which would give financial stability, enable the council's economic recovery ambition through continued support of residents, businesses and communities, and support the climate change programme. He was reassured that the prominence of the carbon neutrality ambition was coming to the fore, welcoming the grant from the public sector decarbonisation scheme and awaiting with interest the publication of the climate investment strategy. He also welcomed the S151 officer's continued support of reserve funds, which provided an essential safety net to mitigate unexpected financial neutrality.

He noted that CBC's ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030 had been significantly hampered by the pandemic and although additional grant funding was welcome, PAB took the view that this was inadequate, and with uncertainty around government and county council support, wondered whether the council should perhaps temper its ambition and reset the timeline.

He also suggested that while a digital solution may be considered the best way to manage the changing nature of public interaction with the council, this may not be the right time, with many thousands of residents without access to or understanding of digital technology. He also questioned whether, in view of recent events in Europe highlighting the UK's dependency on imported energy, the council needed to revisit its ambition to divest from oil and gas and consider the security of its energy sources.

The meeting then adjourned from 3.50pm until 4.20pm, to allow the Cabinet to consider the conservative group's proposed amendments.

Upon reconvening, the conservative budget was formally proposed by Councillor Harman and seconded by Councillor Babbage.

In response, the Cabinet Member Finance and Assets said he was disappointed that the proposed amendments had not been raised earlier and rejected them in the manner presented, but addressed the points as follows:

- reducing the number of cabinet posts may seem feasible, but the Cabinet is the size it is because Members do a lot of work and already have to juggle their Cabinet responsibilities with their time as working members;
- there are already a number of one-off capital revenue schemes under consideration, including the TIC pod, public toilets and IT infrastructure; the bus station was being considered with the county council;
- the proposed Platinum Jubilee fund was recognised as a nice ambition, and £50k could be made available from the Green Economic Recovery and Investment Funding Reserve for this investment.

On behalf of the conservative group, Councillor Babbage said the group was disappointed that additional recycling collections and removal of car-parking charges were rejected, and that the development of the bus station, which had

been supported unanimously by Council, would not be taken forward. However, he welcomed the funding opportunity for councillors across the town to contribute ideas and thoughts to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, and said that on this basis, the group would be willing to support the budget.

The Cabinet Minister Finance and Assets confirmed that the funding would be available on the Community Pride principle, available for community groups to put in bids, rather than for Members to decide where to spend the money.

The Mayor moved to a recorded vote on the proposed budget amendment.

**FOR: (6): Babbage, Fifield, Harman, Mason, Nelson, Seacome**

**AGAINST: (21): Atherstone, Barrell, Bassett-Smith, Britter, Clark, Clucas, Collins, Dobie, Harvey, Hay, Horwood, Jeffries, Lewis, McCloskey, Payne, Pinegar, Sankey, Stafford, Wheeler, Williams, Willingham.**

**ABSTENTIONS: (0)**

**The amendment was lost.**

There were no questions for the S151 officer.

The Mayor then moved to the substantive motion, which was proposed by the Cabinet Member Finance and Assets and seconded by the Leader.

In response to a Member question, it was agreed that the wording for the proposed amendment would be worked out and added to the substantive motion, without the need for an additional vote.

In debate, Members thanked CBC and CBH officers for the huge amount of work involved in getting the budget together, commenting on how resilient the town had been throughout the pandemic, with an increase in pre-Christmas footfall and targets for carpark income reached. In response to a question from a Member as to whether there would be enough funds available this year to support revenue funds, the Executive Director Finance and Assets assured Members that, as the council's S151 officer, he is duty bound to give a full and comprehensive report (Appendix 2). He felt confident that reserves were adequate to meet the budget, and the medium-term financial strategy set out how reserves would be increased over time, giving financial stability over the next four years. He had considered all the things the council could face over the coming year, including 2% pay awards and increasing fuel prices, and Members could be assured that figures and reserves had been independently assessed.

The Leader of the Council said she was very happy to second this ambitious budget, and that the authority should feel rightly proud of its record over the last year – officers have worked hard, in collaboration, there have been no cuts, and a small amount of growth. She thanked the Cabinet Member Finance and Assets for all the hard work on his first budget.

The Mayor moved to a recorded vote on the following substantive motion:

It is recommended that Cabinet/Council:

1. Approve the revised budget for 2021/22 which is also reported separately in the 2021/22 budget monitor for 31 December 2021.
2. Consider the budget assessment by the Section 151 Officer at Appendix 2 in agreeing the following recommendations.
3. Approve the final budget proposals including a proposed council tax increase for the services provided by Cheltenham Borough Council for the year 2022/23 based on a Band D property (an increase of 2.28% or £5.00 a year for a Band D property), as detailed in paragraphs 4.14 to 4.19.
4. Approve the savings / additional income totalling £1,507,000 and the budget strategy at Appendix 4.
5. Approve the use of reserves and general balances and note the projected level of reserves, as detailed at Appendix 5.
6. Approve the capital programme at Appendix 6.
7. Approve the programmed maintenance programme at Appendix 7.
8. Approve the flexible use of capital receipts strategy as detailed in Appendix 8.
9. Note that the Council will remain in the Gloucestershire business rates pool for 2022/23 (paragraphs 4.4 to 4.13).
10. Approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) detailed in Appendix 9.
11. Approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23, including the continued payment of a living wage supplement at Appendix 10.
12. Approve a level of supplementary estimate of £100,000 for 2022/23 as outlined in Section 14.

with the following additional amendment added during debate:

- 13. Approve the use of £50k from the Green Economic Recovery and Investment Funding Reserve to establish a one-off Platinum Jubilee Community Fund and delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member Finance and Assets to progress the governance arrangements for its administration.**

**FOR: (27): Atherstone, Babbage, Barrell, Bassett-Smith, Britter, Clark, Clucas, Collins, Dobie, Fifield, Harman, Harvey, Hay, Horwood, Jeffries, Lewis, Mason, McCloskey, Nelson, Payne, Pinegar, Sankey, Seacome Wheeler, Wilkinson, Williams, Willingham.**

**ABSTENTIONS: (0)**

**AGAINST: (0)**

**The motion was carried.**

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets said that the uncertainty and volatility of the last 12 months had resulted in a continuous and mammoth amount of work, which had been personally challenging and would not have been possible without the support of officers. He thanked them, members of the cabinet who had a huge amount of involvement across their portfolios, and colleagues.

**13. COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION 2022-23**

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets introduced the report, setting out council tax arrangements for the borough, county and the Police and Crime Commissioner, which needed to be formally approved after approval of the budget.

In response to a Member's question, the Cabinet Member Finance and Assets confirmed that he was as confident as he could be that the £150 council tax rebate promised by the Chancellor would be paid centrally and not eat into the council's own budget; he would let Members know if anything changed

In debate, Members raised the following issues:

- it was important that the public be made aware that although CBC is the billing authority, its share of the council tax income is lower than that of the county and the PCC area;
- it should also be made clear that the £150 rebate would be a separate transaction – it would not be taken off at source, and CBC would not benefit from it.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets confirmed both these points, and recognised the hard work of officers in processing various payments and refunds introduced by government throughout the pandemic.

The Mayor then moved to the vote.

**RESOLVED THAT:**

**The Council approve the formal Council Tax resolution at Appendix 2 and note the commentary in respect of the increase in Council Tax at Paragraph 6 of Appendix 2.**

**FOR: Atherstone, Babbage, Barrell, Bassett-Smith, Clark, Clucas, Collins, Dobie, Fifield, Harman, Harvey, Hay, Horwood, Jeffries, Lewis, Mason, McCloskey, Nelson, Payne, Pineger, Sankey, Seacome, Wheeler, Wilkinson, Williams, Willingham (26) – unanimous**

**14. GAMBLING ACT 2005 STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES**

The Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services presented the report, explaining that the council had a statutory duty to update and reconfirm its statement of principles every three years. He noted that Cheltenham had a long history as a place for gambling, most prominently through the racing festival but also through 13 other licensed gambling premises, as well as the council's own Cheltenham Lottery in support of local causes. He encouraged responsible gambling as a way to support the local economy, but stressed that they must be alert to the risks too.

These risks would be addressed according to three principles: namely that gambling must not have any association with crime or disorder, that it must be conducted in a fair and open way, and that children must be protected from its dangers. The council recognised that when the fun stopped, the gambling must stop too. In order to do this, he was working with the Public Health team to build up local risk profiles and risk assessments. He acknowledged that national legislation severely limited their ability to refuse licenses, since the presumption was always in favour of granting them.

The changes made since the last statement of principles three years ago were largely technical – for example, changing references to the reformed organisation overseeing child safety. He added that the Cheltenham Lottery would be unaffected by any of the changes, and that the modest response to consultation had been taken on board.

One Member asked whether the council could do about the issue of self-exclusion, which was a strong indicator of vulnerability to gambling addiction. The Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services responded that this would form part of the risk assessment procedure they was being strengthened. Section 5.5 of the report referenced self-exclusion, with one solution being to share information with nearby treatment centres to most effectively identify and support those at risk.

In debate, Members made the following comments:

- the focus on treating gambling addiction as a public health issue was welcomed, and similar to the county council's approach;
- the recently-introduced national legislation restricting the use of fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs) was also welcomed.

The Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services agreed with both comments, saying the county council has a good team working on gambling

addiction as a public health issue, and that the reduction in the maximum bet on FOBTs from £100 to £2 would make a significant difference.

One Member added that in their role as Chair of Licensing Committee, they were happy with the report as it effectively targeted the areas of policy in which the council could play a role. Many areas of licensing policy were a matter for national government, but it was important for the council to act where it could. They noted that Appendix D contained a list of organisations offering help and advice to those affected by gambling addiction, and suggested that Members could direct potentially vulnerable constituents to this.

The Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services thanked Members for their contributions and asked that they approve the recommendations.

### **15. CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION PATHWAY AND STRATEGY**

The Cabinet Member Climate Emergency introduced his report, describing the climate emergency as the biggest challenge we face and one we cannot afford to ignore – both in respect of the long-term prosperity of humanity and from a simple financial perspective. He thanked the small but growing team at CBC, who have a wealth of knowledge and expertise, and reminded Members of the council's strong track record on environmental matters to date, as set out in the report. The council cannot achieve its aims without an all-encompassing formal plan, however, and is adopting a cross-party approach and working in partnership with CheltenhamZero and various public sector organisations to achieve its goals. The climate emergency action plan is a pathway to net zero, covering eight topic areas, each with a number of actions split into different time periods, and focussing on what CBC can deliver as an authority, and what needs involvement of others.

He said it was important to note the council would be bidding for government support in a number of areas, and the Cheltenham Green Deal will enable the council to back proposed actions with money. It will also be offering a local bond scheme, giving local people opportunity to invest in projects which help the planet and make a return too. He reminded Members that the key principle of the strategy is the willingness to change as a borough and take responsibility to act on this serious challenge, but that Cheltenham can be part of the global shift towards a cleaner, greener, more pleasant world – the first step is to voting today.

In response to questions from Members, the Cabinet Member Climate Emergency responded as follows:

- regarding progress on reducing carbon emissions of the council's own vehicles, the authority itself to account by reporting to Overview and Scrutiny, ensuring the right questions are asked, ditching diesel vehicles, moving towards alternative fuels etc, with more detail provided year on year;
- to tackle climate change deniers and conspiracy theorists, the plan encourages community engagement and, with Planet Cheltenham, is investigating the potential for community champions, as well as going into schools to help educate children about the issues at an early stage;

- climate justice is an important consideration – ensuring that people who can afford to bear the brunt do so, so that the less well-off are not unfairly impacted. This is mostly a national issue around tax, but local authorities can get involved by draught-proofing council housing and improving fuel efficiency;
- it is important that Cheltenham, as a festivals town, moves away from diesel generators for outside events on CBC land – the Cabinet Member Culture, Wellbeing and Business is working on an events strategy to incorporate this;
- whether Cheltenham made a big tree-planting pledge in partnership in 2019 with other Gloucestershire councils is debatable, but this is an indicative action alongside many others in the scoping report;
- with regard to planning standards – requiring all new development to be zero carbon, protecting key wildlife sites from development – a climate supplementary planning document is currently underway and will set a framework on which local planning applications can be judged. This will only carry a certain level of weight, but until national planning policy forces higher standards, it will at least inform the JCS and Local Plan, and demonstrate to developers that they will need to go above and beyond if they want to develop in Cheltenham.

In debate, Members enthusiastically welcomed the ambitious strategy, and commended both the Cabinet Member Climate Emergency for his championing of these vital issues and the climate emergency team for their hard work and expertise. They made the following comments:

- Cheltenham has already made a start, with its policy to have a zero-carbon taxi fleet by 2030, its first zero-carbon private housing development recently permitted in Leckhampton, on a brownfield site and including 40% affordable housing – a revolutionary moment. Solar panels have been installed on many CBH properties, but isolated instances cannot be relied upon, and mapping out a pathway is vital;
- inclusion of measures to combat the loss of biodiversity and threat to the eco-system – a crisis in its own right - in the plan is welcomed;
- there are a number of infrastructure initiatives which could help but would need county council investment – such as smart street-lighting which can be used, among other things, for EV charging, and electric hook-up for licensed events;
- while trees are nature’s way of removing CO2 from the atmosphere, there are technological solutions as well which would be worth investigating, and great potential for working in conjunction with tech start-ups at the Minster Exchange and with the cyber hub;
- the climate emergency pathway has crossovers to all portfolios, and it is exciting to see so many initiatives and projects starting to take shape.

The Cabinet Member Climate Emergency said Members had made some excellent points, which would have been heard by the team and would be acted upon.

**RESOLVED (unanimously) that the Council:**

- **notes the progress made to date;**
- **approves the emerging Climate Emergency Action Plan: Pathway to Net Zero, and delegates implementation to the Director for**



Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Climate Emergency and the Section 151 Officer;

- delegates authority to the Director for Environment in consultation with the Cabinet Member Climate Emergency and Section 151 Officer to commit expenditure from the allocated Climate Emergency budget;
- approves the 'Cheltenham Green Deal' (the climate change investment strategy).

**16. ORDER OF PRECEDENCE**

The Chief Executive Officer presented the report to Members, and asked that they ratify the order of preference as set out in the papers.

In the absence of any debate or questions, the Mayor moved to the vote:

**RESOLVED THAT:**

- **the Order of Precedence in Appendix 2 be noted.**
- **Councillor Sandra Holliday and Councillor Matt Babbage be put to the Annual Council Meeting for election as Mayor and Deputy Mayor respectively for the Municipal year 2022 - 2023.**

**FOR: (27)**

**AGAINST: (0)**

**ABSTENTIONS: (0)**

**17. NOTICES OF MOTION**

There were none.

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

There were none. The Mayor thanked the Chief Executive and officers.

Steve Harvey  
Chairman

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**Cheltenham Borough Council**  
**Council – 21 March 2022**

## Capital, Investment, Treasury Management Strategies 2022/23

<b>Accountable member</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets, Councillor Peter Jeffries</b>
<b>Accountable officer</b>	<b>Head of Property, Finance and Assets (Deputy s151 Officer)</b>
<b>Accountable scrutiny committee</b>	<b>Treasury Management Panel</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<p>In December 2017, CIPFA published updates to the Prudential Code and The Treasury Management Code of Practice. The new Prudential Code requires the Council to approve a Capital Strategy on an annual basis in advance of the forthcoming financial year. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) also updated statutory guidance on treasury management which has resulted in changes to the Treasury Management Strategy and the introduction of a separate Investment Strategy.</p> <p>For 2021/22 a revised and updated set of strategic documents were approved by Council: The Council's Capital Strategy, Investment Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy.</p> <p>Wider consultation took place across the Council in the preparation of these documents to reflect our collective vision for the use of assets and resources to drive economic recovery in the town following the Covid-19 pandemic. These have been reviewed again in light of the changes to the 2022/23 budget which was approved by Full Council on 21 February 2022.</p> <p>In accordance with best practice, the Council has adopted and complies with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the Prudential Code by relevant Capital Finance Regulations.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>1) That Council considers and approves the following :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Capital Strategy 2022/23 at Appendix 2;</b></li> <li>• <b>The Investment Strategy 2022/23 at Appendix 3;</b></li> <li>• <b>The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2022/23 at Appendix 4; and</b></li> <li>• <b>The 2022/23 MRP Statement at Appendix 5.</b></li> </ul>

<b>Financial implications</b>	The financial implications are reported in appendices 2 – 5.  <b>Contact officer: Gemma Bell, Head of Property, Finance and Assets (Deputy s151 Officer)</b>  <b>Email: gemma.bell@cheltenham.gov.uk</b>
<b>Legal implications</b>	As detailed in the report.  <b>Contact officer: One Legal – legal.services@tewkesbury.gov.uk</b>  <b>Tel: 01684 272012</b>
<b>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</b>	None arising directly from this report.  <b>Contact officer: Georgie Tweddell, Georgie.tweddell@publicagroup.uk</b>  <b>Tel: 01285 623110</b>
<b>Key risks</b>	As noted in Appendix 1.
<b>Corporate and community plan Implications</b>	The purpose of the strategy is to improve corporate governance, a key objective for the Council.
<b>Environmental and climate change implications</b>	The capital and investment strategies outline how our assets and resources are planned to be used to meet our corporate priorities, including those relating to carbon neutrality. These schemes and subsequent funding were approved by Council on 21 February.
<b>Property/Asset Implications</b>	As detailed in appendices 2 and 3.  <b>Contact officer: Gemma Bell, Head of Property, Finance and Assets (Deputy s151 Officer)</b>  <b>Email: gemma.bell@cheltenham.gov.uk</b>

## 1. Background

- 1.1 Local authorities in England are legally obliged to “have regard” to the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and the Prudential Code by relevant Capital Finance Regulations.
- 1.2 Local authority investment decisions have made headlines over the past few years with questions being raised about the role of local authorities investing in property and assets as a means to generate income to compensate for the reduction in government funding. Investing in property and other assets is nothing new for Cheltenham Borough Council whom has historically held major assets such as retail sites and commercial property for some time now. In recent years however the emphasis on using these assets to generate a commercial yield has become much greater and this has involved some councils investing in property outside of its area. The scaling up of investments by local councils has been brought to the attention of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and CIPFA resulting in changes to the Treasury Management Code and the Prudential Code.
- 1.3 Following consultations in February and August 2017, CIPFA published its new 2017 guidelines

of Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Cross-sectoral Guidance Notes and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities just before the end of 2018. The Council is now required to prepare and approve four strategies/statements on an annual basis:

- Capital Strategy;
- Investment Strategy;
- Treasury Management Strategy Statement; and a
- A Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement

- 1.4. Additionally, a MHCLG consultation was concluded in August 2020 which now means that from 26 November 2020 local authorities are prohibited from using monies borrowed from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) to invest purely for yield. Borrowing can still be used for service expenditure and schemes focused on regeneration, housing or funding interventions to prevent negative outcomes for a local area. The capital and investment strategies present how we continue to comply with these requirements by focusing our assets, resources and investments on our key corporate priorities to support the economic recovery of the town following the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.5. With that in mind, we have also used the strategy documents to set out a proposal to set out our approach to future investment decisions and our management of our asset portfolio which balances social value, sustainability, regeneration, commercial and housing needs at a strategic level to ensure a positive direction of travel to economic recovery continues.
- 1.6. This will inform the development of a strategic vision and delivery framework that will help guide management of our current portfolio and guide future potential investment by establishing a clear vision, objectives and selection criteria.

**2. Consultation**

- 2.1. Each strategy is attached at Appendices 2 - 5 and is based on information relating to the Council’s local circumstances with accompanying information and advice supplied by the Council’s treasury advisors Arlingclose Limited.
- 2.2. The financial information included in these documents was approved by Council on 21 February 2022.

<b>Report author</b>	<b>Gemma Bell, gemma.bell@cheltenham.gov.uk, 07341 780601</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix 1 – Risk Assessment Appendix 2 – Capital Strategy 2022/23 Appendix 3 – Investment Strategy 2022/23 Appendix 4 – Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2022/23 Appendix 5 – Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2022/23
<b>Background information</b>	Section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003 Cheltenham Borough Council Treasury Management Practices Medium Term Financial Strategy – Council 21 February 2022



The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	I	L	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
	LOBO Loans - If £7m of these loans are recalled by the banks if they choose to exercise their option then we would need to have the resources on the day to repay. Alternative borrowing arrangements at today's current rates would be favourable for the Council	ED Finance & Assets Paul Jones	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2015	1	2	2	Accept	If the loans are recalled the council could take out temporary borrowing which is currently much lower than the rates on these loans. Any capital receipts available could also be used to repay debt.	May 2021	ED Finance & Assets Paul Jones	
	If the assumptions made within the strategies change, then the aspirations within the capital programme may become unaffordable.	ED Finance & Assets Paul Jones	13 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	3	2	6	Accept	The Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential and Treasury Indicators reflect various assumptions of future interest rate movements and Government support for capital expenditure. These will be continually monitored and any necessary amendments will be made in accordance with the Strategy		ED Finance & Assets Paul Jones	

	If tenants exercise break-clauses and/or not renew leases, then there may be an impact on income projections and net returns.	Simon Hodges	15 <sup>th</sup> August 2018	2	3	6	Accept	Should tenants serve notice, the Council will have 6 months prior notice to find new tenants.		Simon Hodges	
	If thorough due diligence is not undertaken when pursuing commercial property investments, the Council may not meet all of the criteria set out within its capital and investment strategies.	ED Finance & Assets Paul Jones	13th March 2019	4	2	8		Due diligence is of paramount importance. All of our commercial investments have individual business cases that are subject to thorough risk assessment and stress testing and we also stress test the whole investment portfolio to ensure all risks are captured and properly controlled. Where appropriate to the size and scale of the project we also commission independent technical, legal, accounting, risk management, property, taxation advice		Simon Hodges	



**Cheltenham Borough Council  
Council 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022  
Council Size Submission**

<b>Accountable member</b>	<b>Councillor Rowena Hay, Leader of the Council</b>
<b>Accountable officer</b>	<b>Paul Jones, Executive Director, Finance and Assets</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Key/Significant Decision</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	This report identifies the work carried out by the Electoral Boundary Review Group and puts forward to Council a council size proposal for a submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) based on a Council size of 40 members.
<b>Recommendations</b>	Council approves the submission of Appendix 2 to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on the proposed council size.

<b>Financial implications</b>	Members allowances based on 40 members is currently built into the base revenue budget. Any deviation away from that number could have an adverse or positive impact on the base budget.  <b>Contact officer: paul.jones@cheltenham.gov.uk</b>
<b>Legal implications</b>	The conclusion of the LGBC on a boundary review is legally binding and cannot be avoided by the Council.  <b>Contact officer: legalservices@onelegal.org.uk</b>
<b>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</b>	There are no direct HR implications arising from this report.  <b>Contact officer: hr.cheltenham@publicagroup.uk</b>
<b>Key risks</b>	There is a risk that the Commission may not agree with the Council's preferred council size proposals and, as set out above, the Commission's decision would be legally binding.
<b>Property/Asset Implications</b>	There are no direct Property/Asset implications arising from this report  <b>Contact officer: Gemma.Bell@cheltenham.gov.uk</b>

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. The Local Government Boundary Commission (LBGBC) wrote to the Council in July 2021 setting out the electoral review timetable. The initial task for the Council is to develop thoughts on the proposed council size (i.e. the number of elected members) alongside assembling five-year forecast electorate data.
- 1.2. Importantly, this stage provides the opportunity to consider the number of elected members and to reflect, from first principles, on the role and contribution of elected members in modern local governance.
- 1.3. An all member survey was conducted to help evidence a draft submission to the Council size review which was considered by a cross-party working group on Monday 7th March 2022, prior to full Council consideration at this meeting.

**2. COUNCIL SIZE**

- 2.1. The initial stage of an Electoral Review is to determine a preferred council size. This is the number of Councillors required to deliver effective and convenient local government.
- 2.2. The electoral boundary review group met on Monday 7th March 2022 to look at council size and concluded, based on the results of the member survey, that Council puts forward a council size proposal for a submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) based on a Council size of 40 members.

**3. WARDING ARRANGEMENTS**

- 3.1. The second stage of the review is to submit proposals to the Commission on warding patterns.
- 3.2. The electoral boundary review group will meet to look at warding patterns and model a number of possibilities.

**4. NEXT STEPS**

- 4.1. If the proposal is agreed by Full Council it will be submitted to the Commission as the Council's submission. However, if this is not agreed then it will be for individual members or political groups to make their own submissions.
- 4.2. It should be noted that even if the proposal is agreed by Full Council this does not prohibit any member or group from making their own submission.

<b>Report author</b>	Contact officer: Paul Jones, <a href="mailto:paul.jones@cheltenham.gov.uk">paul.jones@cheltenham.gov.uk</a> 01242 264365
<b>Appendices</b>	1. Risk Assessment 2. Council size submission

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
	LGBC do not agree with the Council's proposal.	ED Finance and Assets	11 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	2	2	4		Officers will work with the Commission to put forward a strong case based on the evidence provided within its submission.	17 <sup>th</sup> May 2022	ED Finance and Assets	

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# Council Size Submission: Template

Cheltenham Borough Council

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## How to Make a Submission

It is recommended that submissions on future governance arrangements and council size follow the guidance provided and use the format below as a template. Submissions should be treated as an opportunity to focus on the future needs of the council and not simply describe the current arrangements. **Submissions should also demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been considered in drawing up the proposal and why you have discounted them.**

The template allows respondents to enter comments directly under each heading. It is not recommended that responses be unduly long; as a guide, it is anticipated that a 15 to 20-page document using this template should suffice. Individual section length may vary depending on the issues to be explained. Where internal documents are referred to URLs should be provided, rather than the document itself. It is also recommended that a table is included that highlights the key paragraphs for the Commission's attention.

'Good' submissions, i.e. those that are considered to be most robust and persuasive, combine the following *key success components* (as set out in the guidance that accompanies this template):

- Clarity on objectives
- A straightforward and evidence-led style
- An understanding of local place and communities
- An understanding of councillors' roles and responsibilities

## About You

The respondent should use this space to provide the Commission with a little detail about who is making the submission, whether it is the full Council, Officers on behalf of the Council, a political party or group, a resident group, or an individual.

By law, the LGBCE have to take account of three main considerations when conducting an electoral review as set out in Schedule 2 of the Act:

- Improve electoral equality by equalising the number of electors each councillor represents
- Reflect community identity
- Provide for effective and convenient local government

Electoral reviews are initiated primarily to improve electoral equality. This means ensuring as far as is reasonable, that for any principal authority the ratio of electors to councillors in each electoral ward or division is approximately the same. Under the criteria adopted by the LGBCE, there are two conditions considered to warrant a review, if the imbalance is unlikely to be corrected by foreseeable changes to the electorate within a reasonable period:

- Any local authority with an electoral division or ward that has an electoral variance of 30% or over. This means a division or ward having 30% more or fewer electors per councillor than in average for the council as a whole, and;
- Any local authority where more than 30% of divisions or wards have an electoral variance of over 10% from the average for that authority.

### **Cheltenham Borough Council:**

This is a submission made by Cheltenham Borough Council and was approved at a full meeting of the Council on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022. The proposal received (TBC after Council meeting) support.

### Reason for Review (Request Reviews Only)

Please explain the authority's reasons for requesting this electoral review; it is useful for the Commission to have context. *NB/ If the Commission has identified the authority for review under one of its published criteria, then you are not required to answer this question.*

The commission has identified CBC as requiring an electoral review as we have not had a review since 2000/01 and there are some distinct variations in our wards.

### The Context for your proposal

Your submission gives you the opportunity to examine how you wish to organise and run the council for the next 15 - 20 years. **The consideration of future governance arrangements and council size should be set in the wider local and national policy context.** The Commission expects you to challenge your current arrangements and determine the most appropriate arrangements going forward. In providing context for your submission below, please demonstrate that you have considered the following issues.

- When did your Council last change/reorganise its internal governance arrangements and what impact on effectiveness did that activity have?
- To what extent has transference of strategic and/or service functions impacted on the effectiveness of service delivery and the ability of the Council to focus on its remaining functions?



- Have any governance or capacity issues been raised by any Inspectorate or similar?
- What influence will local and national policy trends likely have on the Council as an institution?
- What impact on the Council's effectiveness will your council size proposal have?

## Background

The council has 40 councillors across 20 wards which in pairs align to the 10 county council electoral divisions. Elections are held every two years with one seat in each ward up for election. These arrangements have been in place since 2002.

The council has in the past considered whether it would wish to move to four yearly elections but this has been dismissed following workshops with members.

In a recent Member survey carried out in March 2022 to support this electoral review, 69% of respondents thought that 40 Councillors is the appropriate number for the borough.

The council has a cabinet system and is currently Liberal Democrat controlled.

- Liberal Democrats – 30 (group leader Cllr. Rowena Hay)
- Conservatives - 7 (group leader Cllr. Tim Harman)
- People against Bureaucracy – 2 (group leader Cllr. John Payne)
- Non-aligned - 1

The Council has a civic mayor that is selected on an annual basis. The current mayor is Cllr. Steve Harvey and the Deputy Mayor is Cllr. Sandra Holliday.

There are two MPs for the borough. Alex Chalk is the Conservative MP covering most of the borough and Lawrence Robertson who is the Conservative MP covering two wards to the north of the borough, Prestbury and Swindon Village, the main part of his constituency being Tewkesbury.

## LGA peer challenge 2018

In terms of reviews of our effectiveness, the council participated in a LGA peer challenge in 2018.

[https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/19/corporate\\_priorities\\_and\\_performance/1431/lga\\_peer\\_review\\_2018](https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/19/corporate_priorities_and_performance/1431/lga_peer_review_2018)

The key messages from the review were as follows:

- The Council is performing at a high level with great ambition
- CBC is moving into a new phase: defined by new approaches to modernisation, customer access, finance and partnership working

- Growth – The Golden Valley Development (Cyber Park) at west Cheltenham and proposed development at north west Cheltenham are game changers. It is critically important to ensure benefits are achieved for all parts of the community
- Need to gain more benefit from partners and contracted services – clarify what you expect
- Match your resource and capacity to your ambition

In terms of feedback on our governance arrangements, the peer review team concluded:

As part of the revised organisational structure it would be beneficial to review member portfolios and senior officer roles to provide dedicated political and managerial leads in relation to key priorities, for example on the Golden Valley Development (Cyber Park) and deprivation. It will also be important to develop a stronger awareness of the distinctive roles and responsibilities of officers and members. In addition, reviewing the role of backbenchers could add political capacity.

#### **Agreed actions from the Peer Challenge:**

1. The need to strengthen the role of backbenchers through recruiting champions for particular areas of work and building an understanding of their skills and professional knowledge.  
Update: The council has six member champions appointed for the following topics that are of great interest to member; Cycling and Walking, Safeguarding, Mental Health and Armed Forces
2. The role of scrutiny needs strengthening  
Update: In 2019, the committee commissioned Campbell Tickell to assess the current arrangements and ways of working in the context of the Statutory Guidance and make recommendations about how the committee could be more effective and how resources could be better focussed or increased. Campbell Tickell presented initial findings in January 2020 before submitting their final report, including a range of recommendations, in February 2020. The committee accepted the recommendations and established a task group to devise an action plan in response to the recommendations.
3. Cabinet member portfolios  
Update: The Cabinet was increased from 7 Members to 9 in February 2020 to provide specific leads to support the growing environmental / climate change agenda and the economic development / growth agenda. These two new portfolios are generating considerable additional workloads and are of growing local and national importance.

#### **Covid response:**

The council has just been through the sternest test of its governance arrangements as a result of its response to the pandemic. The attached report notes how well the council coped

[https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/documents/s39041/2022\\_01\\_17\\_OS\\_covid%20response.pdf](https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/documents/s39041/2022_01_17_OS_covid%20response.pdf)

### **Support for our communities**

At the height of the pandemic, to ensure the most vulnerable were supported, we rapidly established a community 'help-hub', working with Gloucestershire County Council, supported by Cheltenham Borough Homes and The Cheltenham Trust (TCT). We re-deployed 25 staff to support hundreds of vulnerable residents to ensure they had the essentials of food, their prescriptions, as well as to hear a friendly voice. With TCT, we established an additional innovative food service to provide more support to local people:

<https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/news/article/2394/>

With our well-established community connections and councillor insight, we quickly gathered intelligence from across the town, swiftly realising that local food banks were struggling to meet demand. Therefore, the Mayor's Foodbank fund was established and raised thousands of pounds -

<https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/news/article/2415/>

November 2020: Local Government Association (LGA) – Renewal & Recovery Review:

To assess our Covid response, we took part in a LGA Recovery and Renewal Panel with the Deputy Leader and CEO of Exeter City Council, looking at our emergency response and identifying ways to improve our recovery efforts; snapshots include:

- “External stakeholders in particular, value the Council’s ability to adapt at pace to meet the needs of residents and businesses in a dynamic and complex environment”
- “CBC was one of, if not the first council to publish a Recovery Strategy. That early publication and consultation enabled the council to clearly signal recovery aims and objectives, which in turn informed the thinking and work of others including Gloucestershire County Council”
- “Both internally and externally the enhanced communications put in place by the council are recognised and hugely valued as transparent and timely, in particular the council’s social media channel has helped to maintain visibility for the council and keep people informed”

### **June 2021: Internal Audit Finding: Response to Covid-19:**

In 2021, SWAP Audit Services undertook an audit on the following areas to provide assurance that the response to COVID-19 was robust and responsive to the needs of staff and customers, and in line with national Government guidelines:

- ICT: equipment, Data Protection considerations and arrangements to allow staff to work from home
- H&S of staff: arrangements allowing staff to safely WFH
- Key service delivery: arrangements in place to ensure customer access to previous face-to-face services
- Staff wellbeing arrangements
- Community response

- Emergency response and liaison with appropriate agencies
- Emergency decision-making arrangements

Assurance Opinion: “A sound system of governance, risk management and control exist, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area audited”

The council can be rightly proud of how it coped with the pandemic, not only in the way it kept its governance structures and services running but also how well it supported local communities and businesses deal with the impact of the pandemic.

### **Other areas of context**

Elected members who took part in the working group also wished for two other issues to be considered as part of the context for our electoral review:

The drive for a more diverse and representative set of councillors:

Our elected members have noted that with any proposed decrease in their numbers would see a rise in the workloads – already 92% of our councillors are spending over 15 hours a week on council business. And almost a quarter feel that time spent on council business is unmanageable. They feel that increased workloads would deter younger people of working age from becoming councillors. Therefore our elected members have a strong desire to not reduce the number of councillors so that workloads do not deter working age people from becoming councillors.

### **Community needs**

Our elected members have noted just how much time they are spending dealing with community needs within their wards. From the member survey, nearly three quarters of members are spending 20% of their time on community issues, with a quarter spending over half their time on community issues. The pandemic illustrated just how important all of our members are in supporting their communities – and community needs remain high across the borough with many of our residents facing challenges with fuel, food and transport costs all impacting on household budgets.

Elected members also noted that in more deprived wards – there are particular needs and issues that require particular attention and time. Being aware that Cheltenham has the greatest extremes between our most deprived communities and our least deprived communities in the county, our Overview and Scrutiny committee has agreed to set up a specific scrutiny task group that will review whether CBC’s policies and service delivery are targeted at working with communities to help them address the causal factors of multiple deprivation that it can influence and it should be working with other stakeholders to ensure that their efforts are similarly targeted

[https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/documents/s39542/2022\\_02\\_28\\_OS\\_tackling%20deprivation\\_presentation.pdf](https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/documents/s39542/2022_02_28_OS_tackling%20deprivation_presentation.pdf)

Elected members were concerned that any proposed decrease in their numbers would lead to a loss in the connection between ward councillors and their ability to properly understand and support the community that they represent.

### Local Authority Profile

**Please provide a short description of the authority and its setting, in particular the local geography, demographics and community characteristics.** This should set the scene for the Commission and give it a greater understanding of any current issues. The description should cover all of the following:

- Brief outline of area - are there any notable geographic constraints for example that may affect the review?
- Rural or urban - what are the characteristics of the authority?
- Demographic pressures - such as distinctive age profiles, migrant or transient populations, is there any large growth anticipated?
- Community characteristics – is there presence of “hidden” or otherwise complex deprivation?
- Are there any other constraints, challenges, issues or changes ahead?

Further to providing a description, the Commission will be looking for a submission that demonstrates an understanding of place and communities by putting forth arguments on council size based upon local evidence and insight. For example, how does local geography, demographics and community characteristics impact on councillor casework, workload and community engagement?

From its humble medieval origins to today’s buzzing borough of 116,043 people (2020 mid-year estimate), Cheltenham is a place that has thrived through centuries of change. It is a place we are proud of and passionate about, and as a council we are committed to helping it grow and prosper in years to come.

Although a predominantly urban authority we have five parish councils which cover the villages which historically were outside of the town itself – Charlton Kings, Swindon Village, Prestbury, Up Hatherley and Leckhampton with Warden Hill.

We know that Cheltenham is about to enter a period of significant change; Our Joint Core Strategy, approved in December 2017 and developed over a number of years with Tewkesbury Borough Council and Gloucester City Council, sets the reality of the growth challenge for the area up to 2031

Of particular note is our commitment to the Golden Valley development – a 200-hectare development that straddles the boundary of Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Borough which will be a world-class, multi-use development with 3,700 homes and the UK’s first cyber focused campus, Cyber Central. This will complement other developments which will see a potential 10,917 new homes built over the lifespan of the JCS.

So for Cheltenham, we are not only entering a decade of growth we are also on the cusp of a development opportunity that comes but once in a lifetime for a local authority of Cheltenham’s size and one which will, when achieved, truly act as game-changer not just for Cheltenham but its wider economic and social hinterland.

Harnessing the opportunity for growth in its wider context is therefore absolutely critical for our town’s future success and if we want to deliver our vision of Cheltenham being a town in which everyone thrives, we need to recognise the challenges our town faces and take action.

Cheltenham has some of the wealthiest areas in the UK, and yet two areas fall within the nation’s 10% most deprived and 6 within the 20% most deprived. We also know that child poverty is an issue in Cheltenham; once housing costs are factored in; there are four wards where over 30% of children are growing up in poverty. Supporting all our young people and attracting and retaining incoming young people is absolutely critical. Forecasts tell us that by 2029 there will be proportionately fewer under 18s than over 65s living in Cheltenham. This is partly due to the high cost of housing and the lack of affordable, quality rented accommodation on secure tenancies, as well as access to jobs. In recognition of the fact that Cheltenham needs housing that is affordable, accessible and brings about security of tenure to support the growth in employment, the council is preparing a review of options for a step-change in the pace of the delivery of housing (including housing that is affordable).

## CBC Councillors

Elections are held every two years. The Council does not play an overly active role in attracting new Councillors but does offer information via its website on [standing as a candidate](#).

There have been no instances where the Council has been unable to discharge its duties due to a lack of Councillors.

The Council provides learning and development support to Members through a comprehensive Member Induction Programme and ongoing Member development opportunities via service specific Member seminars or Local Government Association training.

## Council Size

The Commission believes that councillors have three broad aspects to their role.

These are categorised as: **Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulatory and Partnerships), and Community Leadership.**

Submissions should address each of these in turn and provide supporting evidence. Prompts in the boxes below should help shape responses.

### Strategic Leadership

Respondents should provide the Commission with details as to how elected members will provide strategic leadership for the authority. Responses should also indicate how many members will be required for this role and why this is justified. **Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

In relation to Governance, it is assumed that Cheltenham Borough Council will continue to operate with most of the existing governance structure. However, it is expected that Members would explore and review options for committee and meeting structures as part of the normal Council processes as required.

Topic	
Governance Model	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>What governance model will your authority operate? e.g. Committee System, Executive or other?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>The Cabinet model, for example, usually requires 6 to 10 members. How many members will you require?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>If the authority runs a Committee system, we want to understand why the number and size of the committees you propose represents the most appropriate for the authority.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>By what process does the council aim to formulate strategic and operational policies? How will members in executive, executive support and/or scrutiny positions be involved? What particular demands will this make of them?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Whichever governance model you currently operate, a simple assertion that you want to keep the current structure does not in itself, provide an explanation of why that structure best meets the needs of the council and your communities.</i></li> </ul>
	<p><i>Analysis</i></p> <p>The Council has had leader and cabinet arrangements in place since 2001 and pursuant to Schedule 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 the Council adopted the new Stronger Leader and Executive Model in 2010 which took effect in May 2012. The Leader is appointed for a four year term of office and the Cabinet consists of the Leader of the Council together with at least two, but not more than nine Councillors.</p> <p>The Cabinet was increased from 7 Members to 9 in February 2020 to provide specific leads to support the growing environmental / climate change agenda and the economic development / growth agenda. These two new portfolios are generating considerable additional workloads and are of growing local and national importance.</p>

		<p>The Cabinet carries out all of the Authority’s functions as set out in <a href="#">Part 3E of the Constitution</a>, i.e. all key decisions and other policy/decisions except those that are the responsibility of the Council; the responsibility of the Regulatory Committees or decisions that are delegated to officers.</p> <p>A Key Decision means any decision in exercise of an Executive Function which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• requires a budget expenditure or saving of £100,000 or more;</li> <li>• relates to the acquisition or disposal of land or an interest in land with a value in excess of £250,000;</li> <li>• is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the Borough</li> </ul> <p>A Significant Decision means any decision in exercise of a non-Executive Function which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• requires a budget expenditure or budget saving of £100,000 or more;</li> <li>• is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the Borough.</li> </ul> <p>The Cabinet meet monthly. It is collectively responsible for all of its decisions and actions taken with each Cabinet Member given an area of special responsibility. Each Cabinet Member works closely with the Executive Directors and Service Managers and develop an in-depth knowledge of their special responsibility area. This knowledge and ongoing oversight is shared with the other Cabinet Members and supports the decision making process for developments and decisions required by the Cabinet in their areas.</p> <p>The Council considers 9 Members to be the appropriate number for the Cabinet to effectively cover the breadth of service areas and deliver the leadership role required. There has been no incidence of Cabinet having insufficient Members to hold a meeting.</p> <p>There is sufficient evidence to show that the current structure is both efficient and effective, and should be maintained and so the model of governance is expected to continue.</p>
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<b>Portfolios</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>How many portfolios will there be?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What will the role of a portfolio holder be?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will this be a full-time position?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will decisions be delegated to portfolio holders? Or will the executive/mayor take decisions?</i></li> </ul>
	<b>Analysis</b>	<p>As stated above the nine Members of the Cabinet are collectively responsible for all decision the Cabinet make and actions taken. Each Member has an area of special responsibility covering numerous service areas. To view a breakdown of the service areas for each Cabinet Member please see the CBC website.</p> <p>The role of a Cabinet Member is not considered to be a full time position but the role demands considerable time. Councillors on the Cabinet are also appointed to other appropriate committees, including the Appointments and Remuneration Committee. Cabinet Members can also be Members of external partnerships and outside bodies and informal meetings representing the Council. Councillors on the Cabinet cannot be Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&amp;S). A Cabinet briefing is a standing item on each O&amp;S agenda and Cabinet Members are often required to attend meetings.</p> <p>The Leader also attends quarterly meetings with other Gloucestershire Leaders and Chief Executives to facilitate and drive county matters to shape and deliver the ambition and vision for Gloucestershire.</p>
<b>Delegated Responsibilities</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>What responsibilities will be delegated to officers or committees?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How many councillors will be involved in taking major decisions?</i></li> </ul>
	<b>Analysis</b>	<p>Article 7 of the Council's Constitution sets out the responsibilities of the Cabinet and Article 4 sets out the responsibilities of Council. Part 3E of the Council's constitution outlines the delegated decision making powers allocated within the political structure and to officers in the Scheme of Delegation. A review of the Constitution has just commenced.</p>

### Accountability

Give the Commission details as to how the authority and its decision makers and partners will be held to account. The Commission is interested in both the internal and external dimensions of this role. **Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic	
<b>Internal Scrutiny</b>	The scrutiny function of authorities has changed considerably. Some use theme or task-and-finish groups, for example, and others have a committee system. Scrutiny arrangements may also be affected by the officer support available.
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>How will decision makers be held to account?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How many committees will be required? And what will their functions be?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How many task and finish groups will there be? And what will their functions be? What time commitment will be involved for members? And how often will meetings take place?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How many members will be required to fulfil these positions?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Explain why you have increased, decreased, or not changed the number of scrutiny committees in the authority.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Explain the reasoning behind the number of members per committee in terms of adding value.</i></li> </ul>
Analysis	<p>The Council has an Overview and Scrutiny Committee comprised of 10 Members (and 5 reserves), with a quorum of 4 Members attending and entitled to vote.</p> <p>The membership constitutes a quarter of all councillors, and enables cross-party representation while retaining political proportionality (with seven Liberal Democrat members, two Conservatives including the Chair, and one from the People Against Bureaucracy group).</p> <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertakes its role in accordance with the provisions of Part 3 of the Constitution (Responsibility for Functions) and Part 4D (Overview and Scrutiny Rules).</p> <p>Its functions include establishing standing or ad hoc sub-committees, as well as scrutiny task groups to carry out in-depth reviews of a particular issue. The group also considers call-ins, receives councillor calls for action, gathers evidence from external persons or organisations, and contributes to the</p>

	<p>monitoring, review and improvement of services provided either directly by or on behalf of the authority.</p> <p>Further to this, it makes reports and recommendations to Cabinet and Council, promotes good practice across the authority and promotes the development of member skills and competencies in O&amp;S. Underpinning this, the O&amp;S workplan sets out its activities over the coming months, taking into account corporate priorities, the forward plan, issues of local concern and available resources.</p> <p>More broadly, the committee seeks to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide constructive ‘critical friend’ challenge to the executive;</li> <li>• Amplify the voices and concerns of the public;</li> <li>• Be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role;</li> <li>• Drive improvement in public services in Cheltenham.</li> </ul> <p>As of March 2022, there are currently no scrutiny task groups in progress, although one will be set up on the topic of Tackling Multiple Deprivation after the May 2022 elections. Scrutiny task groups tend to have around 4 Members and last between 3 and 6 months.</p> <p>In 2019, the committee commissioned Campbell Tickell to assess the current arrangements and ways of working in the context of the Statutory Guidance and make recommendations about how the committee could be more effective and how resources could be better focussed or increased. Campbell Tickell presented initial findings in January 2020 before submitting their final report, including a range of recommendations, in February 2020. The committee accepted the recommendations and established a task group to devise an action plan in response to the recommendations.</p>
<p><b>Statutory Function</b></p>	<p>This includes planning, licencing and any other regulatory responsibilities. Consider under each of the headings the extent to which decisions will be delegated to officers. How many members will be required to fulfil the statutory requirements of the council?</p>

<b>Planning</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will executive members serve on the planning committees?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?</i></li> </ul>
	Analysis	<p>The Planning Committee comprises 11 elected Members and 4 substitutes. Cabinet Members do not sit on this committee. Planning Committee was reduced from 15 to 11 Members in July 2020 in order to increase the effectiveness of the decision-making process and reflect best practice. 85 % of respondents to the recent Member Survey considered the current committee size for Planning Committee was appropriate to its function.</p> <p>It is important to highlight that the work of the Planning Committee has increased quite markedly over recent time and the knowledge required to fulfil the role is becoming increasingly more complex as a result of the evolving legislation and the need to keep informed of changes to the local plan, the Joint Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.</p> <p>A structured site visit organised by planning officers called ‘Planning View’ provides Members with an opportunity to view and enter application sites (and neighbouring sites where necessary) and also consider the surrounding context in advance of the Planning Committee meeting. Planning View has been suspended during the pandemic but will be resurrected in the coming months.</p> <p>All Members of the Council were invited to attend mandatory Planning training following the May 2021 elections to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to understand planning applications (some major) in their wards.</p>

		<p>Planning matters can take up a considerable amount of time for a ward member.</p> <p>The number of applications determined by Councillors has remained relatively consistent over the last four years and is shown in the table below. The level of delegation is not expected to change significantly in the short term.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1025 464 2094 730"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Number of planning applications</th> <th>Number determined by Officers</th> <th>Number determined by Members</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2018</td> <td>1305</td> <td>1251 (96%)</td> <td>54 (4%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019</td> <td>1318</td> <td>1270 (96%)</td> <td>48 (4%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020</td> <td>1216</td> <td>1165 (96%)</td> <td>51 (4%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021</td> <td>1512</td> <td>1460 (97%)</td> <td>52 (3%)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Number of planning applications	Number determined by Officers	Number determined by Members	2018	1305	1251 (96%)	54 (4%)	2019	1318	1270 (96%)	48 (4%)	2020	1216	1165 (96%)	51 (4%)	2021	1512	1460 (97%)	52 (3%)
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<b>Licensing</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>How many licencing panels will the council have in the average year?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>And what will be the time commitment for members?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will there be standing licencing panels, or will they be ad-hoc?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will there be core members and regular attendees, or will different members serve on them?</i></li> </ul>																				
	Analysis	<p>The Council has a Full Licensing Committee comprising 10, politically balanced, Members and two Licensing sub committees - Licensing Miscellaneous and Alcohol and Gambling. The latter deals exclusively with applications for alcohol and gambling licensing and the former taxi, sexual entertainment and other miscellaneous licensing types (street trading, obstruction of the highway etc.) The full Licensing Committee principally meets to consider policy issues, act as lead consultee to the relevant Cabinet Member and respond to local and national licensing consultations.</p>																				

	<p>The full Licensing Committee meets 4 times a year, Licensing Miscellaneous sub-committee scheduled monthly, and the Alcohol and Gambling sub-committee on an ad-hoc basis.</p> <p>All the licensing committees have core Membership although the Alcohol and Gambling sub-committee operates a panel of three chosen from a group of 5.</p> <p>Member's time commitment includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reading the officer's report and accompanying document</li> <li>familiarisation with corporate licensing policy, guidance and legislation</li> <li>attending site visits prior to the committee hearing</li> <li>attending a pre-briefing session on the day of the committee</li> <li>attending the committee hearing</li> <li>mandatory licensing training</li> </ul> <p>The Licensing committee is entrusted with dealing, at times, with very sensitive and serious matters. This includes matters relating to licence holder's conduct that has fallen far below the expected standards, sensitive medical and criminal information, immigration matters and sensitive operational matters. These are usually dealt with as exempt and restricted items.</p> <p>The chair and vice-chair commits more time pre- and post- committee meetings. This will include meetings about issues arising from licensing issues, additional research and preparation for chairing committee's and supporting policy development. In addition, the chair and vice-chair spend time outside of formal committee business to address and respond to contentious issues arising from committee business. Recently, this included meetings to address concerns around taxi licensing safeguarding issues, licensing and regulation of sex establishment licensing, public concern about the impact of big horse racing events in Cheltenham.</p> <p>Decisions made by the Licensing Committee is subject to legal recourse for aggrieved applicants. In most cases, there is a right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court. Decisions that are appealed is dealt with by officers who are summoned to attend and give evidence.</p>
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		<p>Cheltenham has a large, vibrant and award winning evening and night-time economy (ENTE). The Licensing Committee plays an active role in matters affecting the ENTE. This includes both policy development impacting on the management of the ENTE but also individual applications for businesses operating in the ENTE. The Licensing Committee chair also acts as ENTE Champion.</p> <p>Cheltenham is a Purple Flag town. Purple Flag is an international accreditation programme, externally assessed, that aims to reward ENTEs that are shown to be safe, inclusive, welcoming and innovative in its approach.</p> <p>Delegated powers are allocated to officer for licensing application decisions in the majority of cases. Applications that attracted objections and/or does not comply with adopted policy are referred to the relevant licensing committee. Officers also retain the discretion to refer any application to the relevant licensing committee as circumstances dictate.</p> <p>The recent Member survey results show high levels of support for the size of the Licensing Committee (85 % of respondents) so the structure is considered appropriate for this function.</p>
<b>Other Regulatory Bodies</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>What will they be, and how many members will they require?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Explain the number and membership of your Regulatory Committees with respect to greater delegation to officers.</i></li> </ul>
	Analysis	<p>The Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee is an independent group of seven councillors (political proportionality applies )whose main responsibility is to oversee the council's governance arrangements and the effectiveness of its system of internal control.</p> <p>Internal audit provide formal assurance to the audit committee twice a year, an interim report in September and an annual report in June.</p> <p>The audit committee also receive assurance from external audit on :</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the council's annual accounts and annual governance statement</li> <li>• on the effectiveness of the corporate governance framework</li> <li>• on the effectiveness of the corporate risk management processes</li> </ul> <p>The Appointments and Remuneration Committee comprises 9 Members (political proportionality applies )and is responsible for :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering the appointment and dismissal of any Executive Officers</li> <li>• Determine the conditions on which the Executive Officers hold office, including deciding matters relating to the early retirement of those officers.</li> <li>• Consider the Pay Policy Statement and refer it to Council for approval</li> <li>• Determine polices relating to employee remuneration Determine policies relating to local government pensions and discretionary compensation.</li> <li>• Deal with any other appointments, dismissal or remuneration matters referred by Council or Head of Paid Service</li> </ul> <p>The Standards Committee comprises 7 Members (political proportionality applies )and 2 Independent Persons and its role is to exercise the Council's functions in matters relating to standards of conduct within the Council, promote and maintain high standards of conduct at Borough and Parish Councils, review/ monitor the effectiveness of the Code, prepare, monitor &amp; review Protocols, determine applications for dispensation, receive reports from the Monitoring Officer on complaints which have been determined</p>
<p><b>External Partnerships</b></p>	<p>Service delivery has changed for councils over time, and many authorities now have a range of delivery partners to work with and hold to account.</p>	
<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<p>➤ <i>Will council members serve on decision-making partnerships, sub-regional, regional or national bodies? In doing so, are they able to take decisions/make commitments on behalf of the council?</i></p>	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>How many councillors will be involved in this activity? And what is their expected workload? What proportion of this work is undertaken by portfolio holders?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What other external bodies will members be involved in? And what is the anticipated workload?</i></li> </ul>
Analysis	<p>Following each Selection Council, and at other times when vacancies arise, the Leader/Cabinet takes the opportunity to nominate and, in limited cases, appoint persons to various roles within bodies external to the Council. Also the opportunity is taken to nominate persons to other bodies such as Joint Committees. Examples of such nominations are to the board of Cheltenham Borough Homes, the council's arms length management organisation, the Cheltenham Trust and Gloucestershire Airport. The full list of outside bodies to which Members are nominated can be found on our webpage.</p> <p>73% of respondents to the recent Member Survey told us that they spend 10% or less of their council time on attending meetings of an outside body or partnership with 27% spending 15% or more of their time.</p>

### Community Leadership

The Commission understands that there is no single approach to community leadership and that members represent, and provide leadership to, their communities in different ways. The Commission wants to know how members are required to provide effective community leadership and what support the council offers them in this role. For example, does the authority have a defined role and performance system for its elected members? And what support networks are available within the council to help members in their duties? The Commission also wants to see a consideration of **how the use of technology and social media by the council as a whole, and by councillors individually, will affect casework, community engagement and local democratic representation. Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic		Description
<b>Community Leadership</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>In general terms how do councillors carry out their representational role with electors?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Does the council have area committees and what are their powers?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How do councillors seek to engage with their constituents? Do they hold surgeries, send newsletters, hold public meetings or maintain blogs?</i></li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Are there any mechanisms in place that help councillors interact with young people, those not on the electoral register, and/or other minority groups and their representative bodies?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Are councillors expected to attend community meetings, such as parish or resident’s association meetings? If so, what is their level of involvement and what roles do they play?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Explain your approach to the Area Governance structure. Is your Area Governance a decision-making forum or an advisory board? What is their relationship with locally elected members and Community bodies such as Town and Parish Councils? Looking forward how could they be improved to enhance decision-making?</i></li> </ul>
	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Councillors are actively involved within their wards and most consider themselves to play a pro-active part in the communities they represent. The approach taken varies from councillor to councillor but all are involved in some or all of the following as part of their engagement with constituents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holding surgeries – dealing with queries, providing advice and engaging with constituents face-to-face</li> <li>• Constituency matters – emails, written, telephone responses</li> <li>• Community / Resident meetings</li> <li>• Working with and / or offering support to community groups and local organisations</li> <li>• Attending Town and Parish Council meetings</li> <li>• Contact with parish/town councils</li> <li>• Articles for parish/village magazines and newsletters, blogs and/or websites and social media</li> </ul> <p>The Council does not have any area committees in the District and there is no Ward Member delegated budget.</p> <p>In the recent Member Survey approximately 92% of respondents told us that they spend more than 15 hours a week on council duties. Of this time, 27% of respondents were spending 30% or more of this time in reading papers in preparation for a borough council meetings with 50% being spent on constituency issues. 77% of respondents to the survey considered that their time spent on council activities was manageable. 50% of respondents to the survey did not receive a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA). Approximately, 50% of those who were in receipt of a SRA spend fewer than 5 hours on the additional workload, and 50% spent more than 15 hours on this additional workload.</p> <p>9 Cheltenham Borough Council Councillors are also Members of Gloucestershire County Council (5 Liberal Democrat and 4 Conservative). This does naturally give rise to an increased workload for those dual hatted Councillors. Additionally, Borough Councillors play a signposting role where residents approach them on county council (such as highway or on-street parking matters).</p>

DISTRICT COUNCILS IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE 2021

Name	Estimated Population mid-2020	Number of Councillors	Residents per Councillor
Cheltenham	116,043	40	2,901
Cotswold	90,264	34	2,655
Forest of Dean	87,107	38	2,292
Gloucester	129,709	39	3,326
Tewkesbury	96,624	38	2,543
Stroud	120,903	51	2,371

<b>Casework</b>	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How do councillors deal with their casework? Do they pass it on to council officers? Or do they take a more in-depth approach to resolving issues?</li> <li>➤ What support do members receive?</li> <li>➤ How has technology influenced the way in which councillors work? And interact with their electorate?</li> <li>➤ In what ways does the council promote service users' engagement/dispute resolution with service providers and managers rather than through councillors?</li> </ul>
	Analysis	<p>In our recent Member survey 100% of respondents told us that they dealt with casework directly (rather than referring to a CBC officer to respond on their behalf). Our Members told us that casework does vary depending on the demographic of the wards, respecting that there are wards with different needs and services.</p> <p>In May 2021, 20 new Borough Councillors were elected to CBC. An induction training programme was provided to all Councillors in the months following the election. There are ongoing learning opportunities in the form of member seminars. The Democratic Services Team provides a first point of contact for Member enquiries and signposting and offer a Buddy system, aimed at newly elected Members. Technical and professional support is available from specific officers.</p>

		<p>Technology, in the form of laptops and Blackberry Work have been incorporated into the Councillor role to enable a more mobile, responsive and interactive service as well as reduce unnecessary paper consumption. The majority (90%) of Councillors accept a corporate laptop to use for borough council business. All meeting agendas, minutes and communications are sent electronically. Wherever possible all information and documentation from Officers is sent to Councillors electronically. A fortnightly e-newsletter is emailed to all Councillors keeping them up-to-date with current news going on throughout the Council. Since the pandemic all Member general briefings are held on a quarterly basis virtually and recorded for those who cannot attend.</p>
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**Other Issues**

Respondent may use this space to bring any other issues of relevance to the attention of the Commission.

The Council has an excellent record of financial management and is proud to have effectively maintained the high levels of service provision despite an environment of challenging financial circumstances for all local authorities. The Medium Term Financial Strategy provides the funding framework within which the Council will achieve its aspirations and achieve its corporate priorities.

The national restrictions which have been in place, across the country or locally here in Cheltenham, have created a huge amount of financial uncertainty. With the emergence of the Omicron variant, the uncertainty continues to impact customer behaviour which may have further financial impact on our commercial income and on the town's economy. Changes to customer behaviour and the way our services are accessed has changed with no certainty as to whether this will be permanent or temporary and what this means for how we fund and operate our services. It also means we need to continue investing in technology, in particular the digital platform to meet the changing requirements of our residents and service users.

Since its adoption in 2018 the key mechanism driving our response to funding challenges has been the commercial strategy. This has driven an innovative and enterprising mind-set and we have adapted to generate income in different ways to support our general fund budget and deliver against our Corporate Priorities. Recovery from the pandemic and re-opening of the town has meant the contribution of some of these initiatives are providing to the general fund may now be permanently lower than we had assumed in previous budgets.

The 2022/23 budget has re-set our baseline position against our Corporate Priorities and prepared a Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2022/23 and beyond which ensures we continue to be financially sustainable whilst continuing to support economic recovery and growth and our climate change ambitions for the town.

The Council continues to be committed to working with our partners such as Cheltenham Borough Homes, The Cheltenham Trust Ubico Limited and Publica to improve the quality of life for residents and businesses in Cheltenham.

### **Changing electoral ratio**

The current average ratio of councillors to electorate for CBC is 1:2288 electors. Based on planning application data, it is estimated this will be 1:2373 electors per Councillor by 2025. This increase is considered to be manageable with the existing number of 40 Councillors and would not introduce an unacceptable burden on Councillor workload. The proportion of the eligible adult population registered on the Electoral Register impacts on the variation of the councillor electoral ratio across different local authorities. CBC has a high rate of 98% of eligible adult population currently registered on the Electoral Register.

In comparison with councils in the CIPFA nearest neighbour comparison group, the Councillor count of 40 for CBC, places it 5th out of the 16 comparator local authorities within the group between values of 1,865 and 3,793 Residents per Councillor. All Members were invited to complete an online survey to enable the Council to establish what size the Council should be in the future.

#### Considerations if reduced council size:

- A reduction in Councillor numbers would result in a financial saving of Councillor allowances and expenses. However, it was acknowledged there would be a likely increase in workload by the fewer remaining Councillors due to attending more meetings;
- Any reduction in number would result in an unacceptable increased workload for Councillors across both governance arrangements and constituency engagement and casework. With continued population growth the level of constituency casework is expected to remain the same or increase placing a significantly higher demand on a fewer number of Councillors;
- All governance arrangements would be required to be reviewed with a higher number of committee appointments for Councillors;
- Fewer Councillors with higher volume of casework could also result in increased demand on officer time with more assistance required;
- A reduction in Councillor numbers would limit diversity and inclusion as the increase in workload would limit the ability of those who undertake full-time employment or childcare responsibilities.

#### Considerations if increased council size:

- Increasing Councillor numbers would place additional demands upon the Council's limited budgetary resources for allowances and expenses;
- Increasing Councillor numbers would place additional demands on the officer support available particularly on resources in Democratic Services and many other teams within the authority such as housing, planning, environmental services;
- Increased number would reduce the electoral ratio and potentially lower casework demand on Councillors, although equally could make it marginally easier for some members by reducing caseload;
- Increased number of councillors would result in more councillors available to fill the governance posts. An increase is not deemed to be necessary to deliver the existing governance arrangements. Survey results showed strong support for the current number of Councillors appointed to panels and committees.

## Summary

In following this template respondents should have been able to provide the Commission with a robust and well-evidenced case for their proposed council size; one which gives a clear explanation as to the governance arrangements and number of councillors required to represent the authority in the future.

Use this space to summarise the proposals and indicate other options considered. Explain why these alternatives were not appropriate in terms of their ability to deliver effective Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation and Partnerships), and Community Leadership.

The Council has considered carefully the question of the Council's future size and concluded that the current number of 40 Councillors would be appropriate. Since 2002, Cheltenham Borough Council has operated with 40 Councillors elected to 20 wards across the Borough. In the last 10 years the Council has evidenced it is a high performing council with a strong reputation for quality service provision and financial management. There has been a consistently high standard of service from CBC Councillors in delivering effective strategic leadership, accountability and community leadership. There are no significant changes to the Council's regulatory Committees.

During the course of the deliberations the implications of reducing or increasing the number of Councillors were considered. A reduction of any number of Councillors was not considered acceptable and would not allow the Council to continue to provide the present level of representation and service to residents. An increase in Councillors was not felt to be appropriate or necessary with the Council's current membership effectively and consistently delivering a high level of services and Councillor workload to be manageable.

Given the Council's responsibilities it is considered that a continuation of 40 Councillors will give the Council sufficient capacity to effectively operate its current governance and decision-making arrangements. This number allows sufficient Member numbers to ensure the proper and timely consideration and making of decisions as well as guarantee sufficient representation on Committees and Sub-Committees to ensure that any debate is informed by a range of views and opinions. The membership of 40 Councillors also ensures there is sufficient capacity to ensure that absences or unavailability could reasonably be accommodated without significant detrimental impact.

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**Cheltenham Borough Council**

**Council – 21 March 2022**

**Review of No Child Left Behind and plans for 2022**

**Report of the Cabinet Member Safety and Communities**

<b>Accountable member</b>	Cabinet Member Safety and Communities, Cllr. Flo Clucas
<b>Accountable officer</b>	Safeguarding and Partnerships Manager, Tracy Brown Strategy and Engagement Manager, Richard Gibson
<b>Accountable scrutiny committee</b>	All
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	All
<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Executive summary</b>	<p>In December 2018, in response to a children and young people’s needs assessment, the council supported a motion to support the No Child Left Behind Year of Action on child poverty. In 2019, the council successfully coordinated the year of action and involved many partners in its delivery.</p> <p>Following a review in December 2019, when this council agreed to support a second year of the programme, No Child Left Behind has continued to make significant progress despite the interruptions of the pandemic.</p> <p>This report sets out the progress made by No Child Left Behind over the past two years and asks for Council support for plans for 2022.</p> <p>The reports also seeks Council support to support May as a month of celebrating childhood and to commit to supporting the events and activities listed in section 10.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>Council notes the progress achieved by No Child Left Behind since the last report to this council on 16 Dec 2019.</b></p> <p><b>Commits to support a fourth year of No Child Left Behind to be delivered in 2022.</b></p> <p><b>To agree to support May as a month of celebrating childhood and to commit to supporting the events and activities listed in section 10.</b></p>

<b>Financial implications</b>	None as a direct result of this report. It is expected that the delivery of the fourth year of the No Child Left Behind programme can be managed within existing budgets, through support from the Cheltenham Lottery and through specific fundraising.  <b>Contact officer: Martin Yates Business Partner Accountant Martin.Yates@cheltenham.gov.uk 01242 264200</b>
<b>Legal implications</b>	None as a direct result of this report.  <b>Contact officer: xx E-mail: xx@tewkesbury.gov.uk Tel no: 01684 272012</b>
<b>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</b>	None as a direct result of this report. Capacity to support the delivery of the fourth year of the No Child Left Behind programme can be managed within existing capacity within the Strategy and Engagement Team.  <b>Contact officer: xx HR Business Partner xx</b>
<b>Key risks</b>	If the council is not seen as supporting No Child Left Behind, there is a risk that other funders may not be as willing to contribute to the programme.
<b>Corporate and community plan Implications</b>	No Child Left Behind is one of the key projects emanating from the corporate plan that was agreed in March 2019 and its aspiration to work partners to develop community-based approaches that achieve inclusive growth and tackle inequality.
<b>Environmental and climate change implications</b>	One of the strands that NCLB would be interested in considering is how to get more young people engaged in the climate change debate.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 Given the concerns that the council and its partners had about the plight of children growing up in poverty in Cheltenham, a children's needs assessment was commissioned from the Strategic Needs Assessment Team at Gloucestershire County Council
- 1.2 The [needs assessment](#) set out that there was in the region of 4,300 children and young people growing up in poverty. And that those children, when compared to their more affluent peers were then facing significant challenges such as poorer education attainment, higher rates of exclusion, at higher risk being victims of crime, at a higher risk of being drawn into criminal activity, higher risk of being obese, at a higher risk of being open to social care and a higher risk of experiencing poor mental health.
- 1.3 In response to the figures, partners felt strongly that they could not do nothing. Instead the council and its partners devised plans for a year of action on child poverty called No Child Left Behind.
- 1.4 Following a members' seminar on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2018, the cabinet member healthy lifestyles took a motion to full council on 11 December 2018 to support the No Child Left Behind year of action – this was passed with unanimous support.
- 1.5 The year of action was reviewed in the report to council in December 2019. This report sets out activities in 2020 and 2021.

## 2. Reminder of the aims of No Child Left Behind

### 2.1 The aims of the No Child Left Behind are to:

- Highlight the issue of children growing up in poverty in Cheltenham and the inequality between them and their more affluent peers;
- Start to address the inequality gap with a programme of events and activities;
- Be a call to action for all sectors to work together to make transformational change over the longer-term.

### 3. Progress made in 2020 and 2021

3.1 As we entered into 2020, the NCLB team were looking forward to a year that would feature many public events and activities including plans for a children's festival and two innovative career events – one of which would have focused on cyber / digital careers for local school-children in conjunction with Golden Valley partners.

3.2 However, the Covid-19 pandemic meant these plans had to be shelved, but instead the focus switched to both building and sustaining the coalition of local partners interested in tackling child poverty and to directly addressing the impacts of the pandemic on local families through the following projects:

- Building the coalition - No Child Left Behind Community agreement;
- Covid response - Laptops for Learning;
- Covid response - NCLB – FeedCheltenham;
- Covid response - Summer of Play and the Holiday Activity and Food Programme;
- Celebrating success - No Child Left Behind awards.

### 4. Building the coalition – the No Child Left Behind Community Agreement

4.1 The Community Agreement arose from a collective understanding that the current offer for our children and young people – in terms of early years provision, education, family support, social care support and youth support does not work well for some of our children. Across a range of partners, led by our primary schools there was a collective ambition to do more, and to commit to an enhanced level of support so that all our children have the opportunity to thrive.

4.2 This ambition was developed into a collective commitment to all children and their families in Cheltenham, called the [community agreement](#).

4.3 Through signing the agreement, we are asking local partners to commit to working together in a way that is honest, open and shows an understanding that everybody's experiences in life are different including understanding the effects of trauma, particularly in childhood, and to value emotional wellbeing. We want organisations working with families to be inclusive, trustworthy and kind. We want this commitment to be reflected in their policies, their practice and their decision making (including financial).

4.4 Originally thinking that the agreement would be signed by a handful of local partners directly working with children and their families, we have been bowled over by the response. To date 24 schools have signed up alongside 45 local organisations including 12 local businesses.

4.5 The community agreement has the potential to deliver our third aim that of being a call to action for all sectors to work together to make transformational change over the longer-term.

4.6 Despite the pandemic restrictions on meeting face to face, we have held two virtual leadership summits (in March 2021 and November 2021) for the CEOs and directors of community

agreement signatories. Total attendances were 94

- 4.7 The summits gave local leaders the opportunity to hear from national experts and in workshops reflect how to make their organisations compassionate and strengths-based whilst supporting each other to make transformational change over the longer-term.
- 4.8 Alongside the leadership summits, front-line staff have been invited to attend one of three virtual training sessions held in 2021. Total attendances were 69.

### **5. Covid response - Laptops for Learning 2021**

- 5.1 During lockdown 3, in February 2021, NCLB launched our [#LaptopsforLearning](#) scheme which was set up to help ensure local children have access to the right IT equipment to support their learning – both at home during that lockdown, and also when they return to school.
- 5.2 #LaptopsforLearning was set up with the support of range of partners, including Cheltenham Education Partnership, Cheltenham Learning Partnership and IT Schools Africa, supported by volunteers from GCHQ that all shared a vision that no child should be left behind due to being digitally disadvantaged.
- 5.3 Alongside donations of unused / surplus laptops from both homes and businesses, that were then be refurbished by IT Schools Africa we also sought financial donations which would be used to purchase new laptop equipment.
- 5.4 The campaign, which ran to July 2021 was a great success which saw approximately £35,000 raised and 129 devices donated. From the financial donation, 25 ipads were purchased for Bournside school, 25 new laptops for Pittville School and 30 new laptops for All Saints Academy.

### **6. Covid response - Holiday Hunger scheme 2020**

- 6.1 Throughout the pandemic, the issue of access to affordable food and essential items was seen as one of the highest risks faced by our community.
- 6.2 We know that at the height of the pandemic, in excess of 1500 food parcels were being provided every week to Cheltenham residents. In response, local partners Family Space, came up with the idea of #FeedCheltenham, a means of raising much needed funds to support community food providers.
- 6.3 Ahead of the summer holidays in 2020, using £5k funding made available from GCC and the 10 elected county councillors, No Child Left Behind, working with our community food providers under the #FeedCheltenham banner, devised a holiday hunger scheme to provide food to families with children on free school meals. At the time, there were 3,111 eligible children in Cheltenham district and the scheme was devised to plug the gap whilst the children were not in school. In total over 700 family meals were delivered to local families via the six local community food providers.
- 6.4 Although modest in numbers, the holiday hunger scheme set the foundations for how NCLB would work on more ambitious plans to address the issue of holiday hunger.
- 6.5 In addition to the #FeedCheltenham scheme NCLB also relaunched the Holiday Hunger allotment project over Summer 2021. NCLB worked with six local allotment sites and one independent bakery to collect fresh, home-grown produce and baked goods to distribute to food providers around Cheltenham. Over the course of 11 weeks over 100 carrier bags of food were collected and redistributed to meet community need.

### **7. Covid response - Holiday Activity and Food Programmes Summer and Winter 2021**

- 7.1** The holiday activities and food (HAF) provision is funding from the Department for Education for upper tier local authorities to coordinate free holiday provision, including healthy food and enriching activities for children who receive benefits-related free school meals. Via No Child Left Behind, we have coordinated two HAF programmes, one in Summer 2021 and one in Winter 2021.
- 7.2** Over the four weeks of the summer holidays, NCLB worked with 14 local partners to put on face to face activities for children on free school meals that was then supported with food provision via Feed Cheltenham. In total 479 children attended 1440 sessions and 690 meals were provided.
- 7.3** In total £145k of funding was secured from GCC that has enabled community-based partners to deliver the four week summer programme.
- 7.4** In the run up to Christmas, NCLB partners developed a 4-day scheme that would build on the summer programme, but work more closely with local schools in recognition that they have the closest relationship with eligible families. Our winter programme had three elements:
- A choice of a food hamper or the option of a token to choose their own food at one of Cheltenham's community food pantries;
  - An age-specific festive activity pack;
  - Access to a range of face to face activities provided by our partner organisations.
  - Access to tickets to Christmas family activities
- 7.5** In total, we delivered 700 food hampers to local schools, 760 food pantry tokens and 700 activity packs. Ten volunteers helped pack the activity packs. In addition, we partnered with Marketing Cheltenham to offer local families the opportunity to enjoy the Ice Rink. In the run up to Christmas, we offered all families on free school meals the opportunity to book ice skating tickets at a 50% discount. And during the 4 days of the HAF scheme, eligible families could book a free family ticket – which was taken up by 159 local families.
- 7.6** In total £85k of funding was secured from GCC that has enabled community-based partners to deliver the winter programme.

## **8. Celebrating success – the No Child Left Behind Awards**

- 8.1** One of the highlights of our work pre-pandemic, was our No Child Left Behind Awards held in January 2020 at the Town Hall when over 200 people recognised the work of local projects, with 12 projects going home with their Iggy awards.
- 8.2** Despite not being able to hold the event in 2021, we have just held this year's event on 9 March 2022. The event celebrated the many great projects that supported families throughout the pandemic and over 200 people attended. This year's event was held in association with Punchline who helped us raise over £6,000 from local business to enable us to put on the awards.
- 8.3** The event was a great success and gave a real demonstration that NCLB is leading the way in building links between grass-roots community organisations, local schools and local businesses around our shared vision to do more to support local children.

## **9. Summary of achievements and our plans for year 4**

- 9.1** As we start 2022, the No Child Left Behind Partnership is incredibly strong. We have a built a

town-wide coalition of like-minded partners who are determined to take action so that all our children have the opportunity to thrive.

- 9.2** The roots of the coalition are our community-based partners in both VCS and public sectors who are working day in day out to support local children and their families. It is so important that NCLB nurtures and celebrates their work. For instance, the £230k funding we have been able to secure to deliver the HAF programme has made an incredible difference to the capacity to support local children who otherwise might have gone hungry during the school holidays.
- 9.3** We are delighted that this coalition includes private businesses. The 14 businesses that have signed up to the community agreement and taken time to attend our events deserve special mention. But we also recognise the support of businesses such as Creed Catering who have provided food hampers for our holiday and food programmes, Punchline who have raised £6,000 from 12 local businesses for our NCLB awards and Infrastar who have helped us so much with our laptops for learning project
- 9.4** We are also delighted to be working far more closely with local schools, both with our primary schools through the Cheltenham Learning Partnership and secondary schools through Cheltenham Education Partnership. Both our laptops for learning programme and our HAF schemes have reached out to every school in Cheltenham.
- 9.5** In terms of statistics, despite the challenges of the pandemic, NCLB is having a significant impact across a range of success measures:
- No of partners engaged estimated to be in the region of 120 (public sector / VCS / business);
  - Attendees at virtual training events – 163;
  - Profile of NCLB – no of social media engagements 1500 followers and 23k impressions monthly (mean average across twitter and facebook);
  - Amount of funding raised and sources = £292k which includes
    - £230k for the HAF projects
    - £35k for laptops for learning
    - c.£6k from the Cheltenham Lottery
    - £15k from the OPCC
    - £6k event sponsorship
- 9.6** Some of the positives from our work include:
- Whole town approach; NCLB is designed so as to have broad appeal to all Cheltenham's children and young people – it has not sought to limit itself to just benefitting children living in poverty. By doing so we have been able to galvanise a broad base of support for NCLB;
  - Demonstration of the council's place leadership role; coordinating NCLB goes beyond the traditional role of a district council. But using the place vision as a basis, this council has shown that it is willing to lead the debate and coordinate action on matters that impact on its residents;
  - Commitment shown by local partners including public, VCS, businesses and local schools.
- 9.7** Some opportunities that we want to develop in year 4:
- Developing a more defined link with businesses especially through the Golden Valley Development and through our participation in the Large Enterprise Action Group (LEAG);
  - Developing more robust engagement mechanisms with young people;
  - Continue to develop our way of working, shaping it by learning from others and ensuring that it is co-created and owned by our partners.
- 9.8** Therefore, in terms of our plans for year 4 include:
- Scoping out the potential for two careers events with a focus on cyber and sports
  - Plan to deliver more holiday activity programmes including bidding to become the districts

lead for future HAF programmes.

- A commitment to a Summer of Play, the national campaign to give children the space, time, and freedom to play
- Launching the NCLB community grant scheme to provide funding to local community projects
- Participation in the Large Enterprise Action Group (LEAG) which was launched in March 2022 and builds on from NCLB. It will work with local companies, education providers, Chamber of Commerce, BID and CBC to provide mentoring, learning opportunities and employment prospects for Cheltenham’s young people, with some of Cheltenham’s largest companies.
- And a desire to celebrate children in the month of May to coincide with our Children Festival taking place on Saturday 28 May 2022

**10. Celebrating Children Month – May 2022**

- 10.1** To support our plans for our Children’s Festival taking place on Saturday 28 May 2022, we would like to support May as a month when we will celebrate childhood. We plan to do this in the following ways:
- 10.2** We would like as many organisations in the town to show their support for NCLB and celebrate childhood by flying NCLB flags. To support this, we have launched a flag design competition for children and young people at the NCLB awards in March. With council support, we are proposing that the winning design is displayed at the Municipal Offices.
- 10.3** We will be working with schools to encourage them to run events that celebrate and promote the achievements of their children and young people.
- 10.4** The month will end with our annual Children’s festival that will take place on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> May. This completely free festival, which will take over the Town Hall, has the theme this year of Our Future.
- 10.5** We will be encouraging other organisations to come forward with their own plans for how they might want to join in the month. And if the month is successful, we will look to do this again on an annual basis.

<b>Report author</b>	Tracy Brown Safeguarding & Partnership Manager 01242 264142 Tracy.brown@cheltenham.gov.uk	Richard Gibson Strategy & Engagement Manager 01242 264280 richard.gibson@cheltenham.gov.uk
<b>Appendices</b>	1. Risk assessment	

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk			
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	I	L	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer
-	If the council is not seen as supporting NCLB, there is a risk that other funders may not be as willing to contribute to the programme	Richard Gibson	30.1.19	3	3	9	Reduce	Take a decision to support year 4 of NCLB	February 2022	Richard Gibson



## Cheltenham Borough Council

**Council – 21 March 2022**

### **Council Diary – September 2022 to August 2023**

<b>Accountable member</b>	<b>Leader of the Council, Councillor Rowena Hay</b>
<b>Accountable officer</b>	<b>Bev Thomas, Democratic Services Team Leader</b>
<b>Accountable scrutiny committee</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Significant Decision</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<p>The proposed diary of Council meetings for September 2022 to August 2023 is attached as Appendix 1.</p> <p>The dates and times for the Cabinet are shown for information only as it is for the Leader of the Council to determine the Cabinet meeting dates. However, they follow the pattern of time and frequency followed in previous years.</p> <p>If it is necessary to make any subsequent amendments to the draft diary, these will be reflected in the published diary online.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>It is recommended that:</b></p> <p><b>1. The draft Council Diary of meetings for September 2022 – August 2023 be approved.</b></p>

<b>Financial implications</b>	<p>No financial implications</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Martin.Yates@publicagroup.uk</b></p>
<b>Legal implications</b>	<p>No specific legal implications arising from the recommendations.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: legalservices@onelegal.org.uk</b></p>
<b>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</b>	<p>Start and end times of council meetings may impact on officer working hours which may need to be adjusted through flexible working practices e.g. use of flexitime. Additional paid hours may be considered providing any additional cost implications are met within existing budgets. Managers will need to be aware of potential health and safety risks for late evening meetings. This will particularly apply during the winter months for officers returning to their vehicles and travelling home outside normal day light hours.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: clare.jones@publicagroup.uk</b></p>
<b>Key risks</b>	None

<b>Corporate and community plan Implications</b>	The diary of council meetings supports the democratic process. <b>Contact officer: Richard.Gibson@cheltenham.gov.uk</b>
<b>Environmental and climate change implications</b>	Emissions generated by Councillors travelling to meetings in private petrol or diesel vehicles will negatively impact air quality and the climate. Active transport options, such as cycling or walking, should take priority when possible; public transport, EV or car sharing options may also be explored as a preferred way of attending meetings. <b>Contact officer: Laura.Tapping@cheltenham.gov.uk</b>

## 1. Background

1.1. The diary followed a similar rationale to that adopted in previous years, i.e.:

- As far as possible, meetings of a particular committee are scheduled on the same day of the week.
- Easter, August and Whitsun half terms and Friday evenings are avoided wherever possible, with the occasional exception of the regulatory Planning and Licensing meetings.
- Evening meetings have been scheduled for 6 pm to facilitate Members' attendance after the working day. That said, if there is a large agenda, the timing of some committee meetings will be reviewed on a meeting by meeting basis (Planning and Licensing for example). Any change in time will be in consultation with Members and advertised on our website when the meeting is convened.
- Planning View has now been reinstated and will take place at 11am on the day before each Planning Committee.
- Three regular meetings of the Standards Committee have been scheduled in the diary per year. Due to the nature of the committee, there may be a need for ad hoc meetings during the year to deal with specific issues or for meetings to be rescheduled.
- The dates and times for the Cabinet are shown for information only as it is for the Leader of the Council to determine the Cabinet meeting dates. However, they follow the pattern of time and frequency followed in previous years.
- Generally, once a working group has been established it will be permitted to schedule meetings at a time to suit those Members involved so working group meetings are not included in the diary.
- Eight meetings have been scheduled of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These are timetabled to cover key events during the year likely to require scrutiny involvement, including the budget consultation, review of the corporate strategy and agreeing the annual work plan.
- Provisional dates have been included for the Informal Cabinet meetings. These, however, are subject to change and can be rescheduled as the Cabinet sees fit.
- Twelve slots have been identified for member seminars, generally one per month. These are also currently being held virtually, with recordings made available for all Members to view on demand, should they not be able to participate.
- All Councillor briefings have been scheduled on a quarterly basis and will continue to be held virtually.

## 2. Consultation and Feedback

2.1 The draft diary was circulated to officers in January 2022 and Members in February 2022 as part of the consultation. Cheltenham Borough Homes was also consulted in order to avoid clashes.

2.2 Generally, once a working group has been established it will be permitted to schedule meetings at a time to suit those members involved. The Asset Management, Budget Scrutiny and Treasury Management working group meetings are included in the diary but others will be set up as required.

2.3 Regarding Council meetings, a provisional meeting has been scheduled on February 24<sup>th</sup> following the budget meeting on February 21<sup>st</sup>. If the latter meeting is not required, it will be cancelled.

2.4 Consideration has been given to party conference dates and meetings avoided during these times as far as possible.

**3. Performance Management – Monitoring and Review**

3.1 Any feedback on the diary during the year can be noted for consideration in future years.

<b>Report author</b>	<b>Claire Morris</b> <b>E-mail <a href="mailto:claire.morris@cheltenham.gov.uk">claire.morris@cheltenham.gov.uk</a></b> <b>Tel 01242 264211</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	1. Risk Assessment 2. Council Diary September 2022 – August 2023

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	I	L	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
	If the dates for Council meetings are not fixed by the Council before the start of or at the first meeting in the New Municipal Year then the Council will not be meeting the requirements of the Constitution.	DSTL	Jan 22	3	2	6	Reduce	Approve the diary at the March meeting of Council	Mar 22	Democratic Services Team Leader	
	If dates for other meetings are not scheduled in advance there could be problems in arranging meetings in terms of Members, officers and facilities.	DSTL	Jan 22	3	2	6	Reduce	Approve the diary with a full list of meetings as early as possible.	Mar 22	Democratic Services Team Leader	

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## September 2022

<b>Start of Term 1 (5th September – 22<sup>nd</sup> October)</b>		
(please note the school term dates and holidays listed in the diary are those set by Gloucestershire County Council and may vary for individual schools)		
<b>Thursday 1<sup>st</sup></b>		
<b>Friday 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	All Member WebEx	11.30-12.30
<b>Monday 5<sup>th</sup></b>	Overview & Scrutiny	6pm
<b>Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup></b>	Licensing-Full	6pm
<b>Thursday 8<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Friday 9<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Monday 12<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup></b>	Cabinet	6pm
<b>Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup></b>	Member Seminar	6pm
<b>Thursday 15<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Friday 16<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Monday 19<sup>th</sup></b>	Treasury Management Panel	6pm
<b>Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup></b>	Informal Cabinet	6pm
<b>Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup></b>	Planning View	11am
<b>Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	Planning	6pm
<b>Friday 23<sup>rd</sup></b>		
<b>Monday 26<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup></b>	Audit, Compliance and Governance	6pm
<b>Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>CBH Board Meeting</b>	<b>5.30pm</b>
<b>Thursday 29<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Friday 30<sup>th</sup></b>		

October 2022

Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Overview & Scrutiny	6pm
Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup>		
Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup>	Licensing – Miscellaneous	6pm
Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup>		
Friday 7 <sup>th</sup>		
Monday 10 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Deadline for Council questions and motions</i>	noon
Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup>	Cabinet	6pm
Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup>	Member Seminar	6pm
Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup>		
Friday 14 <sup>th</sup>		
Monday 17 <sup>th</sup>	Council	2.30pm
Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup>	Informal Cabinet	6pm
Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup>	Planning View	11am
Thursday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Planning	6pm
Friday 21 <sup>st</sup>		
<b>End of Term 1 (half term 24<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> October)</b>		
Monday 24 <sup>th</sup>		
Tuesday 25 <sup>th</sup>		
Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup>	Standards CBH AGM	6pm 5.30pm
Thursday 27 <sup>th</sup>	Budget Scrutiny Working Group	6pm
Friday 28 <sup>th</sup>		



November 2022

<b>Start of Term 2 (31<sup>st</sup> October – 17<sup>th</sup> December)</b>		
<b>Monday 31<sup>st</sup></b>	Overview & Scrutiny	6pm
<b>Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup></b>		
<b>Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Licensing-Miscellaneous	6pm
<b>Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup></b>		
<b>Friday 4<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Monday 7<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup></b>	Cabinet	6pm
<b>Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Thursday 10<sup>th</sup></b>	Asset Management Working Group	6pm
<b>Friday 11<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Monday 14<sup>th</sup></b>	Treasury Management Panel	6pm
<b>Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup></b>	Informal Cabinet	6pm
<b>Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup></b>	Planning View	11am
<b>Thursday 17<sup>th</sup></b>	Planning	6pm
<b>Friday 18<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Monday 21<sup>st</sup></b>		
<b>Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup></b>		
<b>Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup></b>	Member Seminar	6pm
<b>Thursday 24<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Friday 25<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Monday 28<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup></b>	CBH Board	5.30pm

## December 2022

Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup>		
Friday 2 <sup>nd</sup>		
Monday 5 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Deadline for Council questions and motions</i>	noon
Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup>	Cabinet	6pm
Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup>	Licensing-Full	6pm
Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup>	Member Seminar	6pm
Friday 9 <sup>th</sup>	All Member WebEx	11.30-12.30
Monday 12 <sup>th</sup>	Council	2.30pm
Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Informal Cabinet	6pm
Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup>	Planning View	11am
Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup>	Planning	6pm
Friday 16 <sup>th</sup>		
<b>End of Term 2 (Christmas holiday 20<sup>th</sup> December – 3<sup>rd</sup> January)</b>		
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup>		
Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Cabinet (Budget Proposals)	6pm
Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup>		
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup>		
Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup>		
Monday 26 <sup>th</sup>	<b>BANK HOLIDAY</b>	
Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup>	<b>BANK HOLIDAY</b>	
Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup>		
Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup>		
Friday 30 <sup>th</sup>		

January 2023

<b>Start of Term 3 (3<sup>rd</sup> January – 17<sup>th</sup> February)</b>		
<b>Monday 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>BANK HOLIDAY</b>	
<b>Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup></b>		
<b>Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Thursday 5<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Friday 6<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Monday 9<sup>th</sup></b>	Overview and Scrutiny	6pm
<b>Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup></b>	Informal Cabinet	6pm
<b>Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup></b>	Licensing-Miscellaneous	6pm
<b>Thursday 12<sup>th</sup></b>	Budget Scrutiny Working Group	6pm
<b>Friday 13<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Monday 16<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup></b>	Cabinet	6pm
<b>Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup></b>	Planning View	11am
<b>Thursday 19<sup>th</sup></b>	Planning	6pm
<b>Friday 20<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Monday 23<sup>rd</sup></b>	Member Seminar	6pm
<b>Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup></b>	Audit, Compliance and Governance	6pm
<b>Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>CBH Board</b>	<b>5.30pm</b>
<b>Thursday 26<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Friday 27<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Monday 30<sup>th</sup></b>	Asset Management Working Group	6pm
<b>Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup></b>		

## February 2023

Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup>	Licensing-Miscellaneous	6pm
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup>		
Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup>		
Monday 6 <sup>th</sup>		
Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup>	Cabinet	6pm
Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup>	Standards	
Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup>	Member Seminar	6pm
Friday 10 <sup>th</sup>		
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Deadline for Council questions and motions</i> Treasury Management Panel	Noon 6pm
Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup>	Informal Cabinet	6pm
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup>	Planning View	11am
Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup>	Planning	6pm
Friday 17 <sup>th</sup>		
<b>End of Term 3 (half term 20<sup>th</sup> February – 24<sup>th</sup> February)</b>		
Monday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Council	2.30pm
Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup>		
Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>CBH Board</b>	<b>5.30pm</b>
Thursday 23 <sup>rd</sup>		
Friday 24 <sup>th</sup>	Additional Council if needed	
<b>Start of term 4 (27<sup>th</sup> February- 8<sup>th</sup> April)</b>		
Monday 27 <sup>th</sup>	Overview & Scrutiny	6pm
Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup>		

March 2023

<b>Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup></b>	Licensing - Full	6pm
<b>Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup></b>		6pm
<b>Friday 3<sup>rd</sup></b>		
<b>Monday 6<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup></b>	Cabinet	6pm
<b>Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup></b>	Member Seminar	6pm
<b>Thursday 9<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Friday 10<sup>th</sup></b>	All Member WebEx	11.30-12.30
<b>Monday 13<sup>th</sup></b>	<i>Deadline for Council questions and motions</i>	noon
<b>Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Thursday 16<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Friday 17<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Monday 20<sup>th</sup></b>	Council	2.30pm
<b>Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup></b>	Informal Cabinet	6pm
<b>Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	Planning View	11am
<b>Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup></b>	Planning	6pm
<b>Friday 24<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Monday 27<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup></b>	Asset Management Working Group	6pm
<b>Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>CBH Board</b>	<b>5.30pm</b>
<b>Thursday 30<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Friday 31<sup>st</sup></b>		

April 2023

<b>Monday 3<sup>rd</sup></b>		
<b>Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup></b>	Cabinet	6pm
<b>Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup></b>	Licensing-Miscellaneous	6pm
<b>Thursday 6<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Friday 7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>BANK HOLIDAY</b>	
<b>Easter Holidays (11<sup>th</sup> April-22<sup>nd</sup> April)</b>		
<b>Monday 10<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>BANK HOLIDAY</b>	
<b>Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup></b>	Member Seminar	6pm
<b>Thursday 13<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Friday 14<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Monday 17<sup>th</sup></b>	Overview & Scrutiny	6pm
<b>Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup></b>	Informal Cabinet	
<b>Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup></b>	Planning View Audit, Compliance & Governance	11am 6pm
<b>Thursday 20<sup>th</sup></b>	Planning	6pm
<b>Friday 21<sup>st</sup></b>		
<b>Start of term 5 (25<sup>th</sup> April -27<sup>th</sup> May)</b>		
<b>Monday 24<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Thursday 27<sup>th</sup></b>	Budget Scrutiny Working Group	6pm
<b>Friday 28<sup>th</sup></b>		

May 2023

<b>Monday 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>BANK HOLIDAY</b>	
<b>Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup></b>		
<b>Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Licensing – Miscellaneous	6pm
<b>Thursday 4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>KEEP FREE</b>	
<b>Friday 5<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Monday 8<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup></b>	Informal Cabinet	
<b>Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup></b>	Member Seminar	6pm
<b>Thursday 11<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Friday 12<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Monday 15<sup>th</sup></b>	Annual Council	2.30pm
	Inauguration of the Mayor	6.30 pm
<b>Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup></b>	Planning View Member Seminar	11am 6pm
<b>Thursday 18<sup>th</sup></b>	Planning	6pm
<b>Friday 19<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Monday 22<sup>nd</sup></b>		
<b>Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup></b>	Cabinet	6pm
<b>Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Thursday 25<sup>th</sup></b>	Asset Management Working Group	6pm
<b>Friday 26<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>End of Term 5 (half term 29<sup>th</sup> May – 5<sup>th</sup> June)</b>		
<b>Monday 29<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>BANK HOLIDAY</b>	
<b>Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup></b>		

June 2023

Half term		
Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup>		
Friday 2 <sup>nd</sup>		
Start of Term 6 (6 <sup>th</sup> June – 22 <sup>nd</sup> July)		
Monday 5 <sup>th</sup>	Overview and Scrutiny	6pm
Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup>		
Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup>	Licensing - Full	6pm
Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup>		
Friday 9 <sup>th</sup>	All Member WebEx	11.30-12.30
Monday 12 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Deadline for Council questions and motions</i>	noon
Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Cabinet	6pm
Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup>	Planning View Member Seminar	11am 6pm
Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup>	Planning	6pm
Friday 16 <sup>th</sup>		
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup>	Council	2.30pm
Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Informal Cabinet	6pm
Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup>		
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup>		
Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup>		
Monday 26 <sup>th</sup>	Treasury Management Panel	6pm
Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup>		
Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup>		
Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup>		
Friday 30 <sup>th</sup>		



July 2023

<b>Monday 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Overview and Scrutiny	6pm
<b>Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup></b>	Budget Scrutiny Working Group	6pm
<b>Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup></b>	Licensing - Miscellaneous	6pm
<b>Thursday 6<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Friday 7<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Monday 10<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup></b>	Cabinet	6pm
<b>Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup></b>	Audit, Compliance and Governance	6pm
<b>Thursday 13<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Friday 14<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Monday 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<i>Deadline for Council questions and motions</i>	noon
<b>Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup></b>	Planning View Member Seminar	11am 6pm
<b>Thursday 20<sup>th</sup></b>	Planning	6pm
<b>Friday 21<sup>st</sup></b>		
<b>End of Term 6 - Summer Holidays</b>		
<b>Monday 24<sup>th</sup></b>	Council	2pm
<b>Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup></b>	Licensing - Miscellaneous	6pm
<b>Thursday 27<sup>th</sup></b>		
<b>Friday 28<sup>th</sup></b>		

August 2023

Summer Holidays		
Monday 31 <sup>st</sup>		
Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup>		
Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup>		
Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup>		
Friday 4 <sup>th</sup>		
Summer Holidays		
Monday 7 <sup>th</sup>		
Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup>		
Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup>		
Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup>		
Friday 11 <sup>th</sup>		
Summer Holidays		
Monday 14 <sup>th</sup>		
Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup>		
Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup>	Planning View	11am
Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup>	Planning	6pm
Friday 18 <sup>th</sup>		
Summer Holidays		
Monday 21 <sup>st</sup>		
Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup>		
Wednesday 23 <sup>rd</sup>		
Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup>		
Friday 25 <sup>th</sup>		
Summer Holidays		
Monday 28 <sup>th</sup>	BANK HOLIDAY	
Tuesday 29 <sup>th</sup>		
Wednesday 30 <sup>th</sup>		

Future date - 6<sup>th</sup> September Licensing misc

Future date 8<sup>th</sup> September – All Member WebEx 11.30-12.30

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