

Cabinet

**Tuesday, 20th December, 2022
6.00 - 7.00 pm**

Attendees

Councillors: Rowena Hay (Leader of the Council), Peter Jeffries (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member Finance & Assets), Victoria Atherstone (Cabinet Member Housing), Flo Clucas (Cabinet Member Safety & Communities), Iain Dobie (Cabinet Member Waste, Recycling & Street Services), Martin Horwood (Cabinet Member Customer & Regulatory Services), Alisha Lewis (Cabinet Member Climate Emergency) and Max Wilkinson (Cabinet Member Economic Development, Culture, Tourism and Wellbeing)

Also in attendance: Gareth Edmundson, Paul Jones, Harry Mayo, Bev Thomas, Gemma Bell, Karen Watson and Councillor Wendy Flynn

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the Cabinet Member Cyber, Regeneration and Commercial Income.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 9 because he had been involved in discussions about it at the parish level.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th December 2022 were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

There were no public questions or petitions.

Member Questions (2 total)

1. Question from Councillor Wendy Flynn to Cabinet Member for Housing, and Cabinet Member for Cyber, Regeneration and Commercial Income

Many new developments include quotas for affordable housing but "affordable" housing isn't affordable for many. Homes available at social rent are in great demand, as demonstrated by the Council's housing waiting list. CBC, owning many hectares of land at Golden Valley, are in a strong position to provide

homes available for rent at social rent levels. What is the minimum number of homes, available for **social rent**, that CBC plans to build on its land as a part of the Golden Valley Development?

Response from Cabinet Members

Thank you Councillor Flynn for your question. I agree that Social Rented homes are the most genuinely affordable homes the Council can provide.

To answer your question, it may be helpful to differentiate between the separate roles of the Council.

Firstly, the Council has a Landowner function. As landowner and development partner (with HBD x Factory), the Council intends to bring forward development that reflects the housing policy requirements. The 35% Affordable Housing ambition is currently included in the financial modelling for the project and we hope to maintain this as the project develops. However, the eventual housing and tenure mix will need to be considered in the light of the prevailing economic climate when each of the development plots that make up the whole of the site comes forward. This is a 10 year plus project.

The Council also has a Housing Enabling function. On a large site such as the Golden Valley Development, the Council's Housing Strategy and Enabling Team will be seeking 35% of all homes to be Affordable Housing, as required by planning policy.

As a starting point our team would expect the Affordable Housing element to be split as follows: 70% Social Rented; 30% Affordable Home Ownership, given that it is important we take account of the broader housing needs of the Borough, as set out in our latest local housing needs assessment. This therefore means that of the rented homes that we expect to see delivered as Affordable Housing on this development, 100% of them would be let as a Social Rent.

In the event that there are financial viability issues (and we are satisfied this has been independently tested) then Officers would have to review our tenure mix. In the first instance, Officers would still prioritise delivering Social Rent across those homes where affordability is likely to be most acute – i.e. on 1 bedroom homes and 4 bedroom homes or larger, with the remaining rented homes being provided as Affordable Rent.

Councillor Flynn may be aware that Affordable Rents can be set at up to 80% of market rents, which does call into question whether these homes are truly affordable for low income households, particularly as market rents have increased significantly in recent times. As such, should it be necessary that Affordable Rents are included in the tenure mix, then Officers would seek to ensure that these rents are set at no higher than Local Housing Allowance levels. Please see the link below for details on our current Local Housing Allowance levels against different size properties.

[Current local housing allowance rates | Local Housing Allowance rates | Cheltenham Borough Council](#)

Supplementary question

An outline planning application has come in for the north part of the site, comprising 157 documents in total, with the consultation period lasting from 12th December to 9th January. It is really difficult to process this information in that time. Is there any way that this expiry date could be extended?

Response from Cabinet Member

The Cabinet Member was advised that live planning applications could not be discussed at a public meeting, and suggested taking the question offline. Cllr. Flynn was happy to do this.

2. Question from Councillor Wendy Flynn to Cabinet Member for Customer and Regulatory Services

During the Council meeting on 20th July, 2020, the then Leader, Steve Jordan, reassured me, along with members of the Hesters Way Neighbourhood Forum who were present at that meeting, of the Council's commitment to engaging with and supporting the Forum. There have been some issues with the Forum receiving support from the Council, which, along with Covid challenges, have held up the plan process. Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), the Council has a statutory duty to assist communities in the preparation of neighbourhood development plans. I am happy to report that communications between the Forum and this Council have been re-established and hope that the Plan will now progress smoothly. Will the Leader ensure that, going forward, the Council meets its obligations with regards to the Hesters Way Neighbourhood Forum and will she also reassure the Forum that it has her support, as the previous Leader did?

Response from Cabinet Member

The Council is mindful of its statutory duties and recognises the need to support communities in the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans. Support has and will continue to be provided which will include, amongst other aspects, whether applications relating to the designation of a neighbourhood forum satisfy the statutory requirements; consideration of Neighbourhood Plan areas; and assistance with the production of producing Neighbourhood Development Plans such as publicising plan proposals. With regard to the Hesters Way Neighbourhood Forum designation, the Neighbourhood Forum was designated on 5 December 2017. The designation of the Neighbourhood Forum expires by law after 5 years so has now expired. Therefore, the designation of the Neighbourhood Forum will need to be considered again by Cabinet, in a similar way that it was previously considered in December 2017. Officers are in the process of considering a potential date for Cabinet in early 2023. Should Councillor Flynn wish to discuss the detail of the Hesters Way neighbourhood plan or any part of the process, the planning policy team will be very happy to assist.

Supplementary question

The Hesters Way Neighbourhood Forum has met more than 40 times in the last 12 months and put a lot of energy and time into the Neighbourhood Plan. On the 23rd November, the forum contacted the council realising that their designation was going to run out, and submitted an application on 2nd December. We had notification on the 14th December that the application would need Cabinet approval. My understanding is that it needs to be decided within 13 weeks of submission, including a 6 week period of public consultation. With that in mind, the last Cabinet meeting it could go to is 14th February. Working back from that, six weeks' notice is getting very close considering the Christmas period. Can the Cabinet Member confirm that this will be going out for public consultation imminently?

Response from Cabinet Member

Thank you for your question. It might have been helpful to include those dates in the original question because I don't have the answers immediately to hand, but I want to be completely clear that we recognise the time and effort that goes into the forum. The draft Neighbourhood Plan is very impressive, and this council absolutely supports the principle of neighbourhood planning and will do everything required of us to support this. You raise an interesting point about the designation, and it might have been wise to have notified the council earlier than a few weeks before the imminent expiration of the designation. I am sure officers will work as fast as practicable to do this. There may be a gap as the designation has now expired, but I am not anticipating any particular difficulty regarding re-designation, although we cannot pre-determine the result. We have to follow the proper process determined by statute.

5. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - REVISED FORECAST 2022-23 AND INTERIM BUDGET PROPOSALS 2023-24 FOR CONSULTATION

The Cabinet Member Finance, Assets and Regeneration presented the report, noting that the cost of living crisis and financial turbulence had had a major impact on the HRA, with excess cost inflation, increased interest, energy costs and additional compliance costs increasing the overall expenditure in the HRA by £2.5m next year. While the budget proposal was for rents to increase, this had been capped at 7%, resulting in the budgeted operating surplus falling from over £1m to just £70,000 in 2023/24.

This high inflation and capped rent had a substantial impact on the 30-year projections, with capacity in the HRA being reduced by an estimated £92m. This reduced capacity in the HRA meant that the scale and pace of investment in existing and new homes needed to be carefully managed in order to ensure that vital services to residents in our communities were protected.

He added that while the scale and pace of investment needed to be managed appropriately, the 2023/24 budget proposals in this report demonstrated the council's commitment to its ambitious plans for delivering new homes, improving the quality of existing homes and protecting services for residents and communities for the benefit of Cheltenham. This included £63m over 3 years for additional affordable homes, £32m investment in improving existing

homes and £6m specifically in energy improvement measures for the least efficient homes.

He summarised that the interim budget proposals for 2023/24, including the focus on supporting residents through the cost-of-living crisis, investing in their homes and delivering more net zero homes, would help improve outcomes for all residents and communities, reduce inequality and support the economic recovery of Cheltenham through this challenging period.

The Cabinet Member Housing thanked him for bringing the budget proposals forward, and reiterated the financial pressures faced. It was testament to CBC and CBH colleagues that they were able to continue delivering their £180m housing investment plan and improving existing homes. The report also outlined how they were working towards making Cheltenham Net Zero by 2030, investing in communities, working towards raising standards in line with the Social Housing White Paper, and providing additional support during the cost of living crisis.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The interim HRA budget proposals for 2023/24 (shown at Appendix 2) for consultation including a proposed rent increase of 7% and changes to other rents and charges as detailed within the report be approved;
2. The proposed HRA capital programme for 2023/24 as shown at Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 be approved for consultation;
3. The revised HRA forecast for 2022/23 be noted;
4. Authority be delegated to the Executive Director Finance, Assets and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets, to determine and approve any additional material that may be needed to support the presentation of the interim budget proposals for consultation;
5. Consultation responses be sought by 31st January 2023.

6. GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND CAPITAL - INTERIM BUDGET PROPOSALS 2023-24 FOR CONSULTATION

The Cabinet Member Finance, Assets and Regeneration presented the report, which outlined the General Fund Revenue and Capital Interim Budget Proposals for 2023/24. He reflected on the economic changes of the last twelve months, which provided the background for setting this interim budget. Last December, inflation had already been at a 40 year high of 4.2%, but it now stood at 11.1%. Interest rates had increased eight times since last year, whereas in December 2021 they were paying about 15p for a unit of electricity and 3p for a unit of gas. This now cost 40p and 10p respectively, even with the government's caps on pricing. Across the year, there had been three Prime Ministers and four Chancellors.

Throughout this turbulence, the challenge had been to continue to drive forward with the goals outlined in the November 2020 Covid-19 Recovery Strategy and the Corporate Plan. These included making Cheltenham the cyber capital of the UK, investing in sustainable economic growth in the town centre, supporting the most vulnerable communities through No Child Left Behind, delivering more

housing across the town, and continuing with their commitment to make the council and town net carbon zero by 2030.

He stressed that this had not been easy. With the latest budget monitoring report for 2022/23 reporting a £2.39m overspend against what was a reasonable and prudent budget this time last year, they were placing reliance on general balances to balance the budget this year. These balances were finite, and this was not a long term strategy to rely on.

The Local Government Provisional Finance Settlement setting out the level of government funding for consultation had just been released, with only a 3% increase in core funding against inflation of 11.1%, and just one year's funding guaranteed. It placed greater reliance on local tax generation and CBC's own commerciality to enable them to balance the budget for 2023/24. He was pleased to be able to do that by recommending an interim budget proposal that allowed them to continue to work towards their corporate goals whilst protecting financial sustainability and resilience.

The Cabinet Member Climate Emergency described it as incredible budget against all odds, especially considering the instability in central government throughout the year. It was a tough time for local authorities across the country, and they had managed to maintain essential services while continuing investment in climate change, housing and other corporate priorities. In the current climate, it was an impressive budget.

The Cabinet Member Safety and Communities added that she had been shocked to find out that councils were once again only receiving a one year funding settlement, giving them no way to plan ahead for the next five or ten years. Other councils were finding this virtually impossible to cope with and having to make major cuts. She found it really cheering that CBC was continuing to invest and create opportunities, especially for children and families. They were generating funding from other areas rather than taking cash from residents' pockets to pay for this.

The Leader added that at the LGA Conference in July of this year, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities had promised a two-year budget settlement. This promise had not made it to December.

The Cabinet Member Finance, Assets and Regeneration thanked colleagues for their warm words and highlighted the work of the finance team, who had done incredibly well considering the backdrop of uncertainty in central government and the lack of a longer settlement period. The proposals would go out for consultation now.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The interim budget proposals be approved for consultation, including a proposed council tax for the services provided by Cheltenham Borough Council. The proposed Council tax for 2023/24 represents an increase of 2.99% a year for a Band D property, subject to conclusion of the consultation on the Local Government Provisional Finance Settlement;
2. The schedule of target savings and income generation at Appendix 3 be noted;
3. The proposed capital programme at Appendix 5, as outlined in Section 13, be approved;

4. Authority be delegated to the Executive Director Finance, Assets and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets, to determine and approve any additional material that may be needed to support the presentation of the interim budget proposals for public consultation;
5. Consultation responses be sought by 31st January 2023.

7. INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT 2022

The Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services presented the report, noting that there was a significant volume of paperwork attached to it. The council was obligated to report on how it raised, allocate and spent its Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding within the borough. This had been in place for a couple of years now, and this was the second IFS he had presented.

He clarified a number of the documents that had been circulated. The IFS itself set out funds raised and allocated, in a thorough but not very user-friendly format decided by parliament. The Infrastructure List was also attached, setting out a list of projects on which the money could be spent, though it was not set in stone. The next part was the CIL Rate Summary, which was agreed alongside Gloucester and Tewkesbury district councils as part of the Joint Core Strategy, and could not be tweaked very easily. As ever, they needed to be transparent about what they were charging for different kinds of development.

He highlighted page 43 of the main pack, which contained a summary by officers of exactly what was coming in and where it was going. If possible, this would be made into an infographic for the website, giving a much more user-friendly look at the flow of funding. He thanked Tracey Birkinshaw, Liam Jones, Paul Hardiman and the rest of the officer team for the enormous amount of work it had taken to pull all this together.

In terms of the broad financial headlines, the total receipts between April 2021 and March 2022 were £980k. CIL expenditure by the borough council was £9,958, which represented roughly 5% of receipts to that point, as was allowed by statute. Just over £11k had been passed to parish councils, which was an automatic requirement, but they had retained just over £1.2m in total, made up of the leftover receipts plus money carried forward from the previous year. Of that £1.2m, roughly £49k was allocated to administration going forward, while £86k in Neighbourhood Funding collected by the council would go to parish councils on the 28th April.

He further highlighted the £77k in Neighbourhood Funding collected for unparished areas, made up of around £49k receipts from this reporting year and £28k from the previous year. He noted that roughly half of Cheltenham was unparished, and that this was relevant to the next agenda item as it would be prioritised for spending under the Neighbourhood Panel.

This left just over £1m in strategic infrastructure spending, or roughly 80% of total CIL receipts. This would be used for major infrastructure projects to offset and mitigate the impact of development and support their strategic objectives. It was not a vast pot of money for infrastructure projects, and they were in consultation with the JCS partner authorities and the county council.

He added that there had been some discussion on how this impacted on the previous system of S106 agreements, and he reassured colleagues that the county council had been consulted on this. The list of infrastructure projects provided earlier was effectively the county council's shopping list, and consisted of some £50m-£60m worth of road projects. He pointed out last year that this wasn't really what was expected from an infrastructure list, considering climate change and other key objectives like education and health.

A process had been put in place by the JCS councils to review this list going forward, and this was also detailed in the papers. He hoped that this would lead to a list more reflective of their priorities, like health and education infrastructure, and transport measures that didn't just include roads but also more environmentally friendly modes of transport. Ongoing conversations with the JCS councils and county would continue.

He highlighted last year that properly transparent governance mechanisms, and these were adopted in June. The Neighbourhood Panel prioritising funds for unparished areas now had Terms of Reference, whereas the governance process for the strategic funding would feature a Memorandum of Understanding formally agreeing how much to pool with the JCS and if they wanted to take a Cheltenham-specific percentage. This process would be approved by Council, as would the final infrastructure list will also come to Council. There were separate administration governance process keeping an eye on the 5% of funds allocated to administration.

He commended officers for the work they had put in, and hoped it would serve the borough and the wider JCS area by both supporting developments and mitigating their impact on communities, while tackling deprivation and mitigating the effects of climate change.

The Cabinet Member Finance, Assets and Regeneration clarified that if the county council were to request some of the £1m pot, this would be released. From his point of view, the community spend was key, and this all offered a real opportunity to invest in communities.

The Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services added that at its best, this process would demonstrate how the local councils collaborated and listened to their communities. He hoped it would reduce the gap between parished and unparished areas, so the town's less well-represented areas were properly reflected in its outcomes. Local ward councillors would have a key role in bringing forward funding bids.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The publication of the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) relating to the financial year ending 31st March 2022 by 31st December 2022 be approved;
2. It be noted that the Annual CIL Rate Summary Statement will be published alongside it by 31st December 2022;
3. It be noted that the Cheltenham Neighbourhood Panel for the allocation of the unparished borough neighbourhood element of CIL will be in place by the end of this financial year;

4. It be noted that a further report will be presented by spring 2023 to include the Memorandum of Understanding for the allocation of the CIL Strategic 'Infrastructure Fund'.

8. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY NEIGHBOURHOOD PANEL

The Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services presented the report, noting that it specifically concerned the smaller portion raised that had to be spent on local neighbourhoods, and the areas which were not automatically handed over to parish councils. They wanted an open and transparent process, and so were constituting a Neighbourhood Panel made up of five members. If the political balance of the council were to be strictly replicated, there would be four Lib Dem members and one opposition member, but instead they were taking a more pluralist approach with three Lib Dems and two others. The various members of the panel would be nominated by group leaders.

The panel was expected to advertise two funding rounds each year, although he noted that with only £77k in the pot at the moment, this was the default option for now. It aimed to be an open and transparent process, where the panel would prioritise the most deserving projects with officer support, taking into account corporate objectives and the impact of development. As a fall-back, the allocations would finally be approved by Cabinet, as it was public money that needed to be spent in a way that aligned with their corporate priorities.

The Terms of Reference differentiated between smaller projects requiring a less onerous process and larger projects that might need the county council as delivery agent, and would require a stricter process. He commended it to Cabinet and other authorities as a model for how to involve communities and ward councillors in a democratic, transparent process for spending what would hopefully in the future be a significant amount of money.

The Cabinet Member Housing thanked him for bringing this report forward, and recalled when it was first mentioned a year or so ago. Officers had been key to this, and she highlighted Tracey Birkinshaw's work. Unparished areas lacked the voice that parished areas had, and it was notable that the map showing parished and unparished areas correlated strongly with the map of social deprivation in Cheltenham. She looked forward to the panels being created and hoped that bids could be submitted as early as spring 2023. She advocated community-enhancing projects, focusing on supporting wellbeing and play through infrastructure.

The Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services noted that the list of wards with parished and unparished areas might need to be slightly amended. He agreed that a number of wards in unparished areas had suffered historic deprivation, and it was good to have a pot of money focused on helping those communities.

The Cabinet Member Safety and Communities noted that some areas were only partly parished, which made it a confusing system. In terms of timescale, she asked whether it would be possible for an unparished area to put a bid in for funding that covered more than one year. The Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services responded that the Neighbourhood Panel couldn't prioritise funds that hadn't been raised yet, so there were some constraints there. However, they could approve funding in principle before it was necessarily secured, in order to enable organisations to raise more money. The panel itself would look at these issues, supported by the relevant officers.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Terms of Reference of the Cheltenham CIL Neighbourhood Panel be agreed;
2. Consultation with the relevant Group leaders in respect of the named representatives be delegated to the Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer;
3. The operational establishment of this panel be delegated to the Head of Planning, to be in place to review the first round of expressions of interest by spring 2023.

9. CONSTRUCTION & LEASE OF STORAGE UNIT AT BURROWS PLAYING FIELD

The Cabinet Member Finance, Assets and Regeneration presented the report, noting that Leckhampton Rovers had been granted a lease for the Burrows pavilion and a further licence for the use of the playing pitches, following the recent refurbishment project. A significant amount of work had been carried out by the Council to improve the condition of the pitches and address long standing issues of flooding, requiring ongoing maintenance for which Leckhampton Rovers had taken on responsibility. They had entered into a service agreement with the Council to cover the required elements.

The storage unit proposed in the report would enable the club to fulfil the obligations of the service agreement. Cabinet approval was required as the procurement for a contractor to undertake the work in a public open space would be undertaken by the council but funded by the football club. Once completed, the Council would grant a lease of the unit to Leckhampton Rovers, who would take on responsibility for maintenance and management of the site. He emphasised that to date, this project had been a great example of how the council could work with groups and organisations to deliver benefits for local communities.

The Cabinet Member Waste, Recycling and Street Services welcomed the report as the latest small step in a multi-year program of substantially council-led work improvements to Burrows Playing Field. These improvements had been achieved through cooperation between three levels of councils, alongside Leckhampton Rovers FC and local businesses. Both the building of the BMX track and the installation of the compacted gravel footpath had been led by citizens' initiatives and were now hugely popular. Now the sports field itself had benefitted from a massive investment in levelling and drainage. It was a great success story for the Leckhampton community, and he thanked all those involved.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. A contract be awarded to the preferred bidder of the Invitation to Tender, using the recommended CBC Procurement route – subject to adequate funding being in place to cover all costs associated with the build;
2. A Public Notice be placed, pursuant of Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972, in respect of the granting of a new lease of the completed unit;

3. Should no objections or representations be received, the Head of Property be authorised to prepare and grant a new lease of the storage unit to Leckhampton Rovers Football Club for a peppercorn rent, to run co-terminously with their existing lease and licence.

10. **HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRE SERVICE CHANGES**

The Cabinet Member Waste, Recycling and Street Services presented the report, noting that provision of Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) was a statutory requirement for the county council under the Environmental Protection Act of 1990. GCC provided five HRCs across the county, with the site at Wingmoor Farm in Bishop's Cleeve being the closest to Cheltenham borough. While the borough council had no statutory requirement to provide an HRC, they continued to entirely fund the Swindon Road site for the sole use of residents. CBC was the only district council in Gloucestershire, and maybe the only one nationally, to provide a discretionary and high quality HRC, enhancing the offer for Cheltenham residents, supporting corporate priorities related to the environment and encouraging residents to recycle and reduce waste.

Following the pandemic, much had changed for residents and for the council. Given the reduction in site usage and increasing budgetary pressures, it was appropriate to review the HRC and its post-pandemic usage, along with cost of providing its services. The results of previous public consultations and site usage data had informed the report, which recommended a reduction in site opening hours to deliver the financial savings required. The proposed changes to opening hours would reduce energy costs to support the climate emergency and relieve budget pressures by approximately £35k per year.

He added that exploring the introduction of a wider range of recycling opportunities at the HRC would support their ambition to reduce amount of residual waste disposed of at the site, and provide opportunities with partners to promote behaviour change around waste reduction and reuse as well as recycling.

The Cabinet Member Economic Development, Culture, Tourism and Wellbeing reiterated that the borough council provided the HRC on a discretionary basis, and was going above and beyond as the only council in the county and maybe the country to do so. The proposed changes were sensible in the current circumstances.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The opening times of the household recycling centre set out below be approved, to better reflect post-pandemic site usage with effect from 1 February 2023 with no summer or wintertime variations:

Monday – 8.30am – 4pm
Tuesday – 8.30am – 4pm
Wednesday – CLOSED in line with Gloucestershire County Council sites
Thursday – 8.30am – 4pm
Friday – 8.30am – 4pm

Saturday – 8.30am – 3pm
Sunday – 9am to 12 noon

2. Authority be delegated to the Director-Place and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling and Street services, to:
 - a) take all necessary steps to implement recommendation 1, these measures may include the introduction of a booking system for HRC users;
 - b) implement initiatives to maximise waste reduction, re-use and recycling opportunities for residents in Cheltenham to support its climate emergency priority.

11. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Cabinet Member Economic Development, Culture, Tourism and Wellbeing congratulated 288 Bar and Wok for hosting their first community lunch on the 20th December. Everyone paid what they could afford, up to £5, and there had been a wonderful atmosphere with a diverse section of the local community coming together just before Christmas. He had found it heartwarming and looked forward to attending again in the New Year, and noted that it helped people cope with both isolation and the cost of living crisis.

The Cabinet Member Housing thanked CBH and CBC colleagues for their help throughout the year in her new portfolio, and wished everyone a very happy festive period and all the best for 2023.

Decisions of Cabinet Members

The Cabinet Member Waste, Recycling and Street Services had taken two decisions on 15th December, the first to award a contract to Marshall Peugeot Peterborough for the supply of two 3.5 tonne Peugeot Boxer Chassis Cabs, and the second to award a contract for the supply of two refuse collection vehicles. These purchases were part of their strategic vehicle replacement program, the finances for which had already been approved by the Cabinet Member Finance, Assets and Regeneration.

The Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services had taken a decision on 20th December to approve the Draft Statement of the Graffiti Policy for Consultation, and consisted of a set of tweaks rather than a drastic rewrite. He added that on one level, graffiti policy seemed like a simple question – it was a menace that ought to be gotten rid of as soon as possible – but the reality was more nuanced than that. The existing policy was sensitive to the need for particularly offensive or threatening graffiti to be removed as a matter of priority, but it also needed to consider the potential difficulties in removing graffiti from important heritage buildings. The draft policy was also sensitive to town values like those of the Paint Festival, and made a clear distinction between unwelcome graffiti and street art. He highlighted notable works of street art in the town, and looked forward to hearing the responses to the consultation.

12. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXEMPT BUSINESS

Members resolved to move into exempt session.

13. EXEMPT MINUTES

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 6th December 2022 were approved and signed as a correct record.

Chair