

# Cheltenham Borough Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**Meeting date:** 15 January 2024

**Meeting time:** 6.00 pm

**Meeting venue:** Council Chamber - Municipal Offices

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## **Membership:**

Councillor Tabi Joy (Chair), Councillor Steve Harvey (Vice-Chair), Councillor Graham Beale, Councillor Nigel Britter, Councillor Jackie Chelin, Councillor Stephan Fifield, Councillor Emma Nelson, Councillor Stan Smith, Councillor Julian Tooke and Councillor Suzanne Williams

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**Contact:** [democraticservices@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@cheltenham.gov.uk)

**Phone:** 01242 264 246

## **1 Apologies**

## **2 Declarations of interest**

## **3 Minutes of the last meeting (Pages 5 - 16)**

Minutes of meeting held on 20 November 2023

## **4 Public and Member questions, calls for actions and petitions**

## **5 Cabinet Briefing**

Briefing from Councillor Hay, Leader (if she has an update, or if O&S Members have questions for her)

**Objective:** An update from the Cabinet on key issues for Cabinet Members which may be of interest to Overview and Scrutiny and may inform the work plan

## **6 Matters referred to committee**

## **7 2024/25 General Fund and HRA Budget proposals - Budget Scrutiny**

**Working Group response**

**18:10 (10 mins)**

**Objective:** Update from the Chair of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group on the group's response to the [2024/25 General Fund and HRA interim budget proposals](#).

Chair of Budget Scrutiny Working Group, Councillor Tim Harman

## **8 Business Continuity (Pages 17 - 18)**

**18:20 (20 mins)**

**Objective :** To consider the robustness of CBC business continuity arrangements.

Claire Hughes, Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer

## **9 LGA Peer Review Action Plan (Pages 19 - 22)**

**18:40 (20 mins)**

**Objective :** What progress is being made on the implementation of the recommendations from the [Peer Review](#) ?

Gareth Edmundson, Chief Executive

## **10 Feedback from other scrutiny meetings attended**

[Gloucestershire Health O&S Committee](#) (28 November 2023) – update from Councillor Bamford to follow

[Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel](#) (24 November 2023) – link to [minutes](#)  
(Councillor Clucas was unable to attend)

The [Gloucestershire Economic Growth O&S Committee](#) meeting scheduled in November was cancelled.

**11 Updates from scrutiny task groups 19:10 (10 mins)**

Update from the Chair of the CBH-CBC transition scrutiny task group

Update from the Leader on the CBH-CBC transition

**12 Review of scrutiny workplan (Pages 23 - 28) 19:20 (5 mins)**

**13 Any other item that the Chair determines to be urgent**

**14 Date of next meeting**

26 February 2024

**15 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXEMPT INFORMATION**

**The committee is recommended to approve the following resolution:-**

“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 paragraph 3, Part (1) Schedule (12A) Local Government Act 1972, namely:

Paragraph 3; Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

**16 Gloucestershire Airport Limited (GAL) (Pages 29 - 42) 19:25 (30 mins)**

**Objective :** Looking at GAL’s financial sustainability, both in relation to recent improvements and in the long term.

Jason Ivey, (Director GAL)

Mike Morton (GAL Chair)

Angela Madigan (GAL Head of Finance)

**Informal de-brief**

What went well? Can we identify opportunities for improvement or training needs?





# Cheltenham Borough Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee Minutes

**Meeting date:** 20 November 2023

**Meeting time:** 6.00 pm - 7.50 pm

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## **In attendance:**

### **Councillors:**

Tabi Joy (Chair), Graham Beale, Nigel Britter, Jackie Chelin, Stephan Fifield, Emma Nelson, Julian Tooke and Suzanne Williams

### **Also in attendance:**

Claire Hughes (Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer), Martin Stacy (Housing Strategy and Partnerships Manager), Nigel Potter (Housing Enabling Officer), Paul Tuckey (Housing Enabling Officer) and Gareth Edmundson (Chief Executive), Councillor Rowena Hay, Chris Nelson (PCC, Gloucestershire), DI Gav Morgan, Andrew Roughan (Chief Executive of Plexal), Bruce Gregory (Founder and MD of Hub8)

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## **1 Apologies**

Councillor Smith sent his apologies.

## **2 Declarations of interest**

Councillor Nelson declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7.

Councillor Fifield confirmed with the Monitoring Officer that working in the area of housing and homelessness in his role at Gloucestershire County Council does not constitute a prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 8.

## **3 Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 October were approved and signed as a true record.

#### **4 Public and Member questions, calls for actions and petitions**

None had been received on this occasion.

#### **5 Cabinet Briefing**

The Leader was delighted to share the good news that the council has just been awarded in principle £20m from the Levelling Up Fund, towards the Golden Valley Development, after an earlier bid was unsuccessful due to not fully fitting the criteria. She said this was down to the council's commitment to the project, hard work from Members and officers, lobbying, and the support of the local MP to put the bid in. Not only does it de-risk the borrowing and whole project, but it secures HQ going into Golden Valley, which in turn secures Plexall going in and all the other organisations which have expressed interest.

Regarding CBH, she confirmed that the process was continuing, with the main focus on consultation with tenants and leaseholders. Officers are hoping to appoint an independent supplier with expertise in housing to undertake the tenant consultation in the next few weeks, starting before Christmas but allowing extended time to respond. GE has met with all service heads at CBH to hear their views.

The Chief Executive said that his first job is to listen to CBH colleagues, and he has met and had positive and in-depth discussions with the various heads of service, using the opportunity to provide reassurance and answer all questions across the different service areas. He confirmed that the independent consultation provider will be appointed before Christmas and make allowance for the busy period. He said that his message to CBH colleagues was in reality not to expect the TUPE process to begin until early 2024, but he has asked CBC heads of service to be available to talk to CBH teams and colleagues when invited to do so, and provide reassurance to employees about the transfer. They should be clear that this isn't necessarily about expecting CBH to adopt CBC's culture, but about shaping a new culture together for a new joint organisation. There will be more to update when the consultation dates are in place.

He finished by saying that the 2021 and 2023 Campbell Tickell highlighted a number of areas where the council was advised to strengthen partnership work between CBC and CBH to make efficiencies; this work continues and will be ongoing while the consultation is underway.

#### **6 Matters referred to committee**

There were none.

#### **7 Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) / Operational Policing**

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) commented that he had received and responded to eight written questions, adding that it would be useful to have received these more in advance to allow more time to answer. The Chair said that the

committee is testing out a new system of sending questions in advance and thanked him for his feedback.

He highlighted the following issues:

- getting out of special measures imposed by HM Inspectorate, in record time and faster than any other force. This was significant, as the force had had to work hard to address six inadequate ratings;
- the one outstanding issue, concerning the control room and answer times for 999 and 101 calls, will hopefully be sorted by January;
- the adoption of a new enhanced operating model (EOM) in June this year. It is not yet up the full strength but will result in all sorts of improvements across the force – better arrest rates, more investigations, crimes dealt within half the time, response to Grade 2 emergencies 30% faster. It is a continuous improvement model, and won't be fully working until next June, but there is a lot of be to feel good about;
- as an example, the solved rate of crime in Cheltenham and Tewkesbury is over 30% in neighbourhood policing, the area of most concern to residents, including anti-social behaviour and household burglaries. This is a great credit to the local teams and a major achievement - the best in the county - and compares very favourably with an average solved crime rate of 10-15% around the country.

Chief Inspector Gav Morgan (GM) confirmed that the EOM has meant a restructure of how daily business is carried out, and while it has taken a while to find the right level and resulted in a few struggles for neighbourhood policing, with the help of the PCC and other departments, it is beginning to show real results, including a 38% detection rate in Cheltenham last month.

He confirmed that:

- the terms of reference of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) have been reviewed with Tracey Birkinshaw, resulting in more focussed, multi-agency, problem-solving meetings feeding into the CSP, and a sub-group led by Inspector Mike Yates working with partners and stakeholders. This will progress in the new year;
- there has been a lot more work around plain clothes policing, as a result of concerns around the night-time economy and the vulnerability of young females. With the help of Safer Streets funding, an operation is being developed to help target the perpetrators intent on causing harm;
- work has been carried out around the 'Clear, Hold, Build' initiative with the council, in The Moors and St Peter's areas, with a second meeting scheduled to start developing and pushing that forward;
- a lot of work on bike thefts is underway, with Safer Streets funding used for better signage and QR codes resulting in better recovery of bikes. Marking bikes makes it easier to return them to their owners.

### **Member questions**

Members thanked CN and GM for doing a great job in difficult circumstances.

A Member asked about the ONS crime survey of England and Wales, which includes reported and unreported crime to give the most accurate and authoritative national crime figures. He had been unable to find the figures for Gloucestershire, and with reported wait times of up to six hours on 101 calls, felt that this must result in many crimes going unrecorded.

GM had not seen the report, and could not provide these figures for Gloucestershire or comment on the trend in crime overall in the county based on such data. He said the solved rate only relates to reported crime, and in particular neighbourhood crime. As part of the new operating model, neighbourhood teams are listening to communities to learn what causes the issues; they are taking ownership of individual investigations and solving crimes more quickly.

The Member was particularly worried about 101 calls, particularly for hate crime and other sorts of crime which were less likely to be reported, and felt it would be good to know the full figures of both reported and unreported crime, as a benchmark against which Gloucestershire can measure itself. CN confirmed that the crime survey for England and Wales was the gold standard, and people will talk to the ONS about crimes which they won't necessarily report to the police. While providing an accurate national representation, it is problematic to extract county-level data from the survey, which is why he has initiated a 'Perceptions of Crime' survey, focussed on Gloucestershire. The first one has just been carried out, and after a few years, it will be possible to cross reference with the ONS survey and see any trends.

Regarding 101 calls, he conceded that there is still some work to do, but made the following points:

- the Force Control Room (FCR) handles 999 and 101 calls, and now responds to 999 calls in 6-7 seconds (national target is 10 seconds), which is three times better than a year ago. The target for a response to 101 calls is two minutes, and although it is currently twice that, significant improvements are being made;
- 20 new call handlers are joining the FCR in January, which will improve matters;
- a call-back facility is going to be added to the automatic answer machine - which gives different options but sometimes keeps people waiting a very long time in busy periods. Callers can leave their number and be called back when wait times are shorter;
- an ASB portal was introduced a couple of months ago for people to report ASB, and this seems to be going well;
- a digital desk will be introduced to the FCR in the new year, offering live chats on the website which is currently constrained by the national model and not the easiest to use. He feels that talking to a human will be a much better way to engage with the public, but made the point that by making it easier to report crimes on 101, the crime figures will go up. ASB is under-recorded by 50%, male violence to females by 80%, as well as rural crime, shop lifting, scams and fraud – many of these crimes are currently unreported;
- various procedures are in place to make it easier to report crime and to cope with the subsequent surge in calls, including a triage group and the offer of



overtime for officers – with the added bonus that they will bring huge experience and be able to advise other police officers and call handlers who aren't as familiar with the crime world as warranted officers.

A Member spoke about a recent outbreak of ASB in Warden Hill, and residents' concern about the length of time it took to report it on 101 or the website. Some of the offences – such as speeding vehicles and e-bikes and scooters being ridden dangerously on pavements – are gone in seconds, and the length of time it takes to report them via 101 makes the information useless. He understood improvements were underway and the force operates within the national framework, but the service wasn't good enough at the moment.

CN said he recognises the problem with 101 response times, despite adding 30% resource at the beginning of the year, and made the following points in response:

- retention and replacement of staff has been an issue – a lot of call-handlers move to other areas of police staffing or become officers or PCRs themselves. Courses for 20 new recruits rather than 10 have been introduced, and with the additional 20 starting in January, answering times should improve;
- there has been a big national increase in 999 calls this year – the post-Covid world is more needy and vulnerable, there are more people with complex mental health needs, and issues such as truancy, self-harm and suicide on the increase. This places additional pressure on the force control room;
- a switchboard will be introduced so that calls are answered more quickly initially; the caller may have another wait depending on who they need to speak to, but hopefully it will result in greater encouragement to stay on the line. The current abandonment rate on 101 calls is 30-40%; it should be 10-15%, and will hopefully be driven down after January;
- regarding Warden Hill, it's clear that difficulties in reporting ASB discourage people from trying – there are not many actual reports despite a significant number of concerned residents – but with the introduction of improved systems and the 38% solved crime rates, the trajectory of improvement is good.

GM added the following comments:

- the problem with e-scooters has escalated in the last year or so, and people should be encouraged to reach out to their neighbourhood policing team or PCSO as soon as possible if they cannot get through on 101. If there are no figures to indicate a hotspot, resources won't be directed to where the problem is, and even reporting the following day will enable information to be gathered and hotspots identified;
- regarding dangerous driving and e-scooters, an operation is being put together with extra measures to tackle the problem, including plain clothes patrols and smart water;
- the road policing team is getting an uplift of over 10 constables and three sergeants already recruited to start in the new year, giving greater capacity to patrol hotspot areas;
- officers are also going into schools to educate young people, and plain clothes operations are targeting individuals.

CN added that a mail drop will shortly be sent to every house in the county, with clear, concise, easy-to-read advice on the best way to contact the police. He also advised that £1m will be spent next year on reinforcing neighbourhood policing, with an additional 25-30 PCSO officers, working in tight teams to tackle ASB hotspots, maybe for 3-4 months at a time to really sort the problem out. This will be more effective than spreading the additional officers across the county, give people the reassurance of seeing more officers in uniform, and hopefully reduce long-term demand by preventing crime from happening in the first place.

The Chair thanked CN and GM for their updates, and looked forward to seeing the outcomes next year.

### **8 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping**

Martin Stacy (MS) thanked the committee for the opportunity to speak, and began by saying that everything his team does has its roots in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. This was reviewed last year, with homelessness and rough sleeping highlighted as two separate priorities, rather than a single priority as was previously the case. This was because although there is an overlap, both require a distinct focus. Rough sleeping has its own set of challenges, and a different range of commissioned services is required to get people off the street, to engage with support services, and ultimately to live independently. Both priorities are complex areas requiring a range of solutions and approaches and a significant amount of collaborative work across partnerships – the briefing paper gives assurance of that.

He went on to say that all priorities in the Housing Strategy – including increased provision of affordable housing, making the best use of existing stock, and creating cohesive and sustainable communities – support the efforts to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping, and although Members are only focussing on those two priorities here, it is worth noting the wider housing strategy. It is accompanied by an action plan, setting out key indicators across the priority areas, which will be updated each year and reported to Cabinet as an opportunity to reflect on the key achievements of the previous 12 months.

Paul Tuckey (PT) also welcomed the opportunity to share what is happening in housing options which covers homelessness and preventative techniques, taking both a proactive and reactive approach when people are threatened with homelessness. He highlighted the following aspects of his team's work:

- the journey which began five years ago when the Homelessness Reduction Act widened the service within homelessness, enabling a more preventative approach. Since then, 6-7 colleagues have joined the team, various initiatives have been undertaken, including early intervention for rough sleepers and additional assistance to prevent people from being evicted from their homes;
- they also manage the Homeseeker Plus Housing Register for people seeking social housing, to help them get the most suitable accommodation;
- the report covers the last two years, but emerging issues this year are the rise in the number of homeless applications and rough sleepers due to loss of private rented accommodation; more people needing additional support for mental health and

addiction issues; pressures on other services, such as rising numbers of people no longer able to stay in mental health accommodation, prison releases and the rise in people with refugee status following the closure of hotels.

### **Member questions**

A Member was aware of the number of complex issues causing the increase in homelessness, many of which aren't the responsibility of CBC. He understood that people were falling through the gaps with adult social care, and wondered how CBC is working with Gloucestershire County Council to prevent further homelessness on account of this.

PT said from an operational point of view, a lot of work with statutory and non-statutory agencies was being undertaken, and a duty to refer system was in place, whereby statutory agencies are required to refer people to the council prior to them becoming homeless. His team is doing what it can at the earliest stage to fill the gaps, but other agencies are under pressure with resources. Working groups across the county, housing teams, mental health services, social care and other bodies are all working together on this.

MS added that CBC has a number of partnerships across the county. GCC recognises that solutions are multi-faceted, and has a new multi-disciplinary team focussing on mental health and adult social care – the most difficult areas to reach group. Work is also ongoing in hubs and Housing First - small steps but heading in the right direction in an extremely challenging area with limited resources.

In response to a further Member question, PT said the Homes for Ukraine scheme is still open for people already on the scheme and staying with host families, but not for new families. CBC and CBH have purchased 21 properties under the Local Authority Housing Fund Scheme, which can be let to people in the most precarious situations. The Homes for Ukraine fund is administered by the county council to help people with incentives, helping hosts to continue to provide accommodation, helping with private rented accommodation, enhanced payments and additional assistance if needed.

Regarding other refugees, recent hotel closures and the increase in the number of people receiving positive decisions on their asylum claims has led to more people seeking assistance. The council is doing what it can and exploring all options to provide accommodation and prevent people from becoming homeless.

In response to a Member question about winter weather plans, PT confirmed that a severe weather protocol is in place from 01 November to the end of March, ensuring that suitable, local accommodation is available to assist people. The council works with a number of local support providers, and last week facilitated a benefit housing event hosted by the YMCA, to engage with people from different communities and faith groups who may be able to help with accommodation or time.

He ended by saying that the council has a successful housing-led programme in conjunction with CBH, which tries to ensure people with complex mental health and addiction needs get the wraparound support they need, to try and ensure any tenancy is long term and sustainable, and prevent them from getting caught up in a cycle of losing the tenancy and being back on the streets.

The Leader added that she attended a meeting of leaders from around the county last week, with all areas facing rising homelessness as a result of the speed-up of visa approvals. It

was a call to arms from all county districts to identify any spare capacity of land, buildings, or land for modular builds, to help the situation.

The Cabinet Member for Housing gave heartfelt thanks to colleagues at CBC and CBH, saying the increase in homelessness in the last 12 months is a huge problem, and is giving rise to serious worries about how local councils will manage. Cheltenham is coping at present, but is already exploring options going forward. The Faith in Housing event was a call-out to the Cheltenham community, including anyone with a second home which they might make available for desperate people. She said there are many reasons why someone might lose their home, and the local housing allowance is £200 short of rental of the most basic accommodation in Cheltenham. She was able to confirm that an outbound communications channel is being set up across Cheltenham for all types of community and faith groups, to provide more access to more people about what is needed and how people can support it and get more information.

The Chair asked for information about this to be shared with Members, and thanked officers for all they were doing.

### **9 Feedback from other scrutiny meetings attended**

Councillor McCloskey's feedback from the Gloucestershire Economic Growth O&S Committee (31 October 2023) had been circulated and was taken as read.

### **10 Updates from scrutiny task groups**

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the CBH Scrutiny Task Group met earlier in the day and had made some additions to the one-page strategy included in the agenda pack: clarification of membership of the group, establishing an end date, and consideration of co-opting tenants, other stakeholders and Cabinet Members onto the group to discuss matters.

Members and officers made further suggestions which were added. The Monitoring Officer and Chair confirmed that communication channel would be kept open, with the task group updating when they had anything to share, and the Leader giving regular updates to the Committee.

### **11 Review of scrutiny workplan**

The Chair confirmed that accessibility would be considered in the new year, and encouraged Members to suggest items for the workplan at any time.

### **12 Any other item that the Chair determines to be urgent**

There was no other business.

### **13 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for 15 January 2024.

### **14 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXEMPT INFORMATION**

The committee voted unanimously on the recommendation to approve the following resolution:-

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 paragraph 3, Part (1) Schedule (12A) Local Government Act 1972, namely:

Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information

### **15 Minster Exchange**

The Chair introduced the item, saying Members had been on a very interesting tour that afternoon, and invited the speakers to introduce themselves.

Andrew Roughan (AR), Chief Executive of Plexal, said acquired a majority share in Workshop Group in January 2023. Building clusters round science and technology, Plexal inspires and provides fuel for growth and employment across seven sites in the UK (London, Cheltenham, Manchester). He is happy to share the scale and competence of Plexal to support Hub8, and said that 2024 promises to be an exciting year, not only because of where and what MX is in itself, but because it creates a town-based bridge to the Golden Valley Cyber Park.

Bruce Gregory (BG) introduced himself as the founder and MD of Hub8 and Director of CyNam. He said Hub8 launched a co-working space at the Brewery Quarter in 2019 to support cyber-tech in Cheltenham, and was followed by a second site at Gloscol's Cheltenham campus in 2021. With Plexal, the National Cyber Security Centre Innovation Centre has opened in Cheltenham town centre, resulting in Hub8 currently running three very successful sites across the town. These contribute to the town's economic growth, and MX offers huge opportunity for continued growth, embedded in the fabric of the town. It is a great way to celebrate some amazing companies, and bring together the creative and cultural activities for which the town is known.

The Chair thanked AR and BG. Several Member questions and responses had been circulated, and she invited further questions.

A Member began by saying he uses Hub8 a lot in his business life, and it provides an excellent place to work – well resourced, fantastic staff and amenities. He congratulated AR and BG, adding that he'd expected there to be challenges at the Gloscol site but in fact it works well and businesses enjoy using the site.

### **Member questions**

The Chair said she enjoyed the visit earlier in the day, having attended a planning event earlier in the summer, and wondered if it was worth inviting other Members to visit the site to see how it is progressing. BG said he would be delighted and welcomed the opportunity to show Members round. In relation to the Gloscol site, he said this location is pioneering – there are not many other further education colleges in the UK with industry embedded as here. The positive impact on the students is something to celebrate and he would be happy for Members to visit that site too.

A Member asked what lessons have been learnt, how relationships with clients are developing, and how the buildings are being used to suit clients' needs. BG confirmed that his company had been on a huge learning curve since 2019, about what the community needs and how best to serve that need. MX allows companies to grow, an important component, and Hub8 is taking time to build relationships, get to know the community and understand its needs, to create a safe and trusted environment.

He said that the place itself is the easy part, bringing the community together, stimulating conversations, offering a great programme of events, and making sure there is good tea and coffee – every little detail makes a difference. They have applied what they have learnt, resulting in a nice mix of different spaces in MX not achieved at other co-working sites – open plan space, private meeting rooms, phone booths, private offices. By understanding the high demands of companies and the way they work – they may have 50 employees but only need office space for 6-10 on a regular basis – this results in high and sustainable utilisation of the space.

He said they also understand how to position the different areas of MX and use 'engineered serendipity' to ensure members experience it in the best way, such as having the highest volume of hot-desking on the top floor, which drives vibrancy and movement within the building.

AR said his experience at the Olympic Park had demonstrated the ripple effect, how jobs and productivity grow and thrive in this type of environment, and how under the NCSC banner 71 companies have started their journey in Cheltenham. The unique opportunity offered by MX and the evolution of Hub8's team there is a dress rehearsal for the Golden Valley development.

BG added that the first member Hub8 welcomed through NCSC opened in September 2019 with two desks in the Brewery Quarter, with the intention of trying it out for a year. One year later, they had 20 employees, and now have 50, with many new recruits from Gloscol. There are other great examples of how businesses have grown from this platform, to provide great opportunities for the next generation.

GE pointed out that in addition to its many other benefits, MX's activity also forms a connection between the High Street and one of the oldest parts of the town, largely hidden away and with a reputation for ASB. MX is having a positive impact by activating and shining a spotlight on this part of town.

A Member thanked BG and AR for the excellent tour of MX, and was very encouraged and hugely reassured by all that is going on there. She welcomed their passion for the project, and comprehensive answers to all questions.

The Leader talked about the link between the old and new, saying she had recently met with a lecturer at the University who had tasked his first-year architecture students with creating designs to bring the two elements together. She said their designs were conceptual but amazing, and indicative of what could be done here, as has already been done in London and other big cities.

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# ***Information / Discussion Paper***

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 15 January 2024**

### **Business Continuity**

#### **1. Why has this come to scrutiny?**

- 1.1 This item has come to scrutiny at the request of the committee.
- 1.2 The purpose of this discussion paper is to enable the committee to understand the council's approach to business continuity and any key risks.

#### **2. Summary of the Issue**

- 2.1 Business continuity is the council's ability to maintain critical business functions during a disaster and after it has occurred. Business continuity planning establishes processes and procedures that aim to prevent interruptions to critical services and re-establish full day-to-day function to council services as quickly and smoothly as possible.
- 2.2 Business Continuity plans are vital in terms of the council's preparedness. They provide a framework for considering potential events and threats such as fires, pandemics, supply chain disruptions, and cyber-attacks. It is the responsibility of each service manager to have an up-to-date plan for their service area.
- 2.3 Building on the service level plans, the council should have a corporate recovery plan. This plan sets out the way that the council would respond to an incident which impacts on multiple services or the council as a whole. It is created by using data from the service plans to produce a business impact assessment and enables some early decisions to be taken around service priorities and failover mechanisms that need to be activated.

#### **3. Summary of evidence/information**

- 3.1 Ensuring business continuity plans are up to date and work effectively is best done outside of a live incident. Therefore, officers have recently embarked on a complete review of the councils' arrangements.
- 3.2 This review will retain the relevant parts of the historic plans around building loss etc but will have a much stronger focus on loss of ICT and will enable us to capture any lessons learned from the pandemic or other council's cyber incidents. By way of example each plan owner will be asked to identify, where possible, manual workarounds which could be applied in the event of a cyber incident and how data will be input back into systems once they are recovered.
- 3.3 The committee may also wish to note that the Council recently received substantial assurance from internal audit in relation to ICT business continuity and disaster recovery.

**4. Next Steps**

**4.1** The following timeline sets out the next steps to be taken in this important piece of work:



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<b>Background Papers</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Claire Hughes, Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer <a href="mailto:claire.hughes@cheltenham.gov.uk">claire.hughes@cheltenham.gov.uk</a>
<b>Accountability</b>	Councillor Martin Horwood, Cabinet Member for Customer and Regulatory Services

## Peer Review Action Plan – Update Jan 24

Peer Challenge Recommendation	Action	Update & progress to date	RAG
<p><b>1. Golden Valley Development</b> The Golden Valley Development project is well managed in terms of finance and risk. Now is the time to be engaging with communities, businesses and residents to look at how the council can create and measure social value; it is important that the council thinks strategically about what it wants to achieve, for example, a skills plan and a brighter future plan for the county to provide a pipeline to meet workforce requirements and ensure unique opportunities are not missed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Appointment of Community Engagement, Stakeholder/Public Affairs role to provide additional capacity to deliver improved and enhanced engagement.</li> <li>○ Allocation of a graduate trainee to focus on social value as part of their placement.</li> <li>○ Detailed stakeholder mapping exercise to be completed.</li> <li>○ Creation of community/academic/business engagement action plans for GV work strands.</li> <li>○ Work with and engage with GCC on future workforce requirements and encourage greater partnership working on skills.</li> <li>○ Work with HBD and other ecosystem partners on GV occupier strategy including the development of an offer on skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Community engagement post has been evaluated and will be advertised in January 24.</li> <li>○ Graduate trainees will start their GV Placements in Jan 24.</li> <li>○ LG Challenge participant started 1 day per week in GV team in December 23 working with academic partners on apprentices and skills.</li> <li>○ Plexal have been undertaking work with HBD &amp; CBC on potential occupiers as well as widening the narrative around the IC and looking at branding to ensure it is fit for wider narrative.</li> </ul>	G
<p><b>2. Achieving savings</b> Ensure there is the discipline to achieve savings targets included in the 2023/24 revenue budget. Achieving savings is an organisation wide responsibility, build accountability into management of teams and individuals through the appraisal process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Create a savings delivery programme following proactive engagement with Cabinet to identify efficiencies.</li> <li>○ Service managers to be engaged on achieving their saving targets.</li> <li>○ Work in partnership with CBH to identify shared areas of efficiencies across General Fund and HRA as part of the Cabinet decision to wind up CBH and bring housing under the control of CBC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Savings programme established with savings identified in October 2023. This has been refreshed as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process in light of key decisions taken since the Autumn.</li> <li>○ Service managers have completed individual plans on how savings will be made. This was completed in July - October 2023. Leadership team and the Cabinet have been updated on the current position and have fed into the savings programme for 2024/25.</li> <li>○ In particular, Cabinet Report developed, presented and agreed in October 2023 on the future of housing services with an estimated £2m savings target identified across general fund and HRA.</li> </ul>	A

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work is ongoing to ensure that there is collective accountability across the organisation for budget and savings decisions. Where work has been successful in identifying savings, some have not been seen through to achievement and in some budget areas we are reporting overspends against base budgets which need to be owned and managed by service areas.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. Net Zero 2030</b> Refine the pathway to Net Zero 2030 in order to include clear performance measurements and milestones to demonstrate that the council is on track for delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appoint and commission interim support to drive and review the pathway to net zero.</li> <li>Agree clear performance measurements.</li> <li>Agree reporting timescales.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interim Climate Change adviser appointed and working on:</li> <li>The Net Zero plan to address Scope 1 and 2 emissions alongside defining the high level strategic approach for Scope 3 and Borough Wide Emissions.</li> <li>Proposed structure for the team moving forward.</li> <li>Drafting specific climate objectives across organisation to support delivery of the Council's net zero targets.</li> </ul>	G
<p><b>4. Cheltenham Borough Homes</b> Look for further opportunities for alignment with Cheltenham Borough Homes to support delivery of corporate priorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Cabinet report on the future of housing services recommending to wind up CBH and bring back housing functions under the control of the Council.</li> <li>Appointment of Project Manager to form transition plan.</li> <li>Development of tenant consultation and engagement plan.</li> <li>Business transition plan to be developed to ensure phased approach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cabinet Report on the future of housing services presented and agreed in October 2023.</li> <li>Tenant consultation underway with Campbell Tickell undertaking and they are due to present their findings 27 February 24.</li> <li>Project Manager appointed starting 2 January 24.</li> <li>Interim Housing Transformation Director appointed starting 8 January 24.</li> </ul>	G

<p><b>5. Undertake purposeful communications</b> Think carefully about communications and consultations. Consult with a purpose – there has been good consultation around the Golden Valley vision but there is a wider place shaping responsibility. Raise the council’s profile and get people engaged and interested – create advocates for the Place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review existing communications approaches with a view to raising the Council’s profile further and to improve engagement.</li> <li>○ Appoint a community engagement and stakeholder manager to the GV team to enhance the capacity the team has to promote the activities of the council and to encourage and create more advocates for the place.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Community engagement post has been evaluated and will be advertised in January 24.</li> <li>○ LG Challenge participant started 1 day per week in GV team in December 23 working with academic partners on apprentices and skills.</li> </ul>	G
<p><b>6. Rationalise partnerships to work at a strategic level.</b> Consider rationalising the council’s partnerships and meetings and creating a stakeholder framework. The council already works well at a project level, work at a strategic level to deliver Place leadership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Undertake a review of existing community and partnership meetings in Cheltenham and work with Councils and partners to undertake a review of County-wide partnership meetings.</li> <li>○ Review specific governance and forums relating to the place and develop proposals for updated governance that is effective in supporting CBC, along with its partners, to improve how we shape and deliver place leadership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Met with key stakeholders to collect views on partnerships and governance.</li> <li>○ Review of community and partnership meetings both in CBC and across Gloucestershire councils in progress, with review recommendations expected in Spring 2024.</li> </ul>	G
<p><b>7. Member Induction</b> Improve Member Induction to support Members in understanding their roles and responsibilities and look to refresh Scrutiny training to give Members confidence to add value and constructive challenge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Complete existing Member Induction review and implement. This review includes a refresh and review of existing training available to elected members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review of induction programme in progress and updated Member Induction will be in place ready for council elections scheduled in May 2024.</li> </ul>	G
<p><b>8. Embed CBC culture</b> Work to embed the culture of the organisation more widely so that all staff benefit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure values are embedded into all aspects of organisation including recruitment/policies/procedures.</li> <li>○ Ensure leadership team work together to demonstrate behaviours that engender the right culture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ HR team &amp; learning and development lead are working together on this aspect but slightly delayed due to the decision on CBH.</li> <li>○ Team want to ensure that this work covers employees from both originations to form ‘one team’.</li> </ul>	A

<p><b>9. Develop Staff Induction and Appraisals</b></p> <p>Once the HR team is in place, develop processes for staff induction and appraisals that will include targets that link back from the council priorities, enabling staff to have a sense of accountability and responsibility. Alongside these processes, develop internal communications to be more effective, for example by providing regular updates to staff on the progress of projects and key priorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bring HR team in house.</li> <li>○ Develop staff induction.</li> <li>○ Update and refresh staff appraisal process.</li> <li>○ Ensure appraisals incorporate corporate management responsibilities e.g. budget management.</li> <li>○ Improve internal communications and review use of intranet and current comms technology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ New HR team appointed and in place in September 2023.</li> <li>○ HR successfully transferred from Publica to CBC by September 2023.</li> <li>○ New staff appraisal approach partially designed based on staff feedback, to be tested to get user experience feedback. Testing and co-creation expected to be finished in the early part of 2024 with roll out thereafter.</li> <li>○ Group formed and are reviewing staff induction.</li> <li>○ A review of internal comms will also now incorporate CBH.</li> </ul>	G
<p><b>10. Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion</b></p> <p>The council should take the opportunity once the HR team is in place to co-produce an Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion strategy and policy. The inclusive culture that the council is already developing provides a productive environment for this work to be successful.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Undertake best practice review.</li> <li>○ Draft EDI strategy and ensure that CBC colleagues are involved in the creation of the strategy and that a shared commitment to strategy is embedded in the organisation, translating the strategy into tangible action.</li> <li>○ Update EDI policy.</li> <li>○ Establish an employee EDI group.</li> <li>○ Design and update further employee EDI training &amp; development plans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Initial EDI draft policy completed in October 2023 and is now being consulted on.</li> <li>○ EDI staff group formed.</li> <li>○ EDI action plan written and published.</li> </ul>	G

Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan – 2024

Title	Objective	Format & expected date	Author
<b>Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024 (deadline 14<sup>th</sup> February)</b>			
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	To consider the draft policy and action plan	Discussion Paper	Claire Hughes, Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer
Tourism	<p>To consider CBC’s current tourism and town marketing provision, how effective is it, how is success measured and what plans are there are for further development?</p> <p>To include :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The inclusivity of the tourism offer</li> <li>• Partnership between CBC and Cheltenham Festivals</li> </ul>	Discussion paper, visitor economy data	<p>Helen Mole (Head of Place Marketing and Inward Investment)</p> <p>Cllr. Max Wilkinson (Cabinet Member Economic Development, Culture, Tourism and Wellbeing)</p>
Publica Review	Update on Progress	Verbal Update	Gareth Edmundson, Chief Executive

Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan – 2024

Title	Objective	Format & expected date	Author
<b>Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024 (deadline 13<sup>th</sup> March)</b>			
Climate Pathway to 2030	In light of LGA's recommendations, what progress is being made, how are we communicating our successes ?	Discussion paper	Debbie Baker, Interim Director Climate (and team)
Flooding	Examining the role of CBC in national and local flood risk management plans and strategies. Progress on mitigations since 2007 and CBC role in flood mitigation (to include biodiversity and nature-based solutions) and involvement in the planning process.	Discussion paper	James Mogridge (Flood Risk and Drainage Engineer) Lucy McNabney (Flood Officer) Partner Representatives
Planning Peer Review Update	To consider the progress made on the recommendations	Discussion paper	Tracey Birkinshaw, (Director of Community and Economic Development) Chris Gomm, Head of Development Management, Enforcement and Compliance



Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan – 2024

Title	Objective	Format & expected date	Author
<b>Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024 (deadline 21<sup>st</sup> May)</b>			
Culture Board	Consider its effectiveness, successes and difficulties faced	TBD	Tracey Birkinshaw (Director of Community and Economic Development) Richard Gibson, Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships Chair of Culture Board
<b>Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024 (deadline 19<sup>th</sup> June)</b>			
Tackling Multiple Deprivation	Report back on progress on recommendations of the <a href="#">Scrutiny Task Group report</a> submitted to Cabinet in July 2024	Discussion Paper	Richard Gibson, Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships

<b>Items for future meetings</b>			
<b>Title</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Format and Expected Date</b>	<b>Author</b>
Building Control	Overview and Performance	TBD	Building Control Manager
Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Panels	Cabinet Member to respond to questions on allocation decisions Impact of allocations made		Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services Tracey Birkinshaw ( Director of Community and Economic Development)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan – 2024

Annual Items		
Budget proposals for coming year	January	Chair of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group
End of year performance review	July/September	Ann Wolstencroft ( Head of Performance, Projects and Risk)
Gloucestershire Airport	June/July	GAL representatives
UBICO annual report	September	Karen Watson (Environmental Partnerships Manager), Cllr. Iain Dobie (Cabinet Member Waste, Recycling and Street Services), UBICO representative
Overview & Scrutiny annual report	September /October	Democracy Officer
Annual report of the Police and Crime Commissioner	September	PCC (Chris Nelson)
Publica annual report	October (after Publica AGM)	Jan Britton (Managing Director)
Climate Pathway	July/September	Climate Change Team, Cabinet Member Climate Emergency

Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan – 2024

CIL Neighbourhood Panels	2024	Cllr. Martin Horwood (Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services), Tracey Birkinshaw (Director of Community & Economic Development)
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