

Cheltenham Borough Council

Council

Minutes

Meeting date: 17 June 2024

Meeting time: 2.30 pm - 2.55 pm

In attendance:

Councillors:

Paul Baker (Chair), Dr David Willingham (Vice-Chair), Frank Allen, Glenn Andrews, Victoria Atherstone, Adrian Bamford, Garth Barnes, Dilys Barrell, Angie Boyes, Jackie Chelin, Barbara Clark, Julia Chandler, Flo Clucas, Ashleigh Davies, Chris Day, Iain Dobie, Jan Foster, Juan Carlos Garcia Clamp, Steve Harvey, Rowena Hay, Sandra Holliday, Martin Horwood, Peter Jeffries, Tabi Joy, Alisha Lewis, Andy Mutton, Ben Orme, Helen Pemberton, Richard Pineger, Julie Sankey, Stan Smith, Dr Steve Steinhardt, Izaak Tailford, Julian Tooke, Simon Wheeler and Suzanne Williams

Also in attendance:

Paul Jones (Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)), Claire Hughes (Director of Governance and Customer Services and Monitoring Officer) and Gareth Edmundson (Chief Executive)

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Barnes, Beale, Chandler, Clucas, Collins, Lynch and Oliver.

2 Declarations of interest

Councillor Barrell declared an interest in agenda item 13.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the Annual and Selection Council meeting and the Extraordinary meeting held on 20 May were approved and signed as a correct record.

4 Communications by the Mayor

The Mayor highlighted that one of his roles was to be out in the community listening to residents and feeding back any learning points to the Council. feeding back. He took the opportunity to report on the following recent engagements :

King's birthday reception at Imjin Barracks

Science Festival

D-Day commemoration

Lives of Colour Event

Gloucestershire Volunteer Awards

Cavendish House pop ups

5 Communications by the Leader of the Council

The Leader wished to recognise the recent D-Day commemoration and the opportunity councillors had to engage with veterans.

6 To receive petitions

There were none.

7 Public Questions

1. Question from Mr Barry Brown to Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling and Public Realm, Councillor Izaak Tailford

Cheltenham town centre looks untidy and unkept. An example is that there are huge weeds growing out of most tree pits. On your website you say that tree pits will be cut back at least once a month right to the soil level to discourage any weed growth. Can you confirm that the tree pits are cut back at least once a month? I appreciate that it isn't possible to keep on top of every tree pit so if it is easier then please just answer the above on the trees from Neptune's Fountain to 131 on either side of the road (Prom). Thank you for your time.

Member response

Thank you for your question Mr Brown. I appreciate having my first public council question as a cabinet member.

As a festival town we are pleased to welcome a lot of visitors to the town, many of whom enjoy our thriving night-time economy venues and take away food outlets. Our service provider, Ubico, is out every morning from around 5.30am with manual crews litter picking, sweeping up and emptying bins along with two small pavement sweepers, the jet washing crew and the mechanical road sweeper to ensure the town centre is clean by the time most of us get up in the morning.

We all know there is a climate emergency, and the vital role trees play, so we are being very careful how we look after our trees across the borough. This year we will be further reducing the amount of weed spray used across the borough by not spraying around tree bases in grass verges or on paved areas which will assist in allowing vegetation to grow around tree bases helping to maintain moisture levels. I can confirm that we intend to carefully manually cut back tree bases in hard standing, such as in the Promenade, on a monthly basis where possible and this work has already begun or is about to.

I acknowledge the pavements themselves are in need of improvement too, and we are working with Gloucestershire County Council who are responsible for this.

2. Question from Mr Barry Brown to Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling and Public Realm, Councillor Izaak Tailford

Are there any plans to deep clean the pedestrianised areas of the town centre? The High Street from Poundland all the way to John Lewis really needs a deep clean. I have recently visited Worcester and Leamington Spa and there is no comparison. Their streets are so much cleaner than ours. This is important when it comes to attracting visitors to the town. These are two rival destinations.

Member response

Thank you Mr Brown.

Whilst I am not sure I agree with your comments about the cleanliness of Cheltenham compared to Worcester and Leamington Spa, I am a firm believer that things can always be improved. In fact, your question is very timely and I am pleased to say that there are plans to carry out a deep clean of the pedestrianised areas of the town centre and more details will be made available early in July.

It is important that we don't focus all our efforts in the town centre and forget the rest of the borough. I have therefore asked that a deep clean of some of the outlying shopping areas is carried out and you may have noticed that work is already starting in outlying shopping areas such as Windyridge (w/c 10 June) and Rowanfield (w/c 17 June). Whaddon Road shop fronts are scheduled for w/c 24 June and Lynworth Exchange shop fronts are planned for w/c 1 July. After this work, the crews will move into the town centre and more details will be publicised nearer the time.

I hope this shows the council's commitment to making Cheltenham as clean and tidy as possible, in both the town centre and across the borough.

8 Member Questions

None received.

9 Housing Transition Governance Arrangements and Revisions to the Constitution

The Leader introduced the report and explained that on 11 June Cabinet considered a paper setting out the proposals for the new governance arrangements to reflect the return of housing management to CBC. These new arrangements are vital to establishing effective and robust governance, but also have wider importance in setting a framework that will help to facilitate and create ways in which our tenants and leaseholders can play an essential part in helping to shape CBC's housing service.

In summary, the revised structure includes the establishment of a new Housing Cabinet Committee, made up of 5 elected members, one of whom will be the Cabinet Member for Housing, two tenant representatives, one leaseholder representative and one shared ownership representative.

The main role of the committee will be to:

- Monitor performance and delivery of the consumer standard including the new tenancy satisfaction measures.
- Monitor the impacts of investment in ensuring the Council maintains decent homes, fire and building safety and customer satisfaction.
- Receive and considering complaints data to inform service delivery.
- Have oversight of the risk register for housing services.
- Provide strong and effective connectivity between the Council and the Tenant Panel.

In order to ensure that tenant involvement and engagement is one of the fundamental principles within this new governance arrangement, alongside the Cabinet Housing committee a Tenant Panel and a separate Leaseholder/Shared Ownership Panel will be established. These panels will create a space where tenants and leaseholders, can act as scrutineers and critical friends, working with the Council to develop plans, priorities and policies.

In order to facilitate the above and to ensure effective decision making can continue it has been necessary to review Part 3D (Officer Non-Executive Functions) and Part 3E (Executive Functions) of the constitution and Council are asked to approve the necessary amendments. The Leader also highlighted that some specific delegations around Building Control have also been added. These reflect our current practice but are included to provide additional clarity in the case of any legal proceedings.

Members welcomed the tenant, leaseholder and shared ownership model and thanked officers at CBH and CBC for their input.

RESOLVED (unanimously) THAT

- 1. the new governance arrangements as set out in the Cabinet Report of 11 June be noted.**
- 2. the appointment of members to the Housing Cabinet Committee be delegated to Group Leaders.**
- 3. the consequential amendments to the constitution to reflect the new governance arrangements be approved.**
- 4. the amendments to Parts 3D, 3E and 3F of the constitution as set out in appendices 4, 5 and 6 be approved.**
- 5. the updated contract procedure rules as set out in appendix 7 be approved.**

10 Capital Investment to reduce the energy usage at Leisure@Cheltenham

The Cabinet Member Climate Emergency introduced the report and explained that the investment in Leisure@ was absolutely in line with the Council's net zero action plan. It is funded by the Green Investment Fund and the detailed business case had been agreed by the Green Investment Board.

Both of the investments will reduce energy use and cost and the purchase of pool covers will generate a 16.4 % return on investment. He noted how half of the energy bills for the council were spent on the leisure centre. This investment therefore represented a wise spend to save decision.

Makes sense financially and delivers significance carbon savings and hence on track to meet council declared net zero ambitions.

In response to a question, the Cabinet Member undertook to ask officers to provide more detail on the calculations relating to carbon saving.

In the debate that followed the Cabinet Member Finance and Assets highlighted the significance of the project for CBC since energy consumption represented a huge part of its carbon footprint. It was hoped that additional schemes would be rolled out across town.

Officers in both the property and finance teams were thanked for their input into this project which would deliver an impressive rate of return for the council.

RESOLVED (unanimously) THAT

- 1. a capital investment of £264,500 to replace the existing lighting system in the leisure centre with LED technology be approved.**
- 2. a capital investment of £83,750 from the Green Investment Fund to install pool covers across the building be approved; and**

3. **authority be delegated to the Director of Finance and Assets (Deputy s151 Officer) to procure and award the contract for the installation of the equipment and monitor the implementation.**

11 Council Appointments

The Chief Executive informed that the appointment to the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy Scrutiny Committee had been deferred, pending the Gloucestershire County Council meeting to approve the terms of reference at the end of June.

Members were invited to put forward nominations for the Joint Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy Joint Committee.

RESOLVED THAT

The Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member Planning and Building Control be appointed to the Joint Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy Joint Committee.

12 Notices of Motion

There were none.

13 Any other item the Mayor determines as urgent and which requires a decision

None.