

Cheltenham Borough Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee Minutes

Meeting date: 7 July 2025

Meeting time: 6.00 pm - 6.35 pm

In attendance:

Councillors:

Jackie Chelin (Vice-Chair), Julia Chandler, Chris Day, Juan Carlos Garcia Clamp, Jan Foster, Sandra Holliday and Stan Smith

Also in attendance:

Co-optees Harry Booty and Margaret Cheung

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Joy and Beale.

2 Declarations of interest

There were none.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 19th May were unanimously approved.

4 Public and Member questions, calls for actions and petitions

There were none.

5 Appointment of Co-optees to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Chair welcomed the 2 co-optees Harry Booty and Margaret Cheung to the committee. The Chair was sure that they would make an important contribution to the meetings. They were thanked for taking an interest.

6 Cabinet Briefing

Councillor Jefferies addressed the committee in his capacity as Deputy Leader. He gave Councillor Hay's apologies and explained that she had been at the LGA conference.

He gave an update on the Gloucester City Council meeting with regard to the sale of the airport. There was a majority vote by Gloucester City Council to sell the airport. He highlighted the fact that the new owner is keen on social value and maximising it. He stated that there had been a lot of negative press with regards to the sale and confirmed that it will still be operating as an airport. The sale is now entering into a 12 week due diligence period.

Councillor Baker was then asked to address the committee in his capacity as Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling, Parks, Gardens and Greenspace. He made the following points:

- The HRC is closed at the moment as it needs a £1 million investment.
- The facility is for Gloucestershire County Council to provide.
- The previous administration at the County Council wouldn't make an investment. There is a new administration at the County Council, and there have been some conversations with them already with them and there will be a meeting at the site in August with officers and Cabinet Members from both councils.
- There are 2 sites that are available to the residents – Fosse Way and Wingmoor Farm.
- Wingmoor Farm has seen an increase in visitors of 26%. In June they had 14.5 thousand visitors, which meant it operated at 95% capacity.
- There is 95% of recycling done at the kerbside with the aim to expand the scheme to flexible plastics and tetra packs.
- Fly tipping has increased across the country and the county. Since the closure of the HRC there has been a 45% increase in fly tipping.
- There is no excuse for people to break the law and they are working on robust punishment for people who break the law and fly tip.

The matter then went to Member questions and the responses were as follows:

- There are still spots available on a day-to-day basis at Wingmoor Farm, the Fosse Way site is nearer than people think. With the new homes that are due to be built the County Council need to make a decision.
- Geographic data of the whereabouts of the worst cases of fly tipping will be made available.
- Councillor Baker agreed to take residents comments regarding the state of the road at Wingmoor Farm and the fact that customers were not having a good overall experience there back to Gloucestershire County Council.

The Chair thanked both Members for their updates.

7 Minster Exchange

The Chair introduced the speakers on the item Bruce Gregory (CEO of Hub 8) and Andrew Roughan (CEO of Plexal).

Bruce Gregory addressed the committee and made the following points:

- That he was proud to publish the impact report.
- During the first year of the Minster Exchange (MX) it has made a significant impact as a social aspect of the town.
- The minster gardens is a jewel in the crown of the town centre.
- The minster is the oldest church in the town and they are working closely with the church, it now opens on a Tuesday for half an hour over lunchtime. The MX held a joint carol service with the minster. It is a collaboration that they hope will continue.
- From a commercial stand point they are satisfied with how that it is performing. It is a vibrant community with large tech companies, start-ups and SME's (small and medium sized enterprises) using the space.
- It is a broad community of clients, mainly from the digital sector.
- The café which opened in January 2025 has brought new life and vibrancy to the area.

Andrew Roughan addressed the committee and made the following points:

- He recognised that the journey that the Council had been on to get the MX up and running was a difficult one and appreciated the support that has been given.
- The business model suggests success and both he and Bruce are committed to making it a social and economic success.

A Member thanked the MX team for the tour that was offered to the committee, he stated that he was amazed how clean and well maintained the MX is and is a premium product.

The response to a Member question was as follows:

- There is a trade model how charging is calculated for the businesses that rent these type of spaces. Typically the rent in Cheltenham is between £20 per square foot to £35 per square foot, within that model the tenants will pay for things like business rates, the service charge, reception staff and cleaners. This is a more inclusive cost at £70 per square foot. They believe that this keeps the right balance between flexibility and profit.

The Chair then read the following statement:

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 1 and 2, 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).

The meeting then entered exempt session.

8 Feedback from other scrutiny meetings attended

There have been no County Council Scrutiny Meetings – they are scheduled for later in July.

9 Updates from scrutiny task groups

There are currently no scrutiny task groups.

10 Review of scrutiny workplan

There was no issues raised with regard to the current work plan.

11 Any other item that the Chair determines to be urgent

12 Date of next meeting