

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet

Minutes

Meeting date: 10 June 2025

Meeting time: 6.00 pm - 6.55 pm

In attendance:

Councillors:

Victoria Atherstone, Paul Baker, Flo Clucas, Mike Collins, Peter Jeffries, Alisha Lewis, Izaak Tailford and Richard Pineger

Also in attendance:

Paul Jones (Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)), Tracey Birkinshaw (Director of Community & Economic Development) and Richard Gibson (Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships)

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from the Leader, Councillor Hay. Councillor Jeffries (Deputy Leader) chaired the meeting in her absence.

2 Declarations of interest

As Chair of Big Local, which has awarded significant funding to the Petersfield Partnership, Councillor Clucas, Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services felt it appropriate to declare an interest in Agenda item 6, Petersfield Community and Sports Hub.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 May were approved as a true record and signed accordingly.

4 Public and Member Questions and Petitions

There were no Member questions or petitions. Six public questions had been received which together with the following responses were taken as read:

1. Question from Crispian Webb to the Leader, Councillor Rowena Hay

As Leader of the Council and I understand also the person who instigated the idea of the Cheltenham Trust as a way to subsidise non-revenue producing properties, including the Wilson Art Gallery and Museum, by grouping them with revenue generating properties; can I ask Rowena Hay how effective the Trust has been in managing the Prince of Wales Stadium specifically – a key local facility that was passed as unfit to stage England Athletics licensed events in 2022; and as at today's date still has not got a date for resurfacing to take place?

Member response (from Councillor Izaac Tailford, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Wellbeing and Public Open Space):

Thank you for the question, Crispian. In Rowena's absence, please allow me to answer your question as it falls within my new cabinet portfolio.

The Cheltenham Trust delivers the council's leisure and culture services and manages five properties (The Wilson, Town Hall, Pittville Pump Room, Leisure@Cheltenham, Prince of Wales Stadium) under a management agreement that started in October 2014. The Trust is paid an annual management fee for their services.

The council manages the relationship with the Trust via a quarterly liaison meeting involving the chair of the trustees, the lead cabinet member and senior officers from both the council and the Trust. This meeting reviews the Trust's financial performance, key performance indicators and key governance targets such as health and safety.

In terms of the Prince of Wales stadium, the Trust is responsible for the day-to-day management of the facility such as cleaning and compliance matters as well as managing the relationship with Harriers and other stadium users.

The council however is responsible for the structure of facility including for the athletics track. Whilst we acknowledge that the track does not currently meet the criteria for England Athletics it does remain open, accessible and safe for general use.

2. Question from Crispian Webb to Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets, Councillor Peter Jeffries

Cheltenham and County Harriers pay around £4,000 per month / £50,000 per year to use the Prince of Wales Stadium. The track surface was assessed as needing to be replaced in 2022. Three years on, there is no date set for the resurfacing to take place. It is around 20 years since the track was resurfaced. How much has been set aside year on year towards the known cost of track replacement?

Member response:

Thank you for your question. Any rent/fees paid by the Harriers or any other third parties for the use of the track goes directly to the Trust and is not passported to the council.

At this time the Council does not have a capital fund set aside to replace the track – which in October 2024 was estimated to cost £489k. However, in recognition that both Leisure@ and the Prince of Wales are ageing facilities the Council has recently commissioned an options appraisal that will consider a needs analysis, site assessment, facility mix options, financial appraisal and will make recommendations for the Council to take forward.

The track was last refurbished in 2012 at which time the track surface was re-topped with a 4mm layer of 'crumb', which was designed to extend the life of the track.

3. Question from Polly Symondson to Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Wellbeing and Public Open Space, Councillor Izaak Tailford

As part of Cheltenham Borough Council's Physical Activity and Sports Strategy the guidance states: '*Our physical and community infrastructure is accessible and affordable but also high-quality and sustainable*'. Could I ask how the council continues to allow the Prince of Wales Stadium to fall well below the required standard?

Member response:

Thank you for your question Polly.

Whilst we acknowledge that the track does not currently meet the UK Athletics competition standard it remains open and accessible to users, meets all relevant health and safety requirements and continues to provide an affordable entry to athletics.

An inspection in 2022 identified issues with the shock absorbency of the main track surface and as a result UK Athletics advised that they would be unable to licence the track for competitive sports until such time the issues with the shock absorbency were addressed and tested to an acceptable level. However, the track can still be used for training purposes and non-competitive events.

4. Question from Polly Symondson to Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Wellbeing and Public Open Space, Councillor Izaak Tailford

As you know, the athletics track at the Prince of Wales stadium failed the trackmark accreditation test by England Athletics in 2022 and as such cannot stage licensed competitions. As a result, Cheltenham Harriers have been unable to hold 24 matches to date. Can I ask you to list the practical measures the Council has been implementing to address the situation and when she envisages work will commence in order the track is fit for purpose?

Member response:

Thank you for your question.

Via the planned maintenance budget, the council has recently completed some works to the track including addressing pitting in the track, line-marking, and recently restoring the hammer cage. The council is also looking at replacing the sand in the sand-pit to provide more cushioning for jumpers. In addition the council works with Ubico to ensure that vegetation in and around the Stadium is kept under control.

The council has recently commissioned an options appraisal that will consider a needs analysis, site assessment, facility mix options, financial appraisal and will make recommendations in relation to both Leisure@ and the Prince of Wales Stadium for the council to take forward. I look forward to sharing an update on this when possible, but in the meantime I am meeting with Harriers to discuss their concerns.

5. Question from Jane Woolley to Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Wellbeing and Public Open Space, Councillor Izaak Tailford

As a Team Manager of the U17/U20 Cheltenham & County Harriers Athletics team, and administrator for U13/U15 athletes' training, I am severely disappointed to see their training facilities are still in poor condition, contributing to some injuries our athletes are suffering. I am asking when will some money be allocated and invested into repairing the track, which was deemed unsuitable for competition by England Athletics in 2022? There has been a lot of talk and no action, and money allocated to other parts of the Cheltenham Trust. Our club is producing some national standard junior athletes and spends in excess of £50k pa for hiring the training facility which is current unfit for purpose, but there is no alternative.

Member response:

Thank you for your question, Jane.

Whilst we acknowledge that the track does not currently meet the UK Athletics competition standard it remains open and accessible to users, meets all relevant health and safety requirements and continues to provide an affordable entry to athletics.

Any rent/fees paid by the Harriers or any other third parties for the use of the track goes directly to the Trust and is not passported to the council.

The council has recently commissioned an options appraisal that will consider a needs analysis, site assessment, facility mix options, financial appraisal and will make recommendations in relation to both Leisure@ and the Prince of Wales Stadium for the council to take forward.

I am also personally meeting with Harriers and Smiths Rugby to better understand their concerns and develop the relationship between them and the council.

In terms of council funds allocated to other parts of the Trust, investment has been prioritised to those works required to ensure venues can remain open safely to the public.

6. Question from Jane Woolley to Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Wellbeing and Public Open Space, Councillor Izaak Tailford

How much money will be set aside to pay for the repair of the track, a facility that needs replacing every 10 years and should have been budgeted for annually?

Member response

Thank you for your question.

At this time the council does not have a capital fund set aside to replace the track – which in October 2024 was estimated to cost £489k. However, in recognition that both Leisure @ and the Prince of Wales are aging facilities the council has recently commissioned an options appraisal that will consider a needs analysis, site assessment, facility mix options, financial appraisal and will make recommendations

5 Housing Delivery Test Action Plan

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control introduced his report, saying it is important to CBC and Cheltenham residents, and vital to the successful and sustainable growth of the town. He said the requirement for an action plan was first introduced in 2019, to provide an annual measurement over a three-year rolling period, and the report shows that Cheltenham is meeting its challenging housing delivery targets.

The council has worked in collaboration with its JCS colleagues and other partners, and he thanked officers who have managed to make the incredible amount of detail in this very technical report as easy to understand as possible.

In response to Members' questions, the Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control and the Director of Community and Economic Development confirmed that:

- the outline permission for 4000+ houses at Elms Park is not included in the action plan, as that consent is subject to an S106 agreement and a decision notice won't be issued until that is achieved. This needs to be built into the programme of work;
- the paper presented is based on a three-year rolling programme applied by the government, which looks back at historical data rather than projecting forward. It is likely that the Housing Delivery Action Plan will need to be live for a couple of years to enable the strategic sites to catch up. The Elms Park numbers will be taken into account for monitoring the five-year land supply but this report is based on completions;

- regarding new measures coming forward to track permissions once granted, how long a developer has to start work before the permission lapses, and what the impact of this may be on the planning department's workload, this will be discussed with the Head of Planning to consider national guidance and what other local authorities are doing, see if any patterns are emerging around particular developers, and consider the best action for CBC.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. the prepared Housing Delivery Test Action Plan, June 2025, is approved for publication;**
- 2. authority is delegated to the Director of Community and Economic Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control, to prepare the Housing Delivery Test Action Plan (HDTAP) for publication correcting any minor errors;**
- 3. any future updates to the HDTAP are delegated to the Director of Community and Economic Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control.**

6 Petersfield Community and Sports Hub

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets introduced his report, concerning the Petersfield Partnership and how the council has worked collaboratively with them to deliver a community and sports hub for St Peter's and The Moors residents and the wider community. The report includes information about the proposed lease arrangements with the Saracens Football Club and Petersfield Partnership, which are quite complex, but made clearer by the site plan at Appendix 4. The cost of construction is set out in Section 4 of the report, together with details of fund raising secured so far, the lion's share of which comes from the Big Local trust.

In view of the historic nature and long involvement of the council in this item, he invited the Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships to provide some background. He highlighted the following points:

- the Big Local programme was introduced in 2012 when the borough council was asked by a national body called the Local Trust to nominate an area of Cheltenham which had not seen much investment or regeneration. CBC's nomination of St Peters and The Moors, an area in clear need, was accepted as part of the Big Local Programme as one of the 150 areas to benefit;
- hallmarks of the Big Local programme, which is benefitting 150 areas nationally, include the requirement that the shape of the regeneration is led by residents rather than by local authorities, is not prescriptive, and puts the power in residents' hands. Projects are also expected to be long-term investments and this is welcomed;
- to take the project forward, the St Peters and The Moors Big Local Partnership was set up, constituted so that the balance of power sat with residents, with

CBC, CBH and others always available in the background to advise when needed;

- the Partnership has delivered a vast array of community-based projects, around green space, culture, community development, financial inclusion, trips and social events, many young people-based;
- as it has matured and grown, and with the end of its term in view, the Partnership's key focus over the last few years has been its legacy project and, having worked hard to appraise different options, came to the conclusion couple of years ago that a community and sports hub project ticked all the boxes and would be the recipient of the remaining Big Local;
- with the national Big Local programme coming to an end in March 2026, and any unspent money will be taken back, the support of local trusts and organisations has been essential in providing the focus and effort to ensure that the plan can be delivered within that timescale.

Finally, he made the following minor correction to the report:

- in Paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5, the proposed 25-year term leases for Saracens Football Club and Petersfield Partnership should refer to the lease terms ending on 04 May 2047.

The Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities said that as ward councillor, she knows the area well and supports all the recommendations as set out, knowing how valuable this community centre and sports hub will be for the community. The area, on both sides of the River Chelt, needs a focus in addition to The Rock on Tewkesbury Road and the YMCA,, and in this hub in this location will help bring the community together. She welcomed the great upgrade from the current units for Saracens Football Club, saying this will add huge value to a much-loved local sports club, and was happy to note that plans regarding a management agreement, changes to the lease, and grant agreement will support the Petersfield Partnership in completing the works in budget and on time. She looked forward to the opening party next March.

In addition she noted that the community impact report highlights the value of this community asset in an area where 42% of the residents are aged 25 and under. It will not only be a place to meet up, but will also provide access to services, and she hoped that all Members would be happy to support the recommendations.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Wellbeing and Public Open Space also supported the benefits both for wellbeing, sport, and for getting communities together.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services made the following comments:

- thanks to Councillors Atherstone and Willingham, ward councillors for St Peters, for all the support, and also David Bath, who was awarded Cheltenham's Medal of Honour last year - he has done and continues to do great work at the heart of the community and is respected by everyone;

- as Chair of Big Local since 2016-17, the long journey to today has been bumpy, with many ups and downs, but this is a community like no other in Cheltenham, and the community and sports hub will link it together, enabling it to grow and strengthen. It will not be just a sports facility, but an important focus at the heart of the community, something that will help the community believe in itself and move forward, and inspiring other Cheltenham communities to do the same;
- thanks to Richard Gibson, Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships, for carrying the project for so long, to Margaret Jackson, who was part of the original Big Local, and to Sophie Cowdell for all their great work in creating opportunities and giving the community something of which it can be proud for many years to come.

As borough and county councillor representing St Peter's ward, Councillor Willingham made the following comments:

- the value this facility will deliver is really important, and in his previous term at the county, he had been able to contribute 2% of the cost from the Build Back Better fund, demonstrating the county's willingness to support the scheme as far as it could;
- the Assistant Chief Constable of Gloucestershire visited St Pauls and St Peters and The Moors recently, to see how Operation Endeavour's 'Clear, Hold, Build' project – a three-stage approach to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour – is working. Starting at St Pauls Community Hub, it was clear to see that having a community facility where services and outreach is provided, makes a huge difference;
- the community and sports hub will provide that physical presence currently lacking in St Peters and The Moors, and will be an important part of Operation Endeavour which is a generational project set to continue for two decades or longer.

He hoped that Members would support it.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets said he was proud of the Liberal Democrats' track record in supporting communities, working collaboratively and collectively to overcome obstacles and challenges, and particularly in this instance where the community is taking the lead.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) the disposal by way of two separate leases of land subject to the meeting of a set of conditions set out in para 3.8 is approved;**
- 2) once these conditions are met, authority is delegated to the Director for Finance and Assets, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Finance and Assets and the Director of One Legal, to agree the terms of the lease and conclude the letting;**
- 3) allocation of the following sums to the hub building is committed to:**

- the Big Local fund of £356,643 which is currently held by the Local Trust, but which will be drawn down by the Council;
 - the council's allocation of the future administration fee of £17,832, that accrues to the Council from its role as accountable body for the SPTM partnership;
 - the previous administration fee of £42,143 that forms part of the funding currently held by the Council; and
 - other funding currently held by the Council for the project comprising the Big Local underspend, the contribution from the Housing Revenue Account and the Police and Crime Commissioner funding totalling £71,133.
- 4) a grant agreement is entered into with the Petersfield Partnership CIO to facilitate the transfer of the funds set out above
 - 5) a management agreement is entered into with the Petersfield Partnership CIO to ensure that the hub building is managed for the benefit of the local community;
 - 6) authority is delegated to the Director of Governance, Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Finance and Assets, to agree the final terms of the grant and management agreements and to conclude the arrangements to ensure the hub is managed for the benefit of the community;
 - 7) other such documents are entered into as the Director of One Legal deems necessary or desirable to reflect the terms negotiated.

7 Briefing from Cabinet Members

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control said that the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy Panel report has been circulated and would be brought to Cabinet in July, with information about the funding being provided for good projects around the borough.

The Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities said she was very involved in updating important licensing policies at present, but had recently had an excellent meeting with the new chaplain at the YMCA, Reverend Tim Welch, and attended a productive Violence Against Women and Girls forum meeting and a strategic No Child Left Behind meeting in the last week. She was looking forward to attending a youth event supported by the Children's Society, at which she would be asking young people what three things they would like to change about Cheltenham while hula-hooping.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Wellbeing and Public Open Spaces said he is busy attending events and meeting as many cultural and wellbeing organisations as possible to discuss their needs and actions plans. Some highlights include:

- a meeting with the trustees of the Playhouse Theatre, which is facing an urgent funding crisis (more details provided in Agenda Item 10);
- the 90th birthday celebrations for Cheltenham Lido, with County Councillor Colin Hay, Councillor Willingham and Max Wilkinson MP - a great testament to an outstanding community asset which serves Cheltenham and the wider community. He enjoyed an interesting tour of the site which included the original machinery, and highlighted the amount of work required to keep the place going;
- the Science Festival has just taken place, with many interesting opportunities to learn; he attended an event with the Leader, and enjoyed a very impressive presentation about photosynthesis and leaves;
- the University of Gloucestershire recently held its arts degree show, an amazing display of animation, fashion, music, fine art, film production and more. It offered a great opportunity for students to connect with local employers and businesses, and showcase their talent. A particular highlight was the interior architecture projects, which focussed on Golden Valley collaborative spaces.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency said he had met with officers today and was learning a lot about his new portfolio. He expressed sincere gratitude to his Liberal Democrat colleagues and the Leader for placing their trust in him with this portfolio, saying he was delighted to take on the role at this critical time, having a lifelong passion for climate action, and hoped to do it justice. He shared the following highlights:

- in May, the council supported two workshops hosted by Climate Leadership Gloucestershire: one focussed on climate risks and vulnerabilities across the county, the other on local area energy planning, foundational steps in shaping a resilient, low carbon future for area;
- the retrofit programme has now reached over 54k home owner interactions, well ahead of September targets. One major event and 10 supporting events have been held, and there is evidence of real momentum with home owners beginning to take action;
- 49 students from nine Cheltenham secondary schools have been supported in preparing for a climate action showcase, which will take place at The Wilson, on 25 June, 6.00-7.30pm. All are invited;
- the Cheltenham Zero initiative continues to grow, with two more businesses signed up for carbon audits, and preparations underway for a celebration and fund launch event later this month. They do vital work in helping the local economy transition to Net Zero;

- regarding flood risk, the proposed scheme at Grange Field is progressing to detailed design, and we are also entering the third summer of the Reclaim the River Chelt volunteer programme, tackling invasive species and improving biodiversity;
- new information posts have been installed in parks and nature reserves to raise awareness of the benefits of wild areas and long grasses. These are small but important steps in increasing public understanding of biodiversity;
- progress is being made in housing decarbonisation with several retrofit schemes progressing, and moving forward with assessments and installations under the Warm Homes Social Housing Fund; these upgrades reduce emissions, improve comfort and reduce bills.

He ended by thanking officers in the climate, housing and flooding teams for their dedication, innovation and hard work behind the scenes, essential for the borough's future.

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling and Public Green Space reported on the following:

- he has attended a meeting of Gloucestershire Resources and Waste Partnership in the Forest of Dean, together with other local authorities and the county, where it was clear that recycling rates are stagnating across the county. It was also clear that CBC has been a leader in new recycling initiatives, now considering flimsy plastic and tetra packs, and other authorities look to us;
- en route, he enjoyed an interesting discussion with the county council Cabinet Member for Nature, Climate and Waste Reduction about the household recycling centre and opportunities for that going forward;
- it is good that despite economic difficulties, CBC is still investing in the town, with the new planting scheme underway in the Long Gardens – this will be a real joy Generating colour and biodiversity – and new play equipment, newly-painted railings, and the amazing new public toilets in Montpellier Park;
- he has enjoyed a positive meeting with officers and the Old Pats, to consider how we can work together to enhance their offer and improve their playing surfaces, in accordance with the policy document considered at the last meeting. Improving the town's sports facilities will benefit everyone, and the council is looking to attract funding from wherever it can.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services had a number of items to share:

- she was invited to speak at events in Brussels, providing a great opportunity to talk about what CBC is doing and how. One issue being debated at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg is violence against women and girls, now being handled by local authorities and governments across Europe. She was able to share what we are doing here to make them feel safer, and include them in the discussion which isn't done elsewhere;

- at a local government summit for the UK and Europe, prior to the government and EU summit, she spoke about Cheltenham and enjoyed discussions with other authorities about how we can work together;
- earlier in the day, she walked through the town with the homelessness team, to see what is being done to help homeless people, and consider why the average number in Cheltenham has increased recently. She said this is being investigated, and it appears that people are moving between Cheltenham and Gloucester, but although some people don't want help from the council, there are many wonderful organisations – including P3 Cheltenham, CCP Cheltenham (Caring for Communities and People), Open Door and Citizens Advice – doing great work;
- she shared a story about a man who had been homeless for 20 years, who accepted the offer of a CCP pod before Christmas, due to the extreme cold, and could benefit from heating, water, sanitation, and a bed where he could lay down flat to sleep for the first time in 20 years. He is now moving into his own accommodation in Cheltenham for the first time. She thanked all the volunteers for their work and dedication.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets and the Cabinet Member for Major Developments and Housing Delivery had no briefings to share on this occasion.

8 Cabinet Member decisions since the last meeting

Members reported on the following decisions, taken since the last meeting on 20 May:

03 June 2025: Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Wellbeing and Public Open Space, Councillor Izaac Tailford

i. [To approve grant funding to the Cheltenham Playhouse Theatre](#)

The Cabinet Member said that the Playhouse has been an important and valuable community asset for 80 years, an inclusive and accessible space for those on stage, behind the scenes and in the audience. Unfortunately, it is facing a financial crisis and struggling to keep its doors open in the short term despite the brilliant new trustees' masterplan for the long term. To help it through its immediate problems and support its continuance for future generations during this challenging time, the council has provided £25k towards the £50k the theatre needs to raise before the end of June. It is facing longer-term financial barriers towards the end of the year, and the council will be working with the trustees going forward, and helping however it can.

He invited Cheltenham residents to offer support to the theatre, either financial or by volunteering in some way, to ensure that this important asset continues to thrive and serve the town.

- ii. **06 June 2025:** Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling, Parks, Gardens and Green Open Space, Councillor Paul Baker

[Hillend Engineering Ltd to be awarded the contract for the supply of 3 x 7.5t Food Waste Vehicles](#)

The Cabinet Member said this new contract was required to replace the current fleet, and was pleased to note that the new vehicles run on bio fuel. Food waste is turned into energy and fertiliser, and it is important to recycle as much as possible.

- iii. **09 June 2025:** Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets, Councillor Peter Jeffries

[Award of contract for build of 320 Swindon Road](#)

- iv. **10 June 2025 :**Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services, Councillor Flo Clucas

[Award of Grant to GARAS](#)

[Award of Grant to Cheltenham Welcomes Refugees](#)

The Cabinet Member said these two awards would help refugees and asylum seekers and ensure they are able to access the assistance they require.

9 Any other item the the Leader determines to be urgent and requires a decision

There were no other items.

10 Date of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 15 July, starting at 6.00pm.