

Cheltenham Borough Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee Minutes

Meeting date: 2 March 2026

Meeting time: 18:00-19:10

In attendance:

Councillors:

Tabi Joy (Chair), Jackie Chelin (Vice-Chair), Julia Chandler, Chris Day, Juan Carlos Garcia Clamp, Sandra Holliday, Martin Horwood and Stan Smith

Also in attendance:

Paul Minnis (Director Major Developments and Regeneration), Amy Keates (Construction Project Manager), Richard Gibson (Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships) Victoria Atherstone (Cabinet Member)

1 Apologies

There were none.

2 Declarations of interest

Harry Booty (Independent co-optee) declared that he is a trustee of the Wilson.

There were no other declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the January meeting were approved unanimously.

4 Public and Member questions, calls for actions and petitions

There were none.

5 Cabinet Briefing

The Leader attended the meeting, as Council had only been the previous week there was nothing further to add.

6 Update on the Golden Valley Social Strategy

The Members had submitted questions in advance to the Golden Valley Team, the answers were published in a supplement before the meeting and there were no supplementary questions.

The Chair asked the Members if they had any further questions, the responses were as follows:

- There are nuances that need to be looked at with regard to local employers, as long as the employers have a subsidiary in Gloucestershire then that would class as being a local employer.
- It was explained that there are monthly meetings across multiple organisations with regard to the social value charter.
- With regard to prioritising Cheltenham postcodes, this has occurred following local feedback which showed that people are feeling distanced from the development. They are trying to link up families that are already resident in Cheltenham.
- It will depend on what suppliers can offer as to whether the pairing of students with mentors will be with college or school students. It is open to interpretation and will be whatever can be supported.
- It was explained that some of the organisations will be recruiting from all over the world, the charter is not saying that businesses have to employ local people, but the charter is trying to have a positive impact on local people.
- The aim will be to help the most needy members of the community first.
- It is all about striking a balance and the team have been working with the University of Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire College and the local job centres which has made them confident about stakeholder relationships. The hope is that the whole of Gloucestershire will benefit from the development.
- The consultation is based on information gathered over the last few years.
- There will be a thorough HR process to ensure that the right people are in the right jobs. This is phase one of the charter and this will evolve for other changes.
- Phase 1 construction will have key performance indicators and an apprentice scheme via subcontractors.
- Apprenticeships are not used very often in the intelligence agencies.
- The team are working with Gloucestershire College to find the right apprenticeships for the right companies.
- To ensure that the social charter is not aspirational it has been talked about early so that HBD potential occupiers are aware of the charter and its expectations.

The Chair thanked the officers for attending and asked that the team come to the committee next year to update them on the year's activities.

7 Youth Engagement Policy

The Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships thanked the committee for inviting him to address them.

He thanked them for their interest in No Child Left Behind. The paper was to update the committee on youth engagement findings. He explained that there had been lots of engagement with young people giving crucial information. There is currently a pilot running at Smoky Joes Café town, this is running as a youth café. It launched and has been running 3 weeks (one day a week) with an average of 30 young people attending. It is a project that they wish to sustain. It was also explained that there is an activity pass being worked on in partnership with Gloucestershire College, it is hoped that this will be launched soon, the feedback that was received was that young people want to be more active and the main barrier preventing them to be more active is financial. He also stated how pleased they are that the Council are the lead for the 2026-27 HAF programme.

The Cabinet Member then addressed the committee and reiterated how positive it was to launch the youth café. Young people didn't feel that they had a safe space in the town centre, the youth café offers this and it was important that the young people felt that they had a safe space. The activity pass will be piloted across a number of schools. During the year of youth engagement it has become more apparent that there is a national crisis re school attendance, parents and young people are feeling pressures. There are some very good organisations that CBC work with along with schools and youth centres.

The Chair thanked the committee for their submitted questions and asked if there were any further questions. The responses to the questions were as follows:

- At the time of the meeting it was not known if the amount of children that are in poverty in Cheltenham (approx. 300) was below or above the national average.
- There has been a year of action in 2025 centred around youth engagement and the current year is linked to the year of youth engagement but it is around education.
- A session was hosted in 2025 in the Municipal Offices with schools to build relationships with regard to behaviour and attendance. The NCLB meets every 2 months and are very aware of the challenges of children moving from years 6-7 and the senior school years.
- The team are working with the Police and Gloucestershire County Council to see how they can support young people.
- There can be broader support provided to the early stages age group.
- There is a relationship between us and South Yorkshire as a result of the Golden Valley Project and their work on the social value partnership, they have a good relationship with HBD and HBD do a lot of similar work in

Sheffield (where they are based) and we are keen to build on that with the NCLB team.

- Springbank Community Group are included in lots of conversations.
- The youth café was awarded funding from the OPCC to launch the pilot, other funding opportunities are being considered and they are trying to evidence its needs. Existing networks will be used to secure funding.
- NCLB team will reach out to the Friends of Montpellier Skate Park as there might be something that can be done to work together with them.

The Chair thanked the Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships and the Cabinet Member for their update.

8 Local Government Reorganisation - Joint Scrutiny Proposals

A presentation was made by the Stroud District Council Monitoring Officer with regards to the proposed Overview and Scrutiny arrangements for Local Government reorganisation and the different options that could be used. The options that are being considered are as follows: formal joint scrutiny committee, scrutiny committee or sub-committee “hosted” by one Council, separate scrutiny by each Council or a scrutiny panel.

Option 1 – Formal Joint Scrutiny Committee would involve establishing a new joint scrutiny committee of the 7 councils.

Option 2 - A scrutiny committee hosted by one of the councils. This would mean that one of the Councils establishes a new scrutiny committee or sub-committee, or repurposes an existing one, then co-ops members from the other Councils.

Option 3 – Separate scrutiny by each Council. This would mean that each Council would scrutinise its own contribution to the LGR programme.

Option 4 – Scrutiny panel, this is the recommended option. This would mean that a scrutiny panel would be established under one of the existing scrutiny committees.

It was explained that the next step would be for the Chief Executives to consult with Leaders and test whether option 4 would be supported. There would then be engagement with each councils’ scrutiny committee to ensure ownership/agreement.

In response to a Member question it was confirmed that Overview and Scrutiny will still exist in all Councils, when there is a Shadow Council the committee will run alongside. If the new shadow scrutiny panel is not set up then there will be 7 different processes. The shadow authority will have to have a scrutiny for scrutiny of the transition process. There is going to be proportionality the largest group having the most places on the panel.

9 Culture Board

This was published as a briefing paper for information. Members were encouraged to contact the relevant officer with any questions.

10 Feedback from other scrutiny meetings attended

The information provided in the agenda was noted for information. The Chair encouraged Members to contact the relevant Members on the scrutiny committees they attend with any questions.

11 Updates from scrutiny task groups

There are none at this time.

12 Review of scrutiny workplan

There were no comments on the plan.

13 Any other item that the Chair determines to be urgent

14 Date of next meeting