

# Cheltenham Borough Council

## Cabinet

## Minutes

**Meeting date:** 14 April 2026

**Meeting time:** 6.00 pm - 6.50 pm

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**In attendance:**

**Councillors:**

Paul Baker, Mike Collins, Rowena Hay, Peter Jeffries, Alisha Lewis and Izaak Tailford

**Also in attendance:**

Claire Hughes (Director of Governance, Housing and Communities), Adele Taylor (Interim S151 Officer) and Richard Gibson (Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships)

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### **1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Atherstone, Clucas and Pineger.

### **2 Declarations of interest**

There were none.

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

The minutes of the meetings held on 24 February and 17 March were approved as true records and signed accordingly.

### **4 Public and Member Questions and Petitions**

Five public questions had been received, with written responses published on the website:

## **1. Question from Jamal Rahman to Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Wellbeing and Public Realm, Councillor Izaak Tailford**

The Pittville Pump Room is one of the most, if not the most important and recognisable building within Cheltenham and it is essential to the culture of Cheltenham Spa. With that being said, it is closed regularly due to constant repairs with no large restoration programme in sight. Will the Council and the Councillors for Pittville recognise the cultural and economically benefits of the full restoration of the Pittville Pump Room, and can we see it fully restored in the near future?

### **Cabinet Member response**

Thank you for the question. The council recognises the importance of the Pittville Pump Rooms and the wider historical property portfolio. A property of this unique prestige, age, and size commands a good maintenance regime as well as investment to ensure it is well maintained and accessible to residents and visitors alike. The council's team of professional experienced building surveyors lead on ensuring this has happened and assist in planning ahead to ensure the building is preserved for future generations through reactive, planned maintenance and capital programmes of work.

We are very fortunate that within the team of building surveyors one of our surveyors holds an IHBC (Institute of Historic Building Conservation) qualification, a widely acknowledged and difficult to attain qualification that gives us an excellent insight into building conservation techniques and best practices, providing a robust foundation to decision making processes in relation to our historic stock.

The council is currently investing £250,000 in a widely reported floor strengthening programme which is due to complete before the end of Spring. Decision on Cheltenham's Pittville Pump Room upgrade - Gloucestershire Live. This will allow the use of a Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP) instead of scaffolding, to inspect the high-level ornate plasterwork and undertake works needed to preserve intricate features as well as enhancing visitor experience with the installation of a new ballroom floor to replace the previous floor which was worn and approaching end of life. In agreement with the building operator, The Cheltenham Trust, the building has been closed since January 2026 as this is one of their quieter times and we were keen to minimise business interruption for weddings, functions and other events.

In recent years, the council has invested thousands of pounds of both planned and reactive budgets into maintaining the various roof structures which sit above this unique asset. This includes flat roof replacement works, works to the dome and replacement slates to the pitched roofs. Furthermore, we have undertaken external stonework repairs, procuring craftspeople who have worked alongside National Trust and the Historic Palaces, in recognition of the importance of this work.

In 2018, the council invested £40,000 into an external fabric redecoration programme, this included timber repairs to the external windows, doors and joinery, repair and redecoration of rainwater goods and metal railings around the site. In collaboration with colleagues within the CBC Conservation Team and through desktop and physical research we were able to change the shade of paintwork colour to one more in keeping with what would have been the original colour.

The property team commissioned building condition surveys during 2020 and 2022 and these form the backbone of wider restoration programmes. The condition surveys are due to be renewed in 2026/27 and provide us with up-to-date information needed to build our planned maintenance programmes and prioritise our spend. Our experienced team of building surveyors undertake regular asset condition surveys which are risk based and carried out quarterly for our historic stock. This helps to build our knowledge and understanding as well as forming a 'sense check' on the information we already hold set out in the higher-level condition surveys. Our compliance tasks and regular servicing regimes also help to form our decision-making process, and a number of workstreams and projects arise because of remedial actions needed to ensure compliance.

Although the majority of works are planned, as a result of these regular reviews, occasionally buildings require some unforeseen maintenance works that have not been planned for, especially in relation to our historic stock. In 2024 there was a short period of closure to allow for plasterwork repairs to be undertaken following a high-level plasterwork survey at the Pump Rooms. Despite surveys taking place every two years, on this occasion there were areas of plasterwork deemed too unsafe to reopen the building until these remedial works were complete. For our planned maintenance tasks and day to day repairs, we work closely with The Cheltenham Trust, to ensure these works do not impact on opening times, requiring contractors to undertake works out of hours. We rely on the operator to ensure the building is open as regularly as possible, in line with a shared vision to enhance the visitor experience in the wonderful buildings which make our town a such a special place. The recent, well-received, Pop-Up Café was a great way to achieve this and have the Pump Room open and accessible to the public.

Thank you for bearing with me with this detailed answer, but I hope it highlights the large range of restoration and maintenance works that have already happened or are

ongoing. The Pittville Pump Room is a fabulous asset for our town and for our region, and we will continue to protect it for future generations.

## **2. Question from Jamal Rahman to Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services, Councillor Flo Clucas**

Homelessness has increased in Cheltenham in the past few years, with most people being attracted to both the Town Centre and also public parks like Pittville Park. We've seen an increase of anti-social behaviour, harassment, public drinking etc within Pittville Park which shouldn't be promoted in an area that is so culturally important to Cheltenham and such a great place for people to gather. What are the Council doing to get the homeless the support they need, whilst protecting our beloved places?

### **Cabinet Member response**

Thank you, Jamal Rahman, for your question.

I fully recognise the concerns you raise, and the impact that rough sleeping can have on public spaces. Cheltenham's parks and town centre are important community assets, and it is vital they remain safe, welcoming and accessible to all.

Homelessness, and rough sleeping in particular, are complex issues, often linked to a combination of factors, including mental ill-health, substance misuse and previous offending, with the root causes often going back to adverse childhood experiences.

Unfortunately, rough sleeping is a national challenge, with the estimated numbers of rough sleepers increasing again to a new peak for the UK in 2025.

Cheltenham is not immune to these challenges. Therefore, locally, we utilise a range of initiatives to reduce rough sleeping. These include access to:

- A county-wide commissioned 'Somewhere Safe to Stay hub' situated within Cheltenham for people who are rough sleeping. This is a direct-access, 'first-step' service providing short-term accommodation and support.
- A range of supported housing, from the County Council's commissioned Accommodation Based Support services for individuals with high support needs, through to lower-supported housing for individuals with fewer support needs.
- A dedicated number of self-contained 'Housing First' type homes within the Council's own housing stock, specifically for rough sleepers with multiple needs, and with support provided by the Council's housing management service, as well as Enhanced Housing Support Services, provided by P3 on our behalf.

In addition, we commission Julian House to provide Assertive Outreach Services in Cheltenham to work with rough sleepers and to encourage them to engage with relevant support and accommodation services.

We also jointly commission a multi-disciplinary team that works across the county to support individuals who are rough sleeping, or who are at high risk of rough sleeping, or who otherwise have complex mental ill-health, substance misuse and/or social care needs, and who struggle to engage with mainstream services. This team works

alongside housing, support services and the wider health and social care services, seeking to prevent crises from arising and rough sleeping from occurring.

Just one rough sleeper in our town is one too many, and I encourage anyone who is concerned about a rough sleeper to report their concerns by visiting the following website: [StreetLink](#). The Streetlink service will then send these details through to Julian House to investigate and to begin engaging with that rough sleeper if they are not already known.

Despite our best efforts to support rough sleepers from the streets, sometimes it is necessary to use enforcement powers. The Council therefore works across different teams to ensure that a coordinated approach is taken to tackling rough sleeping, calling upon enforcement action where there is clear evidence of anti-social behaviour, environmental harm or criminal activity, and working alongside our police services where necessary.

Rough sleeping continues to remain a challenging issue for the Council, but we remain committed to working with our partners to tackle this challenge by supporting vulnerable individuals, whilst also seeking to protect the spaces that are rightly valued by our communities.

### **3. Question from Emma Nelson to the Leader, Councillor Rowena Hay**

Enclosed with our recent council tax bill is a CBC information sheet including reference to the Resident Survey stating 82% of local people are satisfied with Cheltenham as a place to live. This survey was carried out by Enventure Research 2025 and a final 76-page report was published in October. The report refers to a sample of 426 on-line and 1,100 respondents.

What proportion of the total number of residents that *could* have responded does the number of actual respondents (including on line) represent and what was the cost to CBC of commissioning Enventure Research to complete the work and report?

#### **Cabinet Member response**

Thank you for your question, Emma.

Responses to the Resident Survey were gathered through a representative survey and an online open access survey.

The representative survey was conducted to provide a sample that was broadly representative of Cheltenham. The nature of this element of the resident survey meant that no more than 1,100 residents could take part.

Whilst this number sounds small, the use of representative surveys is established practice. The purpose of a representative survey is to use a small, carefully chosen sample of people to accurately represent the characteristics of a larger population. This means the results collected from the sample (in this case 1,100 residents) will

accurately reflect the results that would be achieved by interviewing the entire population.

Quotas for the representative survey were set on age, gender and area of Cheltenham, based on mid-year population estimates in 2022. The sample size of 1,100 respondents provided an accuracy of +/-2.9% at the 95% confidence interval. This means with a result of 50%, we can be 95% sure that if we interviewed all residents then the result would be between 47.1% and 52.9%.

The representative survey was conducted primarily using telephone interviews, but face-to-face interviews were also undertaken at various locations across Cheltenham town centre to ensure hard to reach residents were included, such as younger residents

.In order to achieve the required sample size of 1,100, Enventure Research will have contacted or tried to contact many more than 1,100 residents to find enough people willing to take part, who were of the right age, gender and geographic area to meet the parameters set by the quotas.

The online survey was an open access survey which everyone aged 16 and above who lived in the borough at the time could complete. It was promoted on the council's website and social media channels. This survey received 426 responses, which was an increase on the 246 responses received when the survey was run in 2022.

Information on the methodology can be found in the Resident Survey report, which is available on the council's website on the consultations page.

The cost to the council of commissioning Enventure Research to complete the work and the report was £23,750.

#### **4. Question from Gill Hewlett to Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing, Culture and Public Realm, Councillor Izaak Tailford**

Many thanks for your reply to my question at the last meeting regarding graffiti in the town - it was really helpful and I am only sorry that I was unable to be at the meeting to follow it up. I particularly note the role played by Ubico, and your suggestion that I report graffiti so it can be logged and action requested; this is certainly something I will now do.

I would like to ask:

a) is graffiti ever removed without it reported by a member of the public? Do employees of Ubisco ever report graffiti? And,

b) how many incidences of graffiti have been logged in the last 6 months, and what were the timescales for removal of each? In fact, have all those logged been removed?

#### **Cabinet Member response**

Thank you for your follow-up question and for helping with reporting graffiti where you see it. It goes a long way into securing action, much like reporting potholes to the County Council Highways.

In answer to Part A, absolutely graffiti can be removed without a member of the public reporting it. Council officers, councillors and employees of Ubico can all report graffiti internally to get it on the system. Once on the system, it will be booked for removal by Ubico if on a public building, or if on privately owned buildings then alternative action will be taken such as issuing formal notices.

In answer to Part B, currently the officers who can access and present the detail are on annual leave, so I'd be happy to ask for this on their return and as workloads allow, to share at a later date.

## **5. Question from Gill Hewlett to Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control, Councillor Mike Collins**

This week our MP, Max Wilkinson, was proud to have the government announce that the law would change to make all new builds more energy efficient by having solar panels as standard. Cheltenham is a town with many historic houses that are completely energy inefficient, particularly as windows and doors cannot be replaced cost effectively with modern solutions. I want to know what plans the council have to change the prohibitive planning restrictions to enable owners of regency properties to make energy efficient improvements to their properties and to thereby be instep with our MP?

### **Cabinet Member response**

Thank you for your question.

The planning rules are not prohibitive in respect of energy improvement works to historic buildings; that is a mischaracterisation. Work to a listed or historic building must protect the historic significance and character of that building but this does not mean that renewable energy infrastructure nor carbon efficiency works are prohibited, rather that a different approach must be taken.

Conservation Officers at the borough council work to HEAN 18 - Historic England Advice Note 18 (Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency). HEAN 18 is a positive and proactive document which sets out how certain energy and carbon efficiencies can be achieved without (or by minimising) harm to historic and/or listed buildings.

Proposals to undertake works to listed buildings must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. In respect of the examples that you have given (solar panels and replacement windows), HEAN18 (and therefore Cheltenham Borough Council) is generally permissive of the installation of secondary glazing in historic buildings as an alternative to the installation of double glazing – this often outperforms double-

glazing in respect of thermal performance in any case. Furthermore, the replacement of modern windows or those which do not contribute to the architectural or historic interest of a building, with appropriate double glazing is generally supported.

In respect of solar panels, we recognise that these can be acceptable in some cases on historic and/or listed buildings depending on the nature of the building and the positioning of the panels. Again, we follow the approach advocated by HEAN 18 which is generally supportive of solar panels if these are hidden from view by virtue of a shallow pitch roof for example, an intervening parapet wall or within a valley; there are many historic buildings in the borough with these characteristics. Even panels which *are* visible can be supported in many cases (typically Grade II listed buildings) if positioned on a roof slope of less-prominence or significance.

Our Planning team provide a comprehensive listed building pre-application service for anyone interested in improving the energy efficiency of their listed or historic building.

None of the questioners were present to ask supplementary questions.

## **5 Damp and Mould Policy**

The Leader read out an introduction on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services, stating that the policy sets out actions to be taken in relation to damp and mould and what tenants need to know and how they can get help. She said we want to make sure that all our tenants are safe and warm in their homes, and know how to minimise the potential for damp in their homes too, with systems in place to deal with any issues and accessible to tenants without fear or concern.

A Member commented that although this policy is driven by legislation, we know that damp and mould is a significant problem, and with responsibility for 4-5k homes in the town, we need to set the bar high when looking after our tenants, setting a good and clear example for private landlords in Cheltenham and elsewhere. The policy educates all our tenants to help them understand how to tackle the problem and exercise their rights, and is an impressive piece of work.

### **RESOLVED THAT:**

- 1. the Damp and Mould Policy is approved**

## **6 Housing Health and Safety Rating System Policy**

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services, the Leader presented her introduction, which began by stating that the Liberal Democrat council believes all council tenants should live in homes that are safe, warm, dry and well-maintained – that is the objective of this policy. She said that Awaab's Law, which followed the death of a young boy in home with black mould and damp not treated by the landlord, highlights the need for the HHSRS policy, and will allow tenants to know and understand what is covered by the safety rating system. All hazards will be clearly identified, together with advice on what tenants should do if things go wrong. We want tenants to feel they can raise issues, that these will be addressed, and the process that will be followed to address them.

She ended by saying that the policy had been approved by Cabinet Housing Committee, and is supported by tenants.

A Member welcomed the policy, which provides fundamental clarity and information for all tenants around critical safety issues, commenting that the input of Cabinet Housing Committee, which includes tenant representatives, should be highlighted – they have been involved in steering this policy and are very supportive.

Another Member asked whether the council is doing any comms on this and the other new housing-related policy, to send out a strong message to tenants and to raise the bar for private landlords who will be able to see what the council is doing. The Leader said she would follow up on this.

### **RESOLVED THAT:**

- 1. the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) Policy is approved**

## **7 No Child Left Behind Annual Report**

The Leader read an introduction prepared by the Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities, who was unable to be present. She began by thanking the NCLB officers, partner network, and NCLB strategic board and sub-groups who continue to push forward our collective efforts with fantastic results, positively impacting the lives of children, young people and their families year on year.

She also thanked CBC's Golden Valley partner HBD who kindly facilitated an outstanding and inspiring knowledge-sharing session with Sheffield City Council last month, but said it is sad to note that although the challenge areas have shifted slightly, our support initiatives are needed just as much as they were when NCLB was launched in 2018. Last year's Year of Youth Voice Action activities and partnership working culminated in rich intelligence helping us to address the challenges that are most important to young people, leading to the first ever

Changemaker Awards to celebrate the achievements of our young people, the opening of the very successful Youth Café at Smokey Joes in Cheltenham town centre, and the launch of a new Youth Activity Pass, which will be accessible to young people later this year, thanks to our partners Gloucestershire College and Cynam who have brought this web app development forward.

She said last summer's Party in the Park and the recent NCLB Awards Ceremony are excellent examples of outstanding community impact - thanks to our partners who make these events so special and thoroughly enjoyable.

Finally, she said the next challenge is to help address the growing issues of school attendance, engagement and mental health, working with schools, the county council and specialist community partners to provide additional support for children and their families through community-based solutions; with Members' approval today, we will collectively launch our Year of Education for All in September 2026.

Members welcomed the report and the important work done by NCLB to close the gaps for young people living in poverty in our town. They thanked officers across the whole council, past and present, for supporting this initiative and providing services beyond statutory requirements. They made the following comments:

- NCLB was launched in 2016, when the council started to go above and beyond to support children, young people and families who were falling behind as a result of failing services. Ten years on, there are still great gaps in education attainment, health and social welfare and more which the government should be addressing but doesn't appear to be. The council will continue to do all it can to support them but the government should start making inroads into the terrible statistics;
- it is impressive to see how The LibDem authority works closely with its outside partners to make things happen for the people of Cheltenham. The work of NCLB is clearly needed, and its great initiatives and partner working go a long way to filling the gaps;
- one of the strengths of CBC is its partnership working, not just looking to ourselves to get things done but to the wider partnership and community network. This is at the heart of NCLB's huge success.

#### **RESOLVED THAT:**

- 1. the progress that has been made by No Child Left Behind in the past year is noted**
- 2. a Year of Action on Education for All will be undertaken, to run from September 2026 to September 2027 and that the proposed purpose, themes and activities will be consulted on.**
- 3. authority is delegated to the Head of Communities, wellbeing & partnerships, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Safety and**

## **Communities, to develop a detailed plan for the Year of Action on Education for All**

### **8 To adopt the Nature Recovery Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control began by thanking the officer team who have produced this excellent piece of work, which contains a whole host of useful and relevant information. It provides clear guidance to ensure development in the borough protects and enhances biodiversity, in line with the Environment Act 2021, and is a material consideration for all proposals affecting biodiversity, trees, or green infrastructure, in support of the council's Key Priority 3. It establishes that early ecological assessment and nature-led design are essential and biodiversity net gain should be delivered on-site wherever feasible, with off-site provision only where clearly justified. It identifies long-term habitat management as critical to securing durable ecological outcomes, and concludes that integrating green and blue infrastructure offers a practical and achievable way for all scales of development to contribute to nature recovery. Finally, the SPD highlights that strengthened monitoring, reporting and enforcement are necessary to ensure that commitments made through the planning process are delivered in practice.

Members made the following comments:

- encouraging biodiversity net gain on site is very reassuring, as trees and planting in places where people live is one of things that makes Cheltenham such a good place to reside, as well as helping with well-balanced nature recovery;
- the recently-approved tree strategy has identified areas of Cheltenham without many trees and proposed an action plan to remedy this;
- although the SPD is only guidance, it will, like the Climate Change SPD, raise awareness amongst developers and applicants, giving them ideas about what to include in their applications to make them more climate and nature friendly and diverse. It is a good way to raise the bar and encourage people to do more than the minimum they have to do. Congratulations to all those involved on a really comprehensive piece of work.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control welcomed these positive and supportive comments, and agreed that the SPD will reinforce that developers, like the council, have a role to play in enhancing biodiversity.

#### **RESOLVED THAT:**

- 1. the Nature Recovery Supplementary Planning Document (Appendix 4) is approved for adoption;**
- 2. authority is delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control, to make any necessary minor amendments or corrections to the document prior to adoption.**

## **9 Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy**

In her introduction, read out by the Leader, the Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services, welcomed the long-awaited Renters' Rights Act, after many years of campaigning, which creates a mechanism whereby private sector tenants will have the right to complain to the local authority if their landlord does not act properly and responsibly and expect action to sort out problems. The policy sets out how enforcement policies are aligned to the new legal framework, and how this will build new opportunities to change how things are done, meeting our statutory obligations as a council from 01 May, when the new duties come into force.

A Member welcomed the report and change in legislation, which will make a real difference to people living in below-standard private sector rented housing, with landlords who do not follow due process, who currently do not know where to go to report their concerns. It will help make sure all tenants have everything they need to be safe and secure.

### **RESOLVED THAT:**

- 1. the new Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy at Appendix iii is approved, to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026 with transitional arrangements of 6 months to allow the current corporate policy to operate to conclude legacy cases.**
- 2. the Head of Public Protection is authorised to take such actions and decisions as are necessary to facilitate the effective implementation and operation of the Authority's powers referred to in this report.**
- 3. the Head of Public Protection is authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services, to approve minor variations to the policy in line with any revised statutory guidance.**

## **10 Briefing from Cabinet Members**

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing, Culture and Public Realm shared the following:

- he was delighted that the lease for Cheltenham's iconic Lido has been renewed for almost 100 years, and where other lidos are being closed or needing heavy investment to continue, ours is now protected for many generations to come. He thanked Julie and the fantastic team for all the work they do;
- he and Councillor Atherstone recently undertook an after-dark walk around the town centre with members of the Accessibility Forum, to experience for themselves the risks and hazards involved. The insight helps inform decisions by licensing, the safety team and town centre planning on what can be done to help residents and visitors, as well as work with BID and the county council to

make things as safe and manageable as possible. A town centre approach survey will be carried out soon after the election;

- the current Paula Rego exhibition at The Wilson is highly recommended – interesting art by an internationally renowned artist – and continues until 10 May;
- as this is the last Cabinet meeting before the election, thanks to all the fantastic offices, people and partner organisations – from Cheltenham Trust and Festivals to the volunteers in our parks and gardens – who help to make Cheltenham such an amazing place to live.

The Cabinet Member for Major Development and Housing Delivery said she recently had the privilege of visiting the Cherrington's site in Leckhampton, where beautiful bungalows and family homes are being built in a sought-after area. She said the focus is very much on investing in and creating homes which people will love and cherish for years to come, not only beautiful to look at but exceeding expectation and providing adaptable accommodation, including downstairs wet-rooms and wide, wheelchair-friendly doorframes, to support people through all phases of their lives. She thanked CBC's partners and the major development team, who are doing a great job in building houses across Cheltenham both big and small.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control said that with elections in a few weeks' time, it was good to take a moment to think about all the Liberal Democrats have achieved in the last few years – policies and reports, both updates and brand new – which will collectively leave Cheltenham an even better place than it was when they started.

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling, Parks, Gardens and Green Open Space was happy to share several items which demonstrate what the council is doing to positively improve the ambience of the town:

- he is part of the panel for a public art project on the Honeybourne Line, with a £60k grant available for the winning applicant. Over 50 artists have applied, now shortlisted to ten; the standard is very high and the final decision will be extremely difficult, but we can definitely look forward to some really exciting public art on the Honeybourne Line very soon, following some good and informative public consultation;
- he has today attended a seminar about how to deal with and get rid of weeds using an electric weeding machine. These are much used on the continent, especially in Belgium and Holland, and he hopes to arrange a demonstration with Ubico to see if it is something CBC can use in the future to control weed growth on pavements and in gulleys, although there are likely to be pros and cons;
- congratulations to Georgie Bearder, a recent recruit to the greenspace team, who has just successfully passed all her exams with and is a fantastic asset to the team and to CBC;
- CBC has just completed our final community orchard in Naunton Park – it is great to be doing this, and good for biodiversity;
- work is also underway on improving the course of the Park Run in Pittville Park – this incredible event is attended by 600-700 runners and raises money for

- charities, but inevitably has resulted in wear and tear on the paths and the course – now being repaired, including the introduction of matting;
- on the street-cleaning side, we continue our rolling programme, asking people not to park on certain streets at certain times. This is proving very effective and many roads, including Evesham Road, York Street, St Luke's Road, Portland Square and College Road are benefitting, making a real difference to the cleanliness of the town by tackling these difficult-to-clean areas;
  - a programme to update all litter bins is being introduced, particularly in parks and the town centre, with bigger, more attractive bins, which are less attractive to seagulls.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets had a number of items to report:

- thanks to officers, particularly the property team which has taken on so much work recently, with a new principal building surveyor appointed, the compliance work all on track, and the 2026-27 planned works programme now in full swing. This includes the floor-strengthening works at the Pittville Pump Room, which are well underway;
- as well as building new homes itself, he said that CBC also enables new homes to be built by its partners, with planning works and the disposal programme at the former Arle Nursery site in Old Gloucester Road completed last month, and Bromford Housing soon to start work on 171 vital new homes for the borough;
- CBC also owns some commercial units at Enterprise Way, all of which are now let, following successful lease negotiations and renewals;
- moving to finance, he said it is good to note that the 2024-25 accounts have now been signed off and will go to Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee soon in the final stage of the system. He noted a lot of questions and some concerns about the accounts at the budget council meeting, but said it is difficult to convey the amount of legislation and work that the council has to undertake, quite rightly, when guarding public. The legislation is extremely complex, and he would be adrift without the help and guidance of the property team and S151 officer;
- conversations are already underway for next year's accounts, turbo-charged in order to get ahead. This can be difficult, because there is a huge amount of information and we are dealing with public money, but we are making sure everything is transparent throughout;
- finally, regarding transparency, the finance team is having close conversations with the governance team, as the council receives a lot of information requests around finance. We are always looking for ways to ensure the process is smoother and more transparent, as this is crucial when managing public finances.

The Leader thanked everyone for their briefings. She gave special thanks to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control for his contribution to Cabinet over the last few years and wished him well as Deputy Mayor for the next municipal year. She put on public record that Councillor Baker will move to that portfolio in the new Cabinet – he has many years of experience in planning and is ideally suited to

the role with big decisions coming up around the Strategic and Local Plan later this year.

Finally, as this is the last meeting of Cabinet before the elections, she gave huge thanks to all Members for their support and help over the last two years.

### **11 Cabinet Member Decisions since the last meeting**

There was one decision to share on this occasion:

**18 March:** Decision of Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities

To approve the revised proposals for the allocation of Household Support Fund 2025