

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet

Minutes

Meeting date: 14 July 2026

Meeting time: 6.00 pm - 7.15 pm

In attendance:

Councillors:

Paul Baker, Flo Clucas, Steve Harvey, Rowena Hay, Jamie Jamieson, Peter Jeffries, Alisha Lewis, Richard Pineger and Izaac Tailford

Also in attendance:

Gareth Edmundson (Chief Executive), Tracey Birkinshaw (Director of Planning and Building Control) and Adele Taylor (Interim Director of Finance and Operations (S151 Officer))

1 Apologies

There were none.

2 Declarations of interest

There were none.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 May were approved as a true record and signed accordingly.

4 Public and Member Questions and Petitions

One public question had been received and published, with the following response:

Question from Peter Frings to the Leader, Councillor Rowena Hay

Can the council confirm whether or not Leaded Aviation Fuel is used at GAL. If it is

used, does the council accept that the Airport has a legal responsibility to monitor and disclose the volumes used at the airport under Health and Safety legislation?

Leaded Aviation Fuel contains TetraEthyl Lead which is classified as a highly hazardous chemical under The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/2677/contents>). This means that any site which handles Leaded Aviation Fuel has a legal responsibility to carry out a full risk assessment and have in place plans and training to ensure that it is handled safely. Health and Safety risks are a Board level responsibility, and the council has a non-exec director on the Board, so would be aware of how Health and Safety risk is managed and mitigated at the airport.

Therefore the Board of GAL and hence the council must know whether or not Leaded Aviation Fuel is in use at GAL – or it is in breach of its legal responsibilities under health and safety legislation. If Leaded Aviation Fuel is being used at GAL, then any plan which did not monitor how much Leaded Aviation Fuel was being used each year, would be classed as wholly inadequate under the legislation and guidance from the HSE.

Member response

Thank you for your question.

Just to be clear the council is a shareholder in Gloucestershire Airport Limited; the responsibility for day-to-day operations sits with the Gloucestershire Airport Board.

To be helpful, I have inquired with the interim Managing Director at the airport and am advised that in 2025 the airport sold 383,559 litres of AVGAS 100LL, which is a low-leaded aviation fuel used for piston aircraft. The other fuel used is Jet A1; turbine aircraft such as jets use this fuel which is a refined kerosene product with no have any lead additives.

I am further advised that the management of fuel is highly regulated with regards to its handling and use, for both quality and safety standards, that all personnel on site are highly trained to handle and deliver fuel, and that their procedures including Risk

Assessments are subject to regular audits from the fuel suppliers and regulatory authorities, the Civil Aviation Authority.

There was no supplementary question.

5 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Outturn Report 2025-26

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets introduced the report, which will be presented to Council on 20 July. It summarises the financial position 2025-26, showing a £16,000 underspend on the general fund and a £141,000 HRA surplus against the budget approved in February. He said this leaves CBC £1.5m below the

general balances but we have plans to strengthen that throughout the year, against the backdrop of huge financial pressures, locally, nationally and internationally. Despite this, the report demonstrates strong financial management and the discipline of budget control.

He said the report also shows that we have added £1.3m to our earmarked reserves, and have re-profiled our capital programme to match actual project delivery - prudent financial management in real time. The underspend and the approved carry-forward requests totalling £379k were commitments made in 2025-26 which have not yet been billed for or moved forward to 2026-27 [see Appendix 8]. He asked Members to be aware of these in their own portfolios.

There were no questions and no debate.

RESOLVED THAT: Cabinet has noted and recommends that Council:

- 1. notes the General Fund revenue outturn position for 2025/26 after the application of carry forward requests and following the use of earmarked reserves, of an underspend of £16,159 against the 2025/26 revised budget approved by Council on 27 February 2026;**
- 2. notes the General Fund carry forward requests detailed in Appendix 5;**
- 3. notes the reserve movements detailed in Appendix 6;**
- 4. notes the Treasury Management Outturn report in Appendix 7;**
- 5. notes the capital outturn position and financing arrangement in Appendix 8;**
- 6. notes the Council Tax and Business Rates collection performance in Appendix 9;**
- 7. notes the Housing Revenue Account outturn position in Appendix 10;**
- 8. notes the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme detailed in Appendix 11;**
- 9. notes the Section 106 monitoring information in Appendix 12.**

RESOLVED THAT: Cabinet has agreed and recommends that Council:

- 10. approves the carry forward from 2025/26 into 2026/27 of Capital budgets as detailed in Appendix 8**

6 Advice and Inclusion contract

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Service said this contract is for all our residents with housing needs and concerns to be addressed. It will start next year, running for two years initially and potentially two more, providing people with information, help and referrals to the right organisations, as well as helping those who become homeless. Available to anyone in council-owned, social or private housing and also to homeowners, it will provide advice, assistance, and the direct opportunity to change lives – which is what the council is about.

In response to a Member's question about how many people are being helped by the service, she said that the service is discretionary but confirmed that between March 2025 and 2026, 900 cases were considered, the majority of which resulted in a couple or a family having a better life

Members endorsed and supported the report and contract, making the following comments:

- for the many people who are homeless or don't know where to turn to, the importance of early intervention cannot be overstated. It is fantastic that the council can help people in this way, and something of which it can be rightly proud;
- this service is often unseen but is critical for people in desperate and dire need;
- in addition, on a purely cost basis, if people aren't helped in a timely manner, the cost to the council budget may well end up even higher, in addition to the high cost of their suffering.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services thanked Members for their comments and support, and was pleased that CBC can offer something that many councils cannot. She said this contract is a tribute to officers, and thanked them for all the work they do to make it happen.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. the Advice and Inclusion Contract is re-procured for a term of five years from April 1st 2027, with the option of extending the term for a further two years, subject to satisfactory performance and available finance;**
- 2. the Head of Strategic Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services, is authorised to award the contract to the successful tenderer, following evaluation of the bids;**
- 3. the Head of Strategic Housing (or equivalent), in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member, is authorised to extend the contract for a**

further 2 years, following the end of the first 5 years of the service contract, subject to satisfactory performance and available finance.

7 Review of Local Development Scheme and amendment to Statement of Community Involvement

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control introduced his report as follows:

- the review of the Local Development Scheme outlines a timetable for preparing the Strategic and Local Plan, approved in November 2025 and now being updated. Significant progress has been made with Tewkesbury and Gloucester, but there are real challenges in meeting the timetable, including the recruitment and retention of planners and challenges with the necessary evidence needed to support the plan. A small time extension is proposed, continuing with the intention to submit by the end of the year;
- there have been significant changes to planning legislation since the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted in November 2025, with Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) no longer being adopted, replaced by supplementary plans which require more demanding formal consultation. The council has a proud record of delivering SPDs (including climate change and nature recovery), and these have always been well received and made a real impact. The updated SCI removes references to SPDs, reiterates and realigns our commitment to our partners, and sets out how to involve the community at every stage. It also establishes the role of councillors with reference to local and neighbourhood plans, applications and enforcements.

The Leader thanked the Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control for bringing this important document.

RESOLVED THAT:

Local Development Scheme

- 1. the updated Local Development Scheme (Appendix 3) is adopted;**
- 2. authority is delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Planning and Building Control to prepare the Local Development Scheme for publication correcting any minor errors such as spelling, grammar, typographical and formatting changes that do not affect its substantive content;**
- 3. any further changes to the Local Development Scheme in respect of the timetabling of the Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury Strategic and Local Plan arising from the timing of the completion of evidence**

studies and/or arising from the direct engagement with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by the Leaders of Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury are delegated to the Director of Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control.

Statement of Community Involvement

- 1. the amendments to the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (Appendix 4) are approved;**
- 2. authority is delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Planning and Building Control to amend the adopted Statement of Community of Involvement for publication correcting any minor errors such as spelling, grammar, typographical and formatting changes that do not affect its substantive content.**

8 Corporate Plan Year One Review

Introducing the report, the Leader read the executive summary, and highlighted the key points of the update, which give Cabinet the opportunity to recognise the progress made against the five priorities. These include Golden Valley, Marketing Cheltenham, housing improvement and the tree strategy, as set out in Appendix 3 of the report. She said the overall performance picture is positive, with tenant satisfaction above target, biodiversity net gain now reported on through the planning system, more energy-efficient homes, the Cheltenham Trust attracting many visitors, and collection of council tax and business rates close to target at 98%.

She also drew Members' attention to areas where focus needs to be maintained, including affordable housing delivery and the increase in housing complaints, as well as the future of Gloucestershire Airport.

Overall, however, she said this is a positive first-year review, showing good progress over all five priorities, and providing a clear basis for continued monitoring, early action where needed, and continued focus on delivering the best outcomes for Cheltenham's residents, communities and businesses.

Members welcomed the report, and made the following comments:

- it is a good illustration of all the excellent work that has taken place one year into the plan. The Golden Valley social value policy is something of which CBC should be particularly proud;
- regarding housing, tenants who attend Housing Cabinet Committee have commented on how pleased they are with the work being done, and welcome being at the heart and having their voices heard;

- although a slight increase in complaints has been recorded, these are comparatively few in number, and usually sorted quickly and well, thanks to excellent work from officers in the housing and communities teams;
- a lot of good work has been done since March on aligning the actions in the Climate Action Plan (which has eight categories with an average of 12 actions in each) with those in the Corporate Plan, which previously only included a very small number of carbon-reducing actions;
- it is excellent that, after many years as a high risk item, the many strands of work on Golden Valley are coalescing and it is starting to deliver on its goals. It has taken an enormous amount of work by officers to reach this very positive point.

RESOLVED THAT:

- **the review report and performance report to acknowledge the progress that has been made over the first year of the Corporate Plan 2025 to 2028 are noted.**

9 Cheltenham Town Centre and Vacant Units Action Plan update

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing, Culture and Public Realm said the report is at Cabinet for Members to note the progress made and how CBC supports the town centre. He said that despite the many national and international challenges outside the authority's control, Cheltenham is still punching above its weight, with a vacant unit rate of 7.8%, (half the national average), fewer shop closures than elsewhere, and new and independent businesses opening in the town, recently including Mango and Gail's. .

He made the following points:

- although the impact of empty shops is felt, the report highlights the mitigating work being done to ensure the town continues to thrive;
- hopefully, High Street Rental Auction (HSRA) will soon be available to the authority in a designated area of the town, allowing engagement with landlords when necessary and making a positive difference to the town;
- the Marketing Cheltenham team is working hard, and the Visit Cheltenham website had 2.1m visits last year, has 89k followers on social media, distributed 80k printed leaflets, and sends a fortnightly newsletter to 45,000 addresses. These are incredible numbers, and a great marketing achievement;
- the recent BID survey has now ended, and had a good response. BID will now analyse and prioritise what people want, and a business engagement session is planned for next month to share views;
- the report highlights the wide range of positive actions being taken, including planning policy, cleansing and support for cultural offering.

He concluded that the council and its partners will continue to do all they can to ensure the town continues to thrive in the face of various challenges as they come.

Members thanked the Cabinet Member for a comprehensive presentation, and made the following comments:

- Cheltenham is very fortunate to have the BID, supported by local businesses and retailers. It plays a brilliant role in the town centre, including initiatives on graffiti and other types of cleansing. Its success is in no small part due to the energy and ideas of the Chief Executive Fran Inman, who will be leaving shortly; CBC wishes her well and looks forward to working with her successor;
- it is easy for people to run down the town centre, but we are making improvements slowly, and must credit the great team effort from street cleansing and litter pickers who do a fantastic job, day in day out;
- Cheltenham's comparatively low vacant unit rate is a Herculean achievement, due to the commitment, hard work, and imagination of many individuals and organisations, and the effective relationship between CBC and BID;
- in addition, Cheltenham welcomes many thousands of visitors to its festivals across the year, which have a big impact on the town's success.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing, Culture and Public Realm thanked Members for their comments. He added his thanks to Fran Inman at the BID, and to other organisations and businesses, such as the Chamber of Commerce, the many and varied festivals, and the Everyman Theatre. He said a thriving town centre has a positive effect on all residents and visitors, and concluded that, compared with other towns, Cheltenham is doing very well.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. the work underway by the council and partners to support the town centre and its businesses is noted;**
- 2. the report updating on progress against delivery of the vacant units action plan to date is noted.**

10 Cultural Grant Awards for 2026-27

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing, Culture and Public Realm introduced his report, saying it is important to be open and transparent ahead of Local Government Reorganisation about what support CBC provides for its cultural partners, adding that, in the face of financial challenges, taking supportive action now may well save problems in the future.

He said that although the grant to the Everyman is being reduced, CBC continues to support it, and is removing restrictions on how the grant money can be spent. It is a

brilliant organisation which CBC is proud to support, and the Grove Street centre will be a fantastic resource for the town and its people.

Other grants are maintained at the same level, and these organisations can rest assured that CBC will continue to support them in the future.

Members welcomed the awards, which are discretionary, in particular the award to the performing arts festival which gives hundreds of children and young people the opportunity to come together as a community and show off their talents. This can make a difference to how their education progresses and help them build for the future.

RESOLVED THAT:

- **the following cultural grant allocations for the financial year 2026-27 are approved:**

Holst Birthplace Trust (HBT)	Maintain grant amount of £7.5k for 2026-27 and investigate options for entering into a contract for these services in the future.
Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts (CFPA)	Maintain grant amount of £20k for 2026-27 but review for future years.
Cheltenham Arts Council (CAC)	Maintain grant amount of £5k for 2026-27 and continue to work with CAC to ensure that the allocation of their grants reflects the over-arching direction of the council
Gloucestershire Everyman Theatre	To reduce the amount of cultural grant awarded to the Everyman Theatre to £90k for 2026-27 and to £60k for 2027-28
Cheltenham Civic Society	Maintain grant amount of £2k for 2026-27

11 Nominations to Outside Bodies

The Leader introduced the report setting outside bodies nominations, to be made by Cabinet only on this occasion as there is no disagreement between group leaders. She confirmed that most Members are staying where they are following the 2024 election, noting that there is a cost to changing trustees' names for some of the charities.

She added that it is important not to underestimate the value councillors can bring to these organisations.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. nominations to the outside bodies as set out in Appendix 3A and Appendix 3B are made, in accordance with the following principles:**
 - **all nominations are made on the basis that the nominee is a representative of Cheltenham Borough Council insofar as that is compatible with any overriding legal duty to the outside body;**
 - **Cabinet / the Leader reserves the right at any time to withdraw/terminate a nomination which it has made;**
- 2. the Cabinet Member responsibilities for the bodies/groups listed in Appendix 3C are noted.**

12 Briefing from Cabinet Members

The Cabinet Member for Major Development and Housing Delivery reported that, together with the Leader, MP and officers, she went to Golden Valley last Friday, to celebrate the start of work on the site. It was exciting to see diggers and construction vehicles in action where there used to be cows (now moved to new fields) and impressive to note how soon we have reached this stage.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing, Culture and Public Realm shared several items of news, reporting that he has:

- recently met with the Culture Board about the reopening of The Wilson and re-launch of the Big Museum project. It will be good to involve as many people as possible, enabling them to enjoy the town's vast collection;
- shared an LGR update at the Friends of The Wilson AGM, and explained how this might affect the cultural sector across the county;
- attended the launch of the 81st Cheltenham Music Festival, a small but vibrant, thriving and diverse festival, which takes the town's festival offer up a level;
- caught up with various cultural organisations to consider what is working well, what isn't, what works best for the town, and how the council can support their work;
- attended a successful Marketing Cheltenham event at the Queens Hotel, networking with business organisations and focusing on working well together.

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling, Parks, Gardens, and Public Open Space was pleased to report that the two Grade II-Listed chapels at Cheltenham Cemetery have been put to new purpose, as a café and venue for wakes. Not only is this a

great use of the building, but it is also creating new jobs – five so far with more to follow.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets thanked the finance team for the huge amount of hard work to get all the finance reports together and submitted to the external auditor.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency had several items to share:

- the council is continuing with its major decarbonisation project, including the heat network, operational building decarbonisation planning and associated funding. It has also started work assessing further solar opportunities, including rooftop projects, and is moving forward with housing decarbonisation;
- there is a growing focus in the team on adaptation and resilience, ensuring that the council not only reduces emissions but is also managing climate risks, including planning for extreme weather and service disruption;
- the recent Cheltenham Education Partnership Climate Changemakers showcase at The Wilson was a real joy, with the six schools who pitched ideas for funding and were awarded £250 each, presenting their projects. He was impressed by the scale of what they produced, and noted that their work had enthused other children in all their schools;
- Cheltenham Zero has had a strong month engaging with visitors at the Science Festival and Everything Electric West's first show at the racecourse;
- progress has been made on the Grange Fields Flood Alleviation Scheme, with the technical work accepted in principle by Severn Trent, allowing the project to move forward to next approval stage;
- CBC is strengthening work with partners on nature-based flood management across Gloucestershire;
- he was pleased to take part in St Gregory's Catholic Church Peoples' Emergency Briefing – one of many taking place across town – which prompted strong engagement and thoughtful discussion. The team is working on bringing a similar event to councillors and officers in due course.

The Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities highlighted two items:

- the Cheltenham Improvement Act of 1852 has been repealed, making the administration of street markets in the town much simpler and less circuitous;
- the upcoming Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) scheme will provide summer holiday activities for children in difficult home circumstances. He said this small-budget item makes a lot of families happy, with 19 activities available, and also ensures the children get good meal every day of the holidays.

Members were also reminded of the upcoming No Child Left Behind 'Party in the Park' on 05 August.

The Leader said she attended the Local Government Association conference in Bournemouth the previous week, where she met a lot of people, shared ideas, and was part of many discussions around the imminent announcement concerning local government reorganisation. She said that, whatever the outcome, CBC's priority will be to stand up for Cheltenham and fight for its future - protecting local services, securing investment, driving growth through Golden Valley, ensuring communities continue to have a strong voice – as well as not allowing Cheltenham interests to be sidelined, and making sure that LGR enhances Cheltenham rather than diminishes it.

She added that Councillor Beale also attended the conference with a specific remit to take part in as many parish and town council discussions as possible, as he is part of that LGR working group and learning what other councils have done will help inform us and protect our local voices.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services congratulated the Leader on becoming Vice-Chair of the LibDems on the Local Council Network. The Leader said she feels very privileged to take up the role.

13 Cabinet Member decisions since the last meeting

Members reported on the following decisions, taken since the last meeting of Cabinet:

02 June 2026

[To enter into a contract for the maintenance of Cheltenham's water features](#)

Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling, Parks, Gardens, and Green Open Space

10 June 2026

[Government consultation Biodiversity Net Gain -considering a targeted exemption for residential brownfield development](#)

Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control

24 June 2026

[Joint response on behalf of Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucester City Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council to the Draft Local Transport Plan](#)

Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control

14 July 2026

[Award of a contract for advertising banners on lamp posts across Cheltenham](#)

14 Local Government Act 1972 - Exempt Business

RESOLVED 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 3, 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)

15 EXEMPT Minutes of last meeting

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 26 May were approved as a true record and signed accordingly.