

Council

Monday, 14th December, 2015

3.00 - 7.40 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Duncan Smith (Chairman), Chris Ryder (Vice-Chair), Matt Babbage, Flo Clucas, Adam Lillywhite, Dan Murch, Chris Nelson, John Payne, Max Wilkinson, Wendy Flynn, Andrew Chard, Garth Barnes, Nigel Britter, Chris Coleman, Bernard Fisher, Jacky Fletcher, Colin Hay, Tim Harman, Rowena Hay, Sandra Holliday, Peter Jeffries, Steve Jordan, Helena McCloskey, Andrew McKinlay, David Prince, John Rawson, Anne Regan, Rob Reid, Louis Savage, Diggory Seacome, Malcolm Stennett, Klara Sudbury, Pat Thornton, Jon Walklett, Simon Wheeler, Roger Whyborn and Suzanne Williams

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Paul Baker and Councillor Chris Mason.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Smith declared an interest in Agenda item 12 as a Director of Cheltenham Borough Homes.

Councillors Fletcher and Jordan declared an interest in Agenda item 17 and Councillor Jordan announced his intention to leave the meeting for that item.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting held on 19 October 2015 were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. COMMUNICATIONS BY THE MAYOR

The Mayor invited all Members to partake of refreshments in the Mayor's Parlour when Council adjourned for tea. He indicated that the Book of Condolence for the tragedy in Paris would be available in the parlour for any Member who still wished to sign it. He also encouraged Members to buy a 2016 Calendar being sold in aid of the Mayor's charities.

5. COMMUNICATIONS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader thanked all the staff and volunteers who had worked hard to collect donations of clothes to be sent to support the Syrian Refugees. He was also pleased to announce that Cheltenham would be welcoming two refugee families this week as a result of the council and Cheltenham Borough Homes working in partnership with the county council and the government.

The Leader updated Members on the progress made in strengthening the Gloucestershire Airport Board by recruiting two additional non-Executive Directors. Their appointment would be confirmed at the AGM on 16 December.

Regarding Devolution, the Leader updated Members on the challenge session with Greg Clark, the Secretary of State, held on 11 November 2015. Governance and Housing had been highlighted as two areas where the Minister would like Gloucestershire to be more challenging and do further work on their bid. Further work was ongoing and Leadership Gloucestershire had considered any revisions to the bid at their meeting earlier that week. It was then proposed that councils provisionally approve the deal in principle in February, public consultation in May/June, final sign off from partners in July with submission to government in September and shadow arrangements starting October 2016. He would issue a Member briefing later in the week.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

7. MEMBER QUESTIONS

1.	Question from Councillor Andrew Chard to Cabinet Member Corporate Services, Councillor Jon Walklett
	<p>Would the Cabinet Member responsible for IT care to comment on the response which I have just received to an email sent to one of his colleagues, the reply to which was (and I quote) "I am currently unable to respond to emails, I have a limited inbox that quickly exceeds my allowance so your email may not be received at all".</p>
	Response from the Cabinet Member
	<p>I would like to thank Councillor Chard for bringing this to our attention.</p> <p>Members who were elected in 2014 did not have a size restriction placed on their mailbox but Councillors who have been Members for a number of years had the standard restrictions on mailboxes. Changes to the size of these restrictions have been made over the years as systems and accounts have been upgraded.</p> <p>The ICT shared service has reviewed and removed any limits that may have restricted the sending of email although there will still be a prompt to say that the mailbox is reaching capacity but this is only a warning - to encourage regular "housekeeping" -and does not prevent the sending or receiving of email.</p> <p>The individual 'out of office' message is controlled by individual users rather than ICT. A note will be issued to Members informing them of the position.</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Chard asked if the Cabinet Member was arranging suitable training for his colleagues on the use of the out of office message.</p>

	<p>The Cabinet Member responded that he had chosen not to make any specific recommendations but if Members felt a list of options would be useful he would be happy to supply this.</p>
2.	Question from Councillor Jacky Fletcher to Leader, Councillor Steve Jordan
	<p>A petition signed by over 6,700 residents and people who regularly use this road opposing the proposed A40 Bus Lane was presented to a recent meeting of the County Council. I understand that at that time the position of Cheltenham's Liberal Democrat Cabinet on the proposal was unclear. Can the Leader confirm today whether or not his Cabinet support it or oppose the proposal?</p>
	Response from the Cabinet Member
	<p>This proposal has been promoted jointly by Gloucestershire County Council and Stagecoach and Cheltenham Borough Council were not formally approached to provide a position. We had already stated our support for Cheltenham Spa station improvements which we were actively promoting with the Task Force and the rail industry.</p> <p>We are however extremely pleased to understand that the ecological issue that appeared to be the cause of major concern has been addressed by the promoters. We have yet to see the business case which will form part of the final decision making process so it would seem premature to make any judgement, until we have had sight of this key document. However we do generally support GCC's aim to provide an improved public transport corridor along the A40.</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Fletcher asked the Leader to 'come off the fence and say yes or no to the dreaded bus lane?'</p> <p>The Leader replied that this was not a CBC responsibility and he would only be prepared to comment once the GCC had come up with a business plan and issued it for consultation. His understanding was that GCC had decided to delay this process until after the elections when updated traffic information should be available. He added that the final decision for the merged scheme would pass to the Local Enterprise Partnership as the Gloucestershire Local Transport Board ceases to exist from the end of March 2016.</p>
3.	Question from Councillor Tim Harman to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman
	<p>Does the Cabinet Member think that we have sufficient litter bins in Cheltenham to cope with demand?</p>
	Response from the Cabinet Member
	<p>Litter and dog bins are located across Cheltenham in locations where they are considered to be needed. It is Council policy that new and replacement litter and dog waste bins are provided on request, subject to confirmation of need and within budget.</p> <p>There are currently 8 requests outstanding for litter bins at various</p>

	<p>locations throughout the Borough. These should be installed in the next 6 weeks.</p> <p>Officers are also carrying out a review of current bin locations following recent new developments and road changes around the town. If any member believes there is a need for additional litter bins in their ward then they should contact Customer Services and their request will be passed to the appropriate Officer for consideration.</p>
4.	Question from Councillor Flo Clucas to Cabinet Member Finance, Councillor John Rawson
	<p>What will the impact be on the Council's finances of the Chancellor's comprehensive spending review announcement on November 25th? What will the effect be on the Borough Council's services? How many Cheltenham families, older residents and young people would be affected by the government's changes?</p>
	Response from the Cabinet Member
	<p>Over the Spending Review's four-year period, central government's core funding of local government (made up of revenue support grant and business rates income) will fall by 24 per cent in real terms. We are still awaiting precise details of the grant settlement for next year, but the Council's draft budget, published last week, assumes a cut of £227,000 in the coming financial year. If this happens it will mean that core Government funding has halved between 2009/10 and 2016/17.</p> <p>The Government is also consulting on major changes in New Homes Bonus, including means of 'sharpening' the incentive to reward communities for additional homes and reducing the length of payments from six years to four years. This latter proposal could reduce the NHB payable in 2016/17 by £583,500, although the Government has said it will consider introducing a 'floor' to ensure that no authority loses out disproportionately.</p> <p>The Council's draft budget aims to ensure that, as far as humanly possible, these cuts do not affect local front-line services or the wellbeing of the local population. Our draft budget for 2016/17 identifies £738,000 of efficiency savings in the coming year and there are plans to save a further £657,000 a year over the following three years by sharing more of its services with neighbouring councils. However local government's capacity to absorb cuts is coming close to its limits, not just in Cheltenham but around the country, as the Local Government Association has made clear.</p> <p>In a supplementary question Councillor Clucas asked whether this limit was likely to be reached in the next 2-3 years?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member advised that the Medium Term Financial Strategy published last week as part of the draft budget set out a strategy for bridging the financial gap over the next 4 years. With increased uncertainty over NHB and Business Rates, any further cuts could result in the council reaching its limits of ingenuity and ability to find further savings.</p>

5.	Question from Councillor Flo Clucas to Cabinet Member Finance, Councillor John Rawson
	The Government has recently announced significant changes to Housing Benefit, including the elimination of the family premium from the Housing Benefit calculation for new clients. Will these changes affect the local council tax support scheme, the Council's own scheme which provides financial assistance to some of the poorest members of our community?
	Response from the Cabinet Member
	<p>By way of background, council tax support is the scheme by which people on very low incomes receive help in paying in their council tax. From April 2013 the Government cut its funding for council tax support and allowed councils to operate their own local council tax support scheme for working age claimants instead of being bound by a national scheme as previously. Pensioners continued to have their council tax support decided by nationally-set rules.</p> <p>The Council could have decided that it would reduce benefits to working age claimants to claw back the reduction in Government funding, as many councils decided to do. Instead it decided to protect claimants – who include some of the poorest people in the community - and instead find other ways of offsetting the Government funding cut.</p> <p>Last month, the Government announced two significant changes in Housing Benefit from April 2016, which we could choose to incorporate into our local council tax support scheme for working age customers.</p> <p>The first change is to reduce the time limit for backdating a working age claim from six months to one month where 'continuous good cause' has been shown for not contacting us at the correct time. The time limit for pensioners in the housing benefit and council tax support scheme is three months.</p> <p>The second change is to remove the "family premium" from 1st May 2016 for new working and pension age claimants with children; or for existing claimants who become responsible for a child for the first time.</p> <p>There are strong administrative arguments for importing these Housing Benefit changes into the local council tax support scheme, as it would make it easier to manage the claims of people of working age who are applying for both benefits.</p> <p>However, the family premium is £17.45 per week. If this were removed from the local council tax support scheme, new customers might have to pay up to an extra £3.49 per week if their total income is above the new maximum award for their family circumstances.</p> <p>My recommendation at tomorrow's Cabinet meeting will be that we should continue with our current local council tax support scheme for people of working age, unchanged apart from annual uprating.</p> <p>Three years ago we were proud to be among those councils who</p>

	<p>protected council tax support against funding cuts. It seems mean spirited and vindictive to reduce the council tax support now for some very poor people in order to gain a relatively small amount of money. For people who are very hard-pressed financially £3.49 a week is a serious sum of money and the change could cause real hardship.</p> <p>However the changes to the family premium will affect people of pension age, as their council tax support scheme is laid down by the Government and we have no discretion to alter it. Also, the Government has indicated that it will be making further changes next year and we may have to review our local council tax support scheme in a year's time in the light of those changes.</p> <p>In a supplementary question Councillor Clucas asked how many families might be affected and how grandparents looking after grandchildren might be affected by the removal of the family premium?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member estimated that 50 families might be affected by the changes to housing benefit. Clearly there would be some pensioners who might be affected by the family premium reductions but this would be less than those of working age.</p>
6.	Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to Cabinet Member Finance, Councillor John Rawson
	<p>Can the Cabinet Members for Finance/Healthy Lifestyles give an update on the investigation into the Wilson Art Gallery & Museum gas and electricity bill overspend, and progress on rectifying the problem?</p>
	Response from the Cabinet Member
	<p>Part of the reason for the relatively high utilities costs at The Wilson since it reopened is that the building is larger than it was before and more of it is being used for longer periods than previously. This is, in a sense, a measure of the Wilson's success.</p> <p>However, as I reported to Council in July, the highly sophisticated controlled environment equipment – needed to protect and preserve the collections – seems to be unbalanced and to be using too much energy. This has led our property team to question whether the installations have been correctly commissioned. This is currently subject to a contractual disagreement and which ultimately may require a legal remedy.</p> <p>An independent report has been commissioned to review the specification and installation of the system so as to identify and offer solutions to our concerns about the installation. This in turn should help resolve the contractual dispute.</p> <p>The review will also look at occupancy patterns; usage of the building together with current energy management practice; and analysis of the heating and cooling data. All of this information will help us reduce energy costs without putting the collections at risk.</p> <p>Training of staff has already taken place to ensure that they use the controlled environment equipment correctly. Further training is likely to be</p>

	<p>needed in the light of the report's recommendations.</p> <p>In the meantime, officers are looking at what further steps can be taken to improve energy efficiency at The Wilson. An allocation of £10,000 has been included in the proposed planned maintenance budget for 2016/17 to assist in this work.</p> <p>In a supplementary question, Councillor Babbage asked for more explanation on the 'unbalanced' nature referred to and what costs would have been incurred whilst the problem is being addressed?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member advised that it was necessary to maintain a carefully controlled environment to protect the exhibits which required both air-conditioning and heating and it was not advisable to cut energy costs in a crude way. The council was in the process of exploring the potential options for some financial compensation by establishing some financial liability with the contractors. He would be happy to keep Members or members of the Asset Management Working Group updated.</p>
7.	Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to Cabinet Member Development & Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	Can the Cabinet Member give an update on the situation around the Banksy mural in Fairview?
	Response from the Cabinet Member
	<p>The primary role of the council in relation to the property 159 Fairview Road (which has the Banksy mural on its side wall) is to enforce against any breach of listed building requirements. To this end, a notice was served in September 2015 which was not appealed and therefore took effect on 19th October, 2015. This requires action to be taken to reinstate walls, a chimney breast and wooden floors apparently damaged in the abortive attempt to remove the Banksy. The notice also requires the upgrading to a proper standard of five windows which are not appropriate to this listed building and whose installation was not authorised. Action is required to comply with the notice within 6 months – i.e. by mid-April 2016.</p> <p>An 'urgent works' letter has also been served on the owner of the property, requiring repairs to the side wall render which has the Banksy artwork on it.</p> <p>No action has so far been taken by the owner in response to this letter and the Council does now have the option of carrying out the work itself and seeking to claim the cost of the work from the owner.</p> <p>Beyond (and without prejudice to) this statutory position, the Council has been involved in trying to broker the transfer of ownership of the property into 'safe' hands. If this proves possible, the Council will more easily be able to ensure the effective reinstatement of the property itself, together with the restoration and longer term protection of the Banksy. It is not proposed, nor does it appear necessary, for this transfer to be at the Council's cost, but the first task is to achieve a value for the transfer which can be agreed by all parties. The Council is currently supporting the process of trying to achieve a reliable and realistic valuation.</p>

	As a result of the on-going negotiations, the Council has postponed taking further enforcement action, but this option will be resumed in the event that current negotiations fail to achieve a satisfactory outcome.
8.	Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to Cabinet Member Corporate Services, Councillor Jon Walklett
	Can the Cabinet Member comment on reports that some councillors' emails have been appearing to recipients as if they have been sent from other email addresses, and to confirm the extent of the problem?
	Response from the Cabinet Member
	I am personally aware of three or four members having experienced this problem and the issue was originally logged with ICT shared service helpdesk by Councillor Rawson. Despite this necessarily being currently investigated in conjunction with Apple/iCloud there is no threat to our ICT security.
9.	Question from Councillor Adam Lillywhite to the Leader, Councillor Steve Jordan
	At the last full Council meeting I asked the Leader to explain, "how traffic that would have used Boots Corner would now reach the new store (John Lewis) from the South of town, specifying road names" His response was "On the assumption that the Boots Corner trial progresses then traffic will choose to disperse around the town centre in either an easterly or westerly direction thus accessing Albion Street via London Road and St James's Street or from North Street." Respectfully, he has not answered the question, Firstly, North Street would only be accessible through Boots Corner, therefore the traffic would not have 'dispersed' and it would not have closed. Secondly, the route including St James street, accounts for traffic from the East, not how it gets there from the South. Can he please specify the roads to be used by the traffic travelling from the South of the town?
	Response from the Cabinet Member
	I beg to differ. North Street is currently accessible by vehicular traffic both northwards and southwards. My understanding is that traffic will continue to access in a southerly direction and thereby connect to Albion Street and that buses and service traffic will still be able to use the street northwards. Traffic from the South of the town can use various routes including Princess Elizabeth Way, Gloucester Road, Bath Road, Old Bath Road etc. as currently; it really depends upon where a journey begins and the target destination. In a supplementary question Councillor Lillywhite asked what information had been passed to John Lewis with regard to the performance of this Plan, the 500 'unfulfilled' journeys a day, or the out of town shoppers and tourists who have attempted the journey once, or twice, and decided not to try again, the fundamental principle of this traffic modeling? The Leader replied that it was his understanding that John Lewis had

	been given all the information and were supportive of the Local Transport Plan and in particular he planned changes to Albion Street.
10.	Question from Councillor Adam Lillywhite to Cabinet Member Development & Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	The CTP consultation did not include any traffic modelling data for All Saints Rd yet for the adjacent Fairview Rd there is an average increase of over 200%, When figures were finally released after many requests, All Saints Rd showed just a 6% increase, can he please explain how these figures have been 'capped', and how this has been explained to the residents when no such understanding could be gained from the 'consultation'?
	Response from the Cabinet Member
	<p>As my fellow Councillor knows Cheltenham Borough Council is not the Highways Authority and so I would suggest that this question is posed to Gloucestershire County Council. However I am not aware of any data capping or manipulation as I believed that GCC had provided comprehensive data sets during the consultation process.</p> <p>In a supplementary question Councillor Lillywhite commented that the modelling he had received this week for All Saints Road, showed little if any increase in Traffic for the recent 'Open' three day racing festival in November. How can the Cabinet Member believe that such modeling is sufficient to base the future of our town on, as by not explaining 'capping' you clearly claim not to understand the model, and the JCS inspector has so little faith in other modelling from this team that she has requested it to be re-done?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded that they were obliged to work with the information that they had. It was primarily a GCC process who were working with a nationally recognised model.</p>
11.	Question from Councillor Adam Lillywhite to Cabinet Member Development & Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	Night time traffic figures, Given that the aim of the CTP is to remove traffic from the town centre and disperse it through other, mainly residential streets of the town, Day and night, can you please explain the refusal of the Highways Authority to give any night time traffic figures despite incessant requests over the last four years?
	Response from the Cabinet Member
	<p>Again this question is being posed to the wrong authority, however my understanding is that traffic models are based upon morning and evening peak models as the objective is to understand traffic behaviour at the peak rather than off peak periods.</p> <p>In supplementary question Councillor Lillywhite suggested that residents had not been given sufficient information to understand the impact on their lives and communities, at mitigation they were told that if they did not</p>

	<p>agree localized mitigation measures for their road, effectively diverting traffic into adjacent communities, then the means of increasing the traffic capacity could be to remove their parking and make it one way. Where is the integrity? The moral belief in the scheme, that year after year means we still do not get straight answers to honest questions?</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded that the information had been given for the morning and evening peaks. He was not in a position to comment on what information GCC had given to residents.</p>
12.	Question from Councillor Adam Lillywhite to Cabinet Member Development & Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	<p>The OED definition of a Plan is, 'A method of achieving something that has been worked out in detail beforehand', Yet the 'CTP' fails to consider the LTP or the JCS, indeed the only plan is to reduce the northbound road capacity by 30%, how can this be reconciled with the planned increase of 20% of households and jobs in the town when there is already such limited highway capacity, so clearly demonstrated at peaks times by the lack of resilience.</p> <p>In transport terms, what is the CTP aiming to achieve?</p>
	Response from the Cabinet Member
	<p>I have the benefit of access to a full set of the full Oxford English Dictionary and can advise that volume VII N-Poy provides various definitions of the word plan including</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A diagram, table or program indicating the relations of some set of objects, or the times, places etc of some intended proceedings 2. A design according to which things or parts of a thing, are, or are to be, arranged; a scheme of arrangement <p>but I could not find the specific definition cited above.</p> <p>As the Cheltenham Transport Plan has been accompanied by both diagrams and a phased timetable by colleagues at GCC – it would appear to meet the definition of a plan.</p> <p>As you will be aware the plan was also supported by improvements and encouragement for non-personalised transport including walking, cycling and public transport. Has London ceased to grow because of the limitations of the road network? Or have people adapted to alternative modes of travel?</p> <p>Cheltenham has a unique historic fabric and the CTP recognised this very early on hence the option to simply increase capacity by repeating the mistakes of the 1960's when several key streets were irrevocably damaged is not being pursued. The scheme objectives are to assist in maintaining the economic vibrancy of the town, particularly the High Street, as demonstrated by the John Lewis announcement to which the traffic flow on Albion Street was a precursor. Equally it will help reduce the strangle hold of the one-way system.</p> <p>In a supplementary question Councillor Lillywhite commented that the principal of the CTP traffic modelling is that once a journey has been attempted and found to take too long, it will not be attempted again. He</p>

	<p>asked why resources are still being directed at this when the fundamental principal increases congestion and pollution in residential communities and impedes prosperity. This resource could be focused on the 4 waying of Junction 10 which could unlock the town and most likely enable the desired economic growth.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responded that the money being spent on the CLTP could not be diverted to Junction 10 as had been suggested as this was a government responsibility and not one for the borough council. He acknowledged that the plan does rely on modal shift as people will find alternative routes and added that the plan does also include improvements to pedestrian access.</p>
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8. TREASURY MID-TERM REPORT 2015/16

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report which ensured that the authority had adopted the Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2009 and complied with its requirements. He highlighted the following :

- short term borrowing was low as the aim was to keep external borrowing low in the current economic climate.
- Long term loans comprised the additional £4.75m borrowed from the PWLB to finance the purchase of Delta Place
- Security of capital remained the Council's main investment objective. This was maintained by following the Council's counterparty policy as set out in its Treasury management Strategy for 2015/16 for 2015/16 and restricted new investments.
- the council anticipated an investment outturn of £123 200 against a budget of £60 000. He congratulated the Treasury Management team on this achievement.
- The council had also operated within the treasury limits and Prudential Indicators set out in the Council's Treasury Policy Statement and Annual Treasury Strategy Statement.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

- 1. To note the contents of the summary report of the treasury management activity during the first six months of 2015/16.**

9. LICENSING ACT 2003 LICENSING POLICY STATEMENT

The Cabinet Member Development and Safety introduced the report and explained that Section 5 of the Licensing Act 2003 required the Council to review, determine and publish its Licensing Act Policy Statement every five years. He reminded members that the current Policy Statement was adopted by the Council on 10 February 2012. Whilst it was not technically necessary to review the adopted policy statement until 2016, it was deemed appropriate to undertake an early review to reflect various changes in law, good practice and changes to the local licensing landscape.

Consultation had been undertaken and this report was asking Council to consider the consultation feedback and adopt the revised policy. He explained the background to the Licensing Act 2003 which was the primary legislation that dealt with the licensing requirement relating to:

- a) The sale of retail alcohol
- b) The supply of alcohol by or on behalf of a club to, or to the order of a member of the club
- c) The provision of regulated entertainment
- d) The provision of late night refreshment

The Cabinet member said that these activities were authorised through the issue of:

- a) a premises license
- b) a club premises certificate
- c) a temporary events notice

the Council was obligated to promote the four licensing objectives when discharging its functions under the 2003 Act when setting policy. The licensing objectives are:

- a) The prevention of crime and disorder
- b) Public safety
- c) The prevention of public nuisance
- d) The protection of children from harm

The draft policy statement set out the principles the council would apply when determining applications under the 2003 Act for the next 5 years. It also provided guidance to licence holders and applicants on how to make an application and advised how the Council would determine applications.

The amended new policy statement set out a proposed policy vision to make Cheltenham a safe and clean town that offered a great diversity in the night time economy. That is less focused on alcohol and that protects the quality of life for residents. In order for the Council to achieve this vision it must become more proactive in shaping the licensing landscape of the town.

The revised policy statement has a number of proposed measures:

- 1) Designating the town centre as an 'area of concern' (allowing the Council to regulate the number of licensed premises)
- 2) Introducing core hours for licensable activities
- 3) Restricting latest admission times (1 hour before closing for clubs, half an hour for bars)
- 4) Restrict the sale of alcohol from take away food premises
- 5) Restrict the use of pavement cafes and external areas to before 23:00 hours
- 6) The adoption of a Code of Good Practice for drinks promotions
- 7) Formalising the Council's approach to the classification of films not classified by the British Board of Film Classification
- 8) The adoption of model conditions for licensing

The Cabinet Member reported that consultation on the revised policy had been undertaken for 12 weeks between April and July 2015 and four responses were received. He drew Council's attention to the comments of the Licensing Committee and the action taken by officers to address those comments.

The revised policy aimed to give additional guidance and structure to the licensing process to support the licensing objectives listed at 2.3 of the report.

The following responses were given to questions:

- Enforcement of not being able to drink 10 mins before closing-the Cabinet Member referred to the limits outlined in 6.4.1 10am-3am; he explained that most licensed establishments closed at midnight; this did not necessarily impinge on a person's ability to drink
- When asked whether the core hours were rules or guidelines the Cabinet Member explained that the core hours were laid down for ease but an establishment was entitled to apply outside hours but this would have to be considered by Licensing Committee
- There was no policy to undermine the legal right of licensing committee to make decisions

Members welcomed the new policy which would enhance the economy of the town. They felt that much had been achieved over the last 10-15 years and the proposed changes were important to Cheltenham as a place which was attractive to live in and visit.

The Chair of Licensing Committee commended the draft policy and supported the the fact that it addressed the regulation of alcohol consumption.

A member raised the issue of "preloading" among young people. In response the Cabinet Member highlighted that he was aware of the issues with preloading and discussions were taking place with off licences about this. The purpose of the policy was to enhance the late night economy with proper regulation and to ensure the rules were properly enforced and understood.

RESOLVED (unanimously) THAT

- 1. the consultation feedback and officer comments be noted.**
- 2. In accordance with paragraph 3.24, an amendment to Part 3C of the Council's constitution be approved to delegate authority to the Acting Managing Director Place and Economic Development to classify films up to a classification of 15 and higher classifications to the Licensing Committee; and**
- 3. the revised policy attached at Appendix 2 be approved.**

10. CONTRACT RULES

The Chair of the Constitution Working group, Councillor Colin Hay, introduced the report and explained that to ensure that the Council's Contract Rules reflected the latest statutory requirements GO Shared Services had designed a common Procurement and Contract Management Strategy for all of the partner councils. This would be supported by a new common set of Contract Rules prepared by One Legal which had been considered by the Constitution Working Group.

In response to a question it was confirmed that Cheltenham Borough Homes, Ubico and the Cheltenham Trust would also have to comply to the latest statutory requirements.

RESOLVED (unanimously) THAT

The contract rules be approved.

11. CHELTENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING PROTOCOL

The Leader introduced the report which was seeking approval from Council to approve and publish a protocol that would provide :

- a) A general overview and advice to parishes and interested local community groups on the neighbourhood planning process;
- b) Guidance on how the Council will support and process neighbourhood plans and orders; and
- c) A coordinated approach within the Council in relation to neighbourhood planning.

The Leader explained that in terms of funding there was no guarantee that it would be fully funded externally but at present a local authority may submit claims of up to £30 000 for each completed Neighbourhood Development Plan to support the process. In Cheltenham there was one Neighbourhood Plan in place and one was 'in the pipeline'. The protocol clearly laid down who takes which decision and at what point.

The Leader wished to take the opportunity to thank colleagues represented on the Planning and Liaison group who had considered this report.

RESOLVED (unanimously) THAT

The Cheltenham Borough Council Neighbourhood Planning Protocol be approved and published on the Council's website.

12. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT NEW BUILD - SWINDON ROAD SITE

The Cabinet Member Housing introduced the report which sought approval from Council to enter into a JCT Design and Build Contract with J Harper and Sons

with Total Scheme Costs not to exceed £1,439,500. The scheme would deliver ten new homes.

The Cabinet Member highlighted that affordable housing was in high demand in town and should remain a priority. He explained that following the granting of planning permission for 10 units in July a procurement process was undertaken in August with 8 companies expressing an interest. The tender from J Harper and Sons was competitive in the current market and represented value for money for the size and scope of the works proposed. The proposed redevelopment of this site within the HRA was also a good use of Right to Buy receipts and this pipeline of developments should continue as it provided solutions to complex brownfield sites.

The Cabinet Member Housing wished to put on record his thanks to Cheltenham Borough Homes and CBC officers who had been involved.

In the debate that ensued Members welcomed the proposed scheme which brought much needed development of the site and affordable housing to the town.

RESOLVED (unanimously) THAT

- 1. the allocation of up to £1,439,500 for the construction of ten new dwellings be authorised.**
- 2. it be noted that the total scheme costs of £1,439,500 (broken down in further detail in exempt appendix 3) will be funded by circa £430k of RTB receipts with the balance funded by the most appropriate combination of the other funding streams noted within the report – this decision being delegated to the Section 151 Officer in accordance with Financial Rules B7 and B8.**
- 3. it be approved that loan finance be sourced of up to £1.0m from the Public Works Loan Board to be used for the construction of ten new dwellings.**

**13. NOTICES OF MOTION
MOTION A – 20 m.p.h. speed limits**

Proposed by Councillor Whyborn, seconded by Councillor Flynn

Cheltenham Borough Council notes that many councils across the country, of various party political control, have implemented or are now implementing 20mph speed limits over wide areas without traffic calming. Over 14 million people now live in areas, where 20 mph has become the default speed limit in residential and urban streets, except for arterial roads.

Council recognises that 20 mph limits have the potential to promote increased road safety, particularly for young and elderly pedestrians and cyclists, as well as to enable active and sustainable travel. Nationally Public health and other bodies such as NICE, Public Health England, the LGA and the WHO all support such a policy. It is described as the most cost-effective way to improve health equality by tackling inactivity, obesity and isolation, whilst also being child, disability, elderly and dementia friendly.

Council notes that the report of the Cycling and Walking Scrutiny Group includes recommendations to "initiate a review to assess the appetite for a 20 mile speed limit across town from residents, businesses, and visitors", and also notes the County Council report "Draft Local Transport Plan Policy Document PD 2 (Cycle)" in which implementation of a 20 mph zones programme are described as an operational priority.

Council requests that Cabinet consider the recommendations of Overview and Scrutiny committee of 26th Oct 2015 regarding Cycling and Walking, and include provision for a consultation exercise in the 2016/17 corporate work plan to establish where there is appetite for 20 mile per hour limits in Cheltenham and that the Council use its best endeavours in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council to work towards trials in suitable areas where public support exists.

In proposing the motion Councillor Whyborn made the following points about why a 20 mph limit was needed in residential streets:

- Residents frequently complained about speeding but what they really meant is they wanted lower and safer speeds than currently in force so that they can have safer streets for children and adults
- Research showed that impacts at 20 mph were rarely fatal whilst impacts at 40mph were nearly always fatal and 30 mph usually serious
- NICE, Public Health England, LGA and WHO all supported the health benefits through reduced car travel and better air quality
- The Cycling and Walking STG had asked for a public consultation on attitude to a 20 mph limit; the latest GCC Local transport Plan Policy made the point that implementation of 20 mph speed limits was an operational policy
- The UK has a worse record for deaths and accidents of children and the elderly than most of Europe where 19mph urban speed limits are common.
- 20mph speed limits have been successful in 40 areas

Councillor Whyborn emphasised the following points:

- it was not about physical traffic calming measures such as road humps, but rather about 20 mph over reasonably wide areas of urban streets hence implementation involving mainly signage.
- the benefits and idea is that of mutual respect of one community for another when driving.
- It was important to exclude arterial roads. It should be possible for everybody to be within 1/3rd miles driving to a 30mph road.
- There would be a very limited increase in journey time because so much urban driving was stopping and accelerating

He believed it was important to raise the profile of this issue and implement it over significant areas. It was important to follow on the work of the Scrutiny Task Group, who had identified 20mph as a key component in getting people out of their cars to more sustainable means of travel on urban journeys.

Cllr Whyborn highlighted that it was of paramount importance that there was community consultation and buy in. There was funding available now for SW Cheltenham from the ASDA S106 money and funding would also be available in St Pauls due to the Boots Corner scheme. Depending on the results of consultation other sources of funding would be sought.

Councillor Harman, as chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, said the committee had endorsed the recommendations of the scrutiny task group but they had some concerns about a blanket 20 m.p.h speed limit across the borough. He considered it would be better to identify site-specific areas where there was an appetite from local residents. The other concern was whether there would be sufficient enforcement.

In the debate that followed several members referred to the consultation with local residents. A member said there must be a meaningful questionnaire and suggested that 50% of local residents should be in favour of it. Other members felt that a majority of respondents in a particular area should be in favour of implementing a 20 m.p.h. limit. It was important that consulting with local residents was seen as a consultation and it was not a referendum but clearly the council would not want to proceed without public support. To support the consultation, a member suggested that organisations and people in support of the scheme should help the council to promote the benefits by providing suitable information.

A Member who had experience of trying to get a 20 m.p.h speed limit introduced into two designated areas in Prestbury, highlighted the costs and problems raised by GCC in response to the request, even though it had been supported by local residents. This was six years ago and he questioned whether there would be any appetite from the county council in taking this forward.

Another member felt they should challenge the GCC as such a scheme should not be very costly to implement.

As well as support from local residents, members highlighted that support from local police and the Police and Crime Commissioner was also essential. Members also raised the issue of enforcement and felt the council would need to work closely with both the police and GCC to enforce the limits. Another

member suggested that in other authorities the police had given local residents cameras to help in monitoring any speed limits.

Other members suggested that the council should be aiming for behavioural change as well as regulatory change and any enforcement must be supported by education. There would always be those who exceed speed limits but the history of seat belts was a good example of where regulation had led to a change in attitude from the public. One member felt that such a speed limit was not a route for getting people out of their cars and it should not be viewed as such.

Members spoke about the improved safety in residential areas that would result from 20 m.p.h limit and there was clear evidence that survival rates for children in road traffic accidents were significantly higher when the limit was reduced from 30 to 20 m.p.h.

Many members felt a blanket speed limit across the borough would be counter-productive although it was acknowledged that a townwide scheme would be cheaper to implement. However there was consistent support for such a speed limit in smaller, designated areas where it was supported by local residents.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Flynn highlighted that Councillors received many complaints about speeding in residential areas but often this was a perception rather than fact with people fearing for their children's safety and also concerns about environmental issues. She was in favour of asking local residents what they want.

The advantages of reducing speed should be stressed to drivers. Air quality would be improved, they would have more time to react to any incident and a 20 m.p.h speed limit may make drivers think twice about taking a short cut through residential areas. The cost to the motorist may be just a few seconds added to their journey time.

In his summing up, Councillor Whyborn responded to some of the points that have been raised during debate. He acknowledged that police response had been mixed to date and there would be limited police resources for enforcement in residential areas. Following the introduction of any speed limit, drivers would be slowed down by those who were observing the speed limit. He thought that modal shift could result. Stagecoach were reporting that bus travel was up in Cheltenham and cycling was also increasing so there was evidence to suggest that people were moving away from their cars already.

In terms of the public consultation, a target of 50% in favour may be unlikely but it was important that the majority of residents were in support. He accepted that Members felt that the blanket speed limit was impractical but he counselled caution if the areas designated were too small. He was also of the view that a 20 m.p.h should not only apply in the vicinity of schools but also on the routes to schools.

Upon a vote the motion was carried.

Voting: For 35 with 1 abstention.

MOTION B – Mental Health Challenge

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Savage and seconded by Councillor Harman:

As a Council we have a responsibility to work to reduce inequalities in mental health, tackle discrimination on the ground of mental health and work to support positive mental health in our community.

This Council will work with local partners to support people with mental health needs, particularly in areas such as housing, community safety and employment.

This Council resolves to sign the Local Authorities' Mental Health Challenge run collaboratively by the Centre for Mental Health, Mental Health Foundation, Mental Health Providers Forum, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness, Young Minds and the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Councillor Savage spoke as the proposer of the motion. He said that as local politicians they were all well aware of, and frequently discussed the many challenges at local and at national level. These include building a cohesive society with shared values and aspirations, growing the local economy and providing jobs for young people and meeting the challenge of providing affordable housing whilst protecting the environment: He felt that Mental Health, was one problem which politicians and the public have historically shied away from discussing and it was historically at the very bottom of the political and health agenda. However it was an area which gave them as local politicians the opportunity to establish consensus and make a positive difference in peoples' lives.

Having worked as Health Care Assistant in a Psychiatric Hospital, and in his daily work as a doctor, he said mental health was a challenge which he was well aware of. Shocking statistics were plentiful; the Office for National Statistics recorded nearly 6000 suicides in the UK in 2012, a figure almost certain to be an underestimation. Suicide was the leading cause of death in men under 35 in the UK ahead of cancer, heart disease and trauma. 23% of the adult population, and 10% of children and adolescents, would experience some kind of mental health problem in the course of a year, with depression and anxiety accounting for up to 20% of GP consultations.

He advised that much progress has been made in recent years to change attitudes, both in government and in wider society. Indeed, the Coalition Government had significant achievements initiating both a change in attitudes and a change in policy, rightly setting out to reach parity of esteem between physical and mental wellbeing. Norman Lamb and Andrew Lansley's 2011 strategy "No Health without Mental Health" not only outlined a vision of how better outcomes could be achieved for people with mental health problems, but demonstrated an example of cross-party working on this issue which councillors here would do well to emulate.

The Local Government Mental Health Challenge had been set up by leading mental health charities, including Mind, Rethink Mental Illness, the Centre for Mental Health, the Mental Health Foundation, Young Minds, and was endorsed by the Royal College of Physicians and GPs.

The designation of an Officer with responsibility for mental health issues, and an elected member as Mental Health Champion, aims to help, guide, and advise local councillors on mental health issues. It aims to give councillors the support they need to ensure decisions they make and council services consider people with mental health problems.

It would also provide a link to expertise, training and development for councillors, aiding them in their day-to-day casework to be aware of mental health issues and to be in a position to play a positive role in the mental health of the community.

The motion was an opportunity for Members to signal their commitment to support those most in need in the community, and he commended it to the Council.

The Mayor referred to an amendment proposed by Councillor Coleman and seconded by Councillor R.Hay which had been circulated to all members and read as follows.

As a Council we have a responsibility to work to reduce inequalities in mental health, tackle discrimination on the ground of mental health and work to support positive mental health in our community.

(INSERT) This Council acknowledges the significant work that our Officers and partner organisations have done to meet this responsibility.

This Council will (INSERT) 'continue to' work with local partners to support people with mental health needs, particularly in areas such as housing and community safety.

(CHANGE PARAGRAPH)

This Council:

1, resolves to sign the Local Authorities' Mental Health Challenge run collaboratively by the Centre for Mental Health, Mental Health Foundation, Mental Health Providers Forum, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness, YoungMinds and the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

2, will, as suggested in the Mental Health Challenge, nominate a Member (Cllr Dan Murch) and an Officer (Tracy Brown) to be Mental Health Champions.

3, notes with dismay the reports that Gloucestershire County Council are proposing a cut of £250,000 from the Mental Health budget and asks the Leader of the Council to write to the County asking them to reverse this decision.

The proposer indicated that the amendment was not acceptable in its current form as he considered that all Members should have the opportunity to propose a Member Champion and could not accept the wording in 3. Therefore the Mayor adjourned the meeting at 5.40 pm to facilitate the Members concerned coming to some agreement on the wording.

The meeting reconvened at 5.55 p.m.

Councillor Coleman advised that the amendment now proposed the following.

As a Council we have a responsibility to work to reduce inequalities in mental health, tackle discrimination on the ground of mental health and work to support positive mental health in our community.

(INSERT) This Council acknowledges the significant work that our Officers and partner organisations have done to meet this responsibility.

This Council will (INSERT) 'continue to' work with local partners to support people with mental health needs, particularly in areas such as housing and community safety.

(CHANGE PARAGRAPH)

This Council:

1, resolves to sign the Local Authorities' Mental Health Challenge run collaboratively by the Centre for Mental Health, Mental Health Foundation, Mental Health Providers Forum, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness, YoungMinds and the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

2, will, as suggested in the Mental Health Challenge, nominate two Members (Cllr Dan Murch and Councillor Louis Savage) and an Officer (Tracy Brown) to be Mental Health Champions.

3, notes the proposed reduction of £290,000 in the Gloucestershire County Council budget and asks the Leader of the Council to make representations to the County Council as part of the budget consultation process.

This amendment was agreed by the proposer and therefore became the substantive motion.

In speaking for the motion, Councillor Coleman highlighted that one in four people now suffer from mental health at some point in their lives and one in ten children. This statistic of one in four was comparable with those for cancer. Although people were now happier to talk about cancer, mental health issues still remained a taboo subject although they could be just as life limiting. He also had experience of prisoners who had an even higher rate of mental health issues, closer to nine out of ten. He felt that there was a lot that the borough council could do to address some of these issues and he was delighted to have cross party representation as Mental Health Champions to support the skilled officers already in place. It was important to send a message to the county council regarding the need for their continuing financial support.

In the debate that followed all members showed their support for the motion. Many members spoke about their own personal experiences and with friends or family members who had suffered from mental health difficulties. They acknowledged that it was still sometimes difficult for people to talk about mental health issues particularly in the workplace. There was still prejudice and discrimination against people who had experienced mental health difficulties

and it was important to stress to employers that such people are still capable of taking on responsible and valuable roles. Employers should demonstrate the same flexibility with accommodating staff with mental problems as they would with physical problems such as a broken leg.

In the medical profession, social prescribing by doctors was now possible, but there were still too much emphasis on dealing with mental health problems through drugs. Talking therapies were also very important in helping people in their recovery but often there were long waiting lists in surgeries which meant that it was not available when needed. This was one area where partnership working could help and the council should also be seeking the backing of the Health and Well-being Board

A member suggested that the local authority could play a very valuable role and there were very skilled officers in the council's community engagement team who could support any initiatives. Members had heard a lot in the presentation earlier about the valuable work that was being done by the partnerships in this area. A member requested that "employment" was added to paragraph 3 and this was accepted by the proposer.

A Member suggested that the starting point should be in-house and the council should ensure that all its employees were properly supported. Another Member challenged the Members themselves to behave better towards each other and be aware that their comments could sometimes be quite hurtful and upsetting.

A Member highlighted that austerity cuts could cause people to struggle financially and this could have a real impact on people's mental health. Families could also be affected if children were not getting the support they needed for any mental health problems. For this reason it was important to send a strong message to the county council and to the government regarding the impact of policy decisions on the community. Another member deplored the funding cuts to day centres which served a vital role in the community.

A Member concluded the debate by outlining their 25 years' experience with the Samaritans organisation. Many of the people he had talked to had problems trying to find their place in the community and they often rang because they were not getting the support that they needed. Society as a whole needed to have more empathy with people with mental illness and fundamentally change our approach.

In his summing up Councillor Savage thanked members for their support for the motion and commented that it had been a very moving and worthwhile debate. He stressed that the original wording of his motion and his introduction were deliberately apolitical, and the wording of the motion was itself taken directly from Local Government Mental Health Challenge.

Upon a vote on motion was carried unanimously.

MOTION C - Right to buy and the forced sell off of Council housing

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Wilkinson, seconded by Councillor Jeffries:

This Council notes:

- *the Government's proposal to extend the Right to Buy to Housing Association tenants, to be paid for by a forced sell off of the most expensive Council Housing stock;*
- *with alarm the shortage of affordable rented homes in Cheltenham with 2,500 households on our council's housing waiting list and is very concerned that the Housing and Planning Bill risks making matters worse.*
- *the LGA "First 100 Days" campaign which highlighted there are 1.7 million households on waiting lists for affordable housing across England and that more than 3.4 million adults between 20 and 34 live with their parents.*

Council opposes the forced sell off of council housing to pay for this plan and is concerned that the Government also:

- *Fails to address the situation for many local authorities which no longer have any housing stock to sell as they have transferred theirs to housing associations;*
- *Fails to address the situation in areas of high housing demand, like Cheltenham, where there are often few suitable sites to build replacement social housing stock;*
- *Fails to recognise that this means housing associations will simply be trying to catch up with replacing homes rather than building affordable housing to give more people homes they need*

Council notes that even the Mayor of London has said he did not want to see councils "deprived at a rapid rate of their housing stock" if more homes were not being built to replace them.

Council also regrets the following decisions of the Government that will reduce the amount of good quality social housing for rent to local families:

- *The decision that the focus on building "affordable homes" is on homes to buy for £250,000, a price unaffordable for most families trying to get on the property ladder, rather than affordable homes to rent.*
- *That a tax will be imposed by the Government on the rents of council tenants to fund discounts for housing association tenants who are rich enough to buy their properties. Taxing families on the lowest incomes to fund discounts for people who may well be much better off.*
- *The cuts to section 106 payments from developers which will see fewer social housing properties offered to residents in the town from new builds.*

These actions will mean that there is less money for the provision of new social rented properties and less money available to provide services to tenants such as repairs, estate services, youth clubs or play centres that significantly improve the life of families.

Council resolves:

- *to work with other neighbouring authorities to oppose the current government proposals to force councils to sell off high value stock (or any equivalent charge based on estimates of high value stock);*
- *to write to Alex Chalk MP asking him to support the Council's position; to speak up in parliament for more social housing and to push for a genuine "one for one" replacement but not at the cost of losing more council housing.*

In introducing his motion Cllr Wilkinson said that having a secure place to live was one of the most important aspects of a person's life and it was crucial that the state took its housing role seriously. He explained that the primary form of tenancy now was rented accommodation, either private or social which was why it was vital that any new initiatives in this area were pursued with great caution as reckless decisions had the potential to cause a great deal of harm to some of the most vulnerable people in society. He believed that the Government's changes to right to buy, paid for from high value disposals of from council homes, would prove to be reckless and put the social housing sector at grave risk. He said the government would force councils to sell high value council housing which locally in Cheltenham amounted to around 120 properties and the government would extend the right to buy to all housing associations, partly funded by the sale of council properties. The government was shifting the new build affordable housing focus away from homes to rent and towards starter homes worth up to £250,000. What all this meant in practice was a huge decrease in the number of homes available for people in need of the social housing safety net.

Cllr Wilkinson said that Shelter estimated that by 2021 the UK would have lost out on around 180,000 homes. There were fewer socially rented properties for those in need and around 40% of these were being rented privately at anything up to seven times the level of social rents. He explained that locally there were 4,514 homes run by Cheltenham Borough Homes and it was estimated that a further 2,435 houses were owned by housing associations. Each one of these was fulfilling a vital function for a household in need. More than 2,500 people were on the housing waiting list and this would only increase.

The following points were raised by Members in the debate :

- Many Members were disgraced that the Right to Buy Scheme had led to the depletion of the Council's housing stock by nearly one half due to the fact that housing stock which had been sold had not systematically been replaced;
- replacing housing stock was vital to ensure that employment was supported in the town; a member referred to a recent Town and Country Planning Association report which highlighted that housing and jobs were essential to the community yet people were being 'priced out' of property, there was little new social housing, and the housing market could not keep pace with demand and against the backdrop of an increasing population;
- the transfer of social housing to private housing providers had led to increased rents funded by central government via housing benefit; housing associations should reduce rents

- it was crucial to work together to prevent the total abolition of social housing over time which would be the net effect of government policy if it continued in this way
- the risk of an unstoppable wave of homelessness existed as properties were not available for people to live in; homelessness and mental illness went hand in hand so this represented a great deal of insecurity for the community
- The council should redouble its efforts to provide additional affordable housing for people of the town and it was important that the MP voiced the concerns of the council in Parliament
- A member mentioned that if housing associations cut rents then they would have to reduce their offer to developers leading potentially to non-viable sites; the Government strategy had created more private rented housing and he gave the example of one quarter of properties in the St Pauls development being private rented accommodation; this represented a counterproductive approach
- Shorthold tenancies did not provide security for the tenant and this situation would worsen as government implemented its new mechanism regarding council housing which would see tenants subject to maximum five years a tenant
- One member explained that he could not support the wording of the motion because as drafted it criticised the council's policy to sell off its most expensive housing in order to fund council built houses for social rent. He gave the example of the sale of properties in Ledmore Road which was used to fund the redevelopment of St Pauls; he believed that certain aspects had not been covered in the motion but hoped that the council comes forward with a robust plan and strategy by taking a proactive stance in what we do

In summing up the debate Cllr Wilkinson said the council had a responsibility to provide social housing and it was currently unable to meet the affordable homes need in the town. This insecurity needed to be addressed as elsewhere in the country it was having an effect on employment.

Upon 7 members standing in their seats a recorded vote was requested and this was CARRIED

RESOLVED THAT the motion be approved.

Voting For 22: Councillors Barnes, Britter, Clucas, Coleman, Fisher, Flynn, C Hay, R Hay, Holliday, Jeffries, Jordan, McKinlay, Murch, Rawson, Reid, Stennett, Sudbury, Walklett, Wheeler, Whyborn, Wilkinson and Williams

Abstentions 10: Councillors Babbage, Chard, Fletcher, Harman, Nelson, Regan, Ryder, Savage, Seacome, Smith

14. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

None received.

15. ANY OTHER ITEM THE MAYOR DETERMINES AS URGENT AND WHICH REQUIRES A DECISION

The Mayor had agreed that an urgent item should be added to the agenda and would be taken in exempt session.

16. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXEMPT BUSINESS

The Council approved the following resolution:-

“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 paragraphs 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)

17. FACILITATION OF AFFORDABLE ACCOMMODATION

It had been agreed by the Mayor on 10 December 2015 that this item should be taken as an urgent item because the Homes and Communities Agency had proposed a two week window and if a decision by Council was not achieved within this they would withdraw their funding for the proposed affordable housing scheme which could then not proceed.

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the exempt report which had been circulated to Members. In the debate that ensued Members considered the issues. They welcomed the scheme which made the best use of existing assets and created 31 units of new affordable homes within the town. They were assured by the Cabinet Member Finance that the concerns they expressed would be addressed by the ongoing work being undertaken by the S151 Officer and the Lead Commissioner, Housing Services.

RESOLVED

To approve the recommendations as laid out in the report.

Duncan Smith
Chairman