

Cabinet

Tuesday, 12th January, 2016
6.00 - 6.40 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Steve Jordan (Leader of the Council), John Rawson (Cabinet Member Finance), Peter Jeffries (Cabinet Member Housing), Andrew McKinlay (Cabinet Member Development and Safety), Jon Walklett (Cabinet Member Corporate Services) and Chris Coleman (Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment)
Also in attendance:	Councillor Matt Babbage, Councillor Roger Whyborn and Councillor Max Wilkinson

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Rowena Hay

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Leader declared an interest in agenda item 6 as a member of the Cheltenham Business Partnership and shadow BID Board.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meetings held on 8 and 15 December were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

QUESTION RECEIVED FROM COUNCILLOR WHYBORN TO THE CABINET MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND SAFETY

In the light of the Council's resolution on 20 mph speed limits, passed on 14th December 2015, and the O&S Cycling and Walking report referred to in it, would it be a good idea to briefly convene a Cabinet Member Working Group in Spring 2016 to review the form and content of the proposed CBC consultation on 20 mph limits, with a view to the consultation taking place later in 2016?

RESPONSE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND SAFETY, COUNCILLOR MCKINLAY

My report to Cabinet today suggests that a Delivery Programme is developed covering the items discussed in the O&S Cycling and Walking Report.

I welcome Councillor Whyborn's suggestion of a Cabinet Member Working Group to review the form and content of any consultation on 20mph limits; and I'm happy for that to meet in the Spring and feed into the Delivery Programme.

I have no particular concerns about consultation taking place during 2016, but my preference would be that the timing of the delivery of the various elements in the O&S Report is dealt with through the Delivery Programme; which will be able to give better consideration to timing in respect of both the resource

implications and any complimentary work being undertaken by the Borough Council or by other agencies.”

5. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, WALKING AND CYCLING TASK GROUP - CABINET RESPONSE

The Cabinet Member Development and Safety introduced the report which was a response to the recommendations made by the Walking and Cycling Scrutiny Task Group. He welcomed the direction of travel in the STG’s recommendations and believed that recommendation 2 of this report would be a sensible way forward in terms of implementing a succession of initiatives to contribute to improving walking and cycling in the town. He made reference to his response provided to the member question from Councillor Whyborn and confirmed he was happy for a Cabinet Member Working Group to review the form and content of any consultation on 20mph limits in the Spring and feed into the Delivery Programme.

The Leader wished to put on record his thanks to the work of the scrutiny task group which had undertaken a positive piece of work.

RESOLVED THAT

1. the direction of travel in the Walking and Cycling Task Group’s recommendations be endorsed and the Cabinet Responses identified at Appendix 2 be agreed

2. That, in respect of the responses at Appendix 2:

2.1 a Delivery Programme is submitted to Cabinet in Summer 2016, the Programme to identify resource and budgetary implications and a timeline for implementation.

2.2 implementation can commence in advance of the Delivery Programme where the impact of a recommendation is consistent with current work-streams and policies and is deliverable within existing staff and budgetary resources;

2.3 implementation can commence in advance of the Delivery Programme in respect of the cycling and walking champion; and

2.4 implementation can commence in advance of the Delivery Programme in respect of the Cheltenham Cycling and Walking Advisory Group – terms of reference at Appendix 3.

6. CHELTENHAM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT - IMPACTS ON THE COUNCIL

The Leader introduced the report and explained that the Cheltenham Business Partnership (CBP) had determined to support the introduction of a Business Improvement District (BID) in the town centre. A Shadow BID Board had been established and was progressing towards a ballot of businesses in the affected area, currently scheduled for April 2016. The Leader explained that he was the Council’s representative on the Shadow BID Board.

He reported that there were more than 200 BIDS in existence across the country with very positive feedback to date. A Business Plan is agreed for the 5 year life of the BID after which time it is reconfirmed. The Leader explained that the aim of this report was to alert Cabinet to its responsibilities, agree a method by which they are discharged and as far as is possible at the moment, identify the impacts. He highlighted that it was not for the Council to insist that a BID is implemented as this was a decision to be made by businesses in the town, via a referendum within the zone outlined in Appendix 2 of the report. The BID would be established if, through the ballot more than 50% of business rate payers voting were in favour and they represented more than 50 % of the business rate value of those voting. The annual cost of the levy would be an extra 1.25 % on business rates unless the business was located in a shopping centre.

The Leader explained that there was concern that the introduction of the BID and its levy would mean that businesses which paid the Late Night levy (which raises £70k per year) would be paying two local taxes. The Shadow BID Board was proposing that in year one of the BID, any business paying the Late Night Levy would have this amount reduced from their BID levy charge. In subsequent years, they would only pay the BID levy and the Late Night Levy would be discontinued. The BID would continue to fund initiatives related to the night-time economy.

The Leader explained that a loan of £32k from British Bids- a government funded body would be allocated to establishing the BID process in Cheltenham. The loan would be repayable by the BID Board in the event of a positive ballot.

In terms of the specific roles of CBC in the process the Leader explained that Cabinet would be required to delegate authority to the Managing Director Place and Economic Development in consultation with the Cabinet Member Development and Safety to collect the additional rates triggered by the BID process. The Council would be liable for the payment of the BID levy for any property for which it pays business rates and is in the BID area. Post ballot the Council would be able to claim 3 % of the BID Levy to fund its role in collection of the levy.

The Leader highlighted that there was a £9k shortfall in cashflow and an application to the Late Night Levy fund was being progressed to address this.

Finally, the Leader reminded Members that a seminar had been arranged for 28 January to discuss this in more detail.

In the discussion that ensued Members supported the establishment of a BID and whilst it would mean a financial commitment from the council as a considerable property owner it was important to look at the bigger picture in terms of contributing to the economic success of the town. The BID had the potential to make the town one of the most inviting and welcoming towns in the country. It represented a leadership opportunity to businesses to drive forward the prosperity of the town by drawing on their enterprise, initiative and knowledge. Members referred to the success of the implementation of the Late Night Levy and highlighted that the BID would assist day time and retail activities as well as the late night economy.

RESOLVED THAT

1. **the principle of a Business Improvement District (BID) in central Cheltenham be supported**
2. **authority be delegated to the Managing Director Place and Economic Development in consultation with the Cabinet Member Development and Safety to make decisions in respect of the Council's obligations under the BID legislative process**
3. **the current predicted financial shortfall in the BID process be noted and officers be requested to identify a suitable solution to be reported to the Cabinet Member Development and Safety.**

7. PUBLIC NOTICE ASSOCIATED WITH PROPOSED LEASE OF LAND AND BUILDINGS AT ST MARKS PLAYING FIELD, OFF BROOKLYN ROAD CHELTENHAM.

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report and explained that an offer had been made to the council to undertake improvement works of a burned out and derelict sports pavilion at King George V Playing Field, Brooklyn Road, to provide a sporting facility for Rowanfield Rovers AFC: a youth sports club; in return for a 10 year lease of the pavilion and junior sports pitch. The Cabinet Member added that this would be of great benefit to the community and sport in the town and this partnership between the council and voluntary organisations was increasingly strengthening due to the adoption of the Third Sector rents policy adopted some time ago.

The Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment welcomed the recommendations and thanked officers for being so proactive in the search for a new leaseholder by means of its proactive marketing campaign. This lease would enable Rowanfield Rovers to grow and would be received well received in the neighbourhood.

RESOLVED THAT

There having been no objections to the S123 notice inserting in the Public Notice section of the Gloucestershire Echo and published 29th October 2015 and 5th November 2015, the leasehold disposal of the land and building shown edged red on the plan which accompanies this report be approved.

8. REVISED NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION-CBC RESPONSE

The Leader of the Council introduced the report which set out the key topics covered in the Government consultation on proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which would have a potential impact on Cheltenham Borough Council. The deadline for responses had been extended until 22 February.

The Leader outlined the major concerns as follows :

1. Inclusion of Starter Homes as a type of affordable housing- The council's strategy had been to maximise affordable housing in the town as the higher cost of housing in Cheltenham relative to other towns made it difficult for those on low incomes living in the town to find affordable accommodation. The inclusion of starter homes as a type of affordable housing was considered a major attack on social housing with the likely impact being 'squeezing out' affordable rented housing without any guarantee of a net increase in overall housing supply, thus failing to meet local housing need.
2. Converting commercial units to become accommodation was likely to cause amenity issues- there was already a lack of office accommodation in the town centre and this proposal was likely to undermine employment provision in Cheltenham. It was vital that a balance between affordable homes and office accommodation was achieved.

In the discussion that ensued Cabinet Members spoke strongly against the proposals which they believed to be damaging and did not provide an equitable solution to providing decent quality affordable housing. They highlighted the fact that Cheltenham's house prices were some 15-25% higher than in surrounding districts. They believed that the consequences of these proposals had not been thoroughly thought through and these included ultimately housing only being provided in the private rented sector.

The Planning Policy Team Leader was invited to address Cabinet. He reported that the JCS Inspector had asked housing policy to include starter homes in the definition on that day. Important to note was that according to the current Housing Market Assessment starter homes would still be unaffordable to those on modest incomes. It was vital to have regard to the strategic HMA as part of the planning policy review to ensure housing needs are being met. Redefining social housing would make it easier for developers to sell on the open market.

Members also commented on the Government's proposal to take action where planning applications had not been delivered. The point was made that it was important to encourage developers with building out the permissions they were granted rather than sanction them. This position had been worsened by the proposal that housing association rents must decrease by 1 % per year for the next 4 years, effectively limiting their ability to build properties and contributing the town's housing supply.

Members also made reference to the Government's aim to strengthen policy on development of brownfield land for housing by the proposal to remove the right of local authorities to reject brownfield developments even if there is good reason. There was potential that this could weaken local planning policy.

In summing up the Leader said there were widespread concerns about the proposals; there should be an opportunity to address the issues locally rather than following national guidelines, as each area had its own unique issues.

RESOLVED THAT

The comments as set out in appendix two be endorsed and authority be delegated to the Leader to agree minor amendments prior to submitting the Council's final response to DCLG.

9. CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING

Leader	29 December 2015	To appoint Jacky Fletcher as the CBC member representative on the Airport Consultative Committee
Leader	24 December 2015	To sign the written resolution to appoint Colin Dennis and Elisabeth Carter as specialist non-executive directors of Gloucestershire Airport Ltd
Cabinet Member Finance	17 December 2015	To reduce the service charge due on 3 Tyndale by £3600 in respect of external refurbishment previously undertaken required to remedy water ingress problems
Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles	18 December 2015	Appointment of David Mackie as artist to the Minster Alleyways Project

Chairman