

Cabinet

Tuesday, 19th April, 2011
6.00 - 7.06 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Steve Jordan (Leader of the Council), John Rawson (Cabinet Member Built Environment), Klara Sudbury (Cabinet Member Housing and Safety), Andrew McKinlay (Cabinet Member Sport and Culture), John Webster (Cabinet Member Finance and Community Development) and Roger Whyborn (Cabinet Member Sustainability)

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

None received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 10 as a board member of Cheltenham Borough Homes.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on tinhe 15 March 2011 be approved and signed as an accurate record.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

None received.

5. TOURISM AND MARKETING STRATEGY

The Director Wellbeing and Culture introduced the report as circulated with the agenda on behalf of the marketing and tourism working group.

The Council's business plan had included a milestone to produce a marketing and tourism strategy for Cheltenham. The Social & Community and Economy & Business Improvement Overview & Scrutiny Committees approved a decision to form a small, time limited working party to develop the strategy.

In response to a query from Cabinet regarding the alignment of the single marketing department for the borough council referred to in paragraph 13.1 of the strategy, the Director Well-being and Culture confirmed that it was still the intention to review the council's marketing spend. However this would coincide with a review of the corporate communications team, together with web and marketing activity and this review had already started.

Councillor John Rawson, speaking as the former chair of the working group, acknowledged that the strategy had taken a long time to develop. This delay had ensured that the strategy was consistent with the national government's spending review and was now also consistent with the council's own budget. In developing the strategy the group had recognized that there was no huge pot of money to spend on marketing of the town and had instead recommended a series of measures which taken together would make Cheltenham a more vibrant destination. The strategy made links with Civic Pride and the Art Gallery and Museum development which would all contribute to enhancing the Cheltenham experience for both visitors and residents.

The Cabinet Member Sport and Culture welcomed the strategy and felt it provided a good overview of the current position. He added that many of the recommendations were already work in progress and to some extent the strategy reinforced the direction that was already being taken. The action plan was helpful in providing a focus for areas to work over the next two years.

The Cabinet Member Housing and Safety suggested that there should be more emphasis on providing activities for young people as well as branding. For example promoting the live music scene in Cheltenham and supporting fringe events around the festivals. The council should also be focusing on the residents of the town and encouraging them to help promote Cheltenham.

In response, the Director said that the action plan referred to maximising the opportunities across all markets and this included young people. She also emphasised that the strategy would sit under the umbrella of the Corporate Strategy and therefore encompassed collective work across all departments.

In response to a challenge regarding the use of the word 'imbalance' in paragraph 11.6 when referring to car parking, the Director responded that this issue would be addressed in the car parking strategy which was still to be written. The report was not implying that resolving car parking issues was not a priority but it was not for the marketing and tourism strategy to offer solutions.

The Leader welcomed the report and thanked the working group and officers for all their hard work.

RESOLVED that the Marketing and Tourism Strategy be approved.

6. QUARTERLY BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Cabinet Member Finance and Community Development introduced the report as circulated with the agenda. The report set out the council's current financial position for 2010/11 based on the monitoring exercise at the end of February 2011 and included revenue, capital, treasury management and the housing revenue account. The report also identified known variations to the 2010/11 revised budget and a position statement on major schemes.

He highlighted the good news in the report in that through its decisive action, the council had reduced a projected £800,000 overspend to a £74,000 underspend and this was a considerable achievement. He also highlighted that Green Waste was performing better than expected and the deficit in car parking income due to severe weather and the general trading situation. He was

pleased to announce Cabinet's intention to support an interim solution to the Bath Road toilets and to bring forward funding for the full roll-out of plastic bottles collection across the borough. Both of these initiatives would be included in base budgets next year.

He referred to the Icelandic Bank situation set out in paragraph 3 and finally congratulated the finance and benefit departments for their achievements on business rate and council tax collection set out in appendix 2.

The Chief Finance Officer acknowledge the major achievement in turning around the budget situation but added a word of caution in that there was still a huge amount of work to do around close down before the final position could be confirmed.

The Cabinet thanked officers for their work and for their enterprise and ingenuity in reducing the budget gap. The Leader acknowledged that although the recruitment freeze had been successful he was aware that it had not been without some pain for the staff involved.

RESOLVED that

- 1. The contents of the report including the key projected variances to the revised 2010/11 budget and the projected total budget saving of £74,300 be noted.**
- 2. Cabinet's intention to recommend to Council, as part of the 2010/11 outturn report to Council on the 27 June 2011, that part of the projected budget saving be used to fund an interim solution relating to the Bath Road toilets be noted.**
- 3. The use of £17,000 of the net underspend on new green waste schemes to fund the bringing forward of the full rollout of plastic bottles collection across the borough in 2011/12 be approved under the financial rules 4G, part 8.11.**

7. COMMUNITY PRIDE 2011 ALLOCATION PROCESS

The Leader introduced the report as circulated with the agenda. Council had agreed to set aside £30,000 for the community pride scheme funded from the Local Area Agreement Performance Reward Grant, as part of the 2011-12 budget. He was pleased that despite the current economic climate, the council was still able to offer support to local community initiatives.

In the past the focus of the scheme had been the public environment with more recent rounds having added emphasis on promoting sustainability and building-up community ownership of the environment. However, in 2011, a shift of emphasis was being proposed to reflect the council's aspirations that communities be more influential in shaping and delivering public services. The focus for 2011 would be to build community resilience and enable local groups to be more influential.

He advised members that the closing date for applications should be Friday 1 July 2011 and not 1 June as indicated in the report and the guidelines.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Community Development supported the focus on enabling communities to do more for themselves and supporting volunteers. This would help address some of the issues arising from cutbacks in public services.

RESOLVED that the application guidelines for the 2011 community pride scheme be approved subject to the closing date being the 1 July 2011.

8. SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2011/12

The Leader introduced the report as circulated with the agenda. This report considers the demands for preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents to support Cheltenham's Local Development Framework

RESOLVED that

- 1. The priorities for the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents as set out in Appendix A be approved.**
- 2. Authority be delegated to the Director of Commissioning, in consultation with the Leader, to agree timescales for the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents within the context of resources and changes in planning policy as set out in section 3 of the report.**

9. RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services introduced the report as circulated with the agenda. A report and revised Risk Management policy (Appendix 1) was considered by the Audit Committee on the 23rd March and their comments have been considered and the policy up-dated.

He emphasised the importance of understanding and the effective management of risks across the organisation. He indicated that an online training module was being developed and he encouraged all members to take a look at it.

RESOLVED that the risk management policy and process be approved.

10. AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME AND BIDS TO HCA

The Cabinet Member Housing and Safety introduced the report as circulated with the agenda. She gave a detailed explanation of the background to the programme and the implications for the council and the potential impact on social and affordable housing in the borough.

She referred to an addendum to the report which had been circulated at the start of the meeting. This referred to an amendment that was required to the Articles of Association of Cheltenham Borough Homes to ensure that they were a registered provider of social housing. Although this was implied in the current Articles it needed to be explicit in order to satisfy the Tenant Services Authority.

She emphasised the importance of the member working group but said that timescales were tight and therefore members should be aware of the high level of commitment involved before putting themselves forward.

Other Cabinet Members commented that the details of the scheme needed to be examined very carefully and therefore the role of the working group was very important. Another member highlighted that the changes being implemented by the government were high risk and could result in two tiers of social housing tenants and increased deprivation unless carefully managed. He urged the Chief Executive and the working group to take a lead on addressing this risk. The risk could also extend to council tax payers and businesses if the block of housing benefit allocated by the government was insufficient.

In response to a question, the Cabinet Member Housing and Safety confirmed that the additional recommendation proposed in the report addendum was an executive matter and the reference to 'Council' in the addendum was a reference to the generic Council and not a meeting of full Council.

RESOLVED that

- 1. The submission of a bid to the HCA by CBH, as part of the consortium lead by Bromford Housing be endorsed.**
- 2. Further consideration be given to specific new build schemes once HCA funding has been allocated to Gloucestershire, prior to consultation and planning applications.**
- 3. The principle of the affordable rents model as a way of accessing HCA funding be accepted and a housing review working group, with suggested terms of reference (Appendix 2) be set up to fully understand the impacts on housing outcomes.**
- 4. The Director Commissioning be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Housing & Safety and Borough Solicitor, to agree the new Articles and sign the resolution effecting the changes.**

11. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Cabinet Member Sustainability brief members on the following areas:

- He had written to Gloucestershire County Council as the planning authority responsible for Wingmoor farm. This was not a formal objection as he did not consider there were sufficient grounds for this but he had commented on the areas of public concern. A recent health report had given it a clean bill of health and there would be stringent monitoring laid down in the procedures.
- The new food waste scheme was bedding in and had already resulted in savings on landfill tax. Any snacks were being resolved and he thanked officers for all their work in the roll-out of new scheme.

The Cabinet Member Built Environment referred to the briefing paper on North Place and Portland Street which had been circulated to members. This indicated that the bidding process had identified five leading consortia that are collectively judged to have both the financial strength and relevant experience to deliver a successful scheme on the site. The five shortlisted would be invited to progress to the next stage and Cabinet were scheduled to receive a further briefing on 26 July 2011, by which time it is hoped that the number of bidders

will have been reduced to two, who will then be invited to prepare “detailed solutions” for the site.

The Cabinet Member Housing and Safety advised that she had now received a final draft on how Gloucestershire County Council expected the districts to allocate the £50,000 of funding youth services. She had been disappointed that the funding was only guaranteed for this financial year and it would then be reviewed. She was aware that this was a matter of great interest for a number of members and therefore she would circulate the final version when available.

12. BRIEFING NOTE REGARDING NORTH PLACE AND PORTLAND STREET OJEU PROCESS

It was noted that a briefing note had been circulated to members.

Chairman