

Cabinet

Tuesday, 10th November, 2020
6.00 - 6.45 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Steve Jordan (Leader of the Council), Victoria Atherstone (Cabinet Member Economy and Development), Flo Clucas (Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles), Chris Coleman (Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment), Peter Jeffries (Cabinet Member Housing), Andrew McKinlay (Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety) and Max Wilkinson (Cabinet Member Climate and Communities)
Also in attendance:	Gareth Edmundson, Paul Jones, Mark Sheldon, Sarah Farooqi

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

Councillors Hay and Hegenbarth sent apologies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th October 2020 were unanimously approved and signed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

There were none.

5. BLACK LIVES MATTER

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles presented the report, reminding Members that a motion on the topic had been moved at Council in June. The motion sought to build on recent events in the USA and ensure that the authority took racism seriously and treated all citizens fairly, equally and without bias. She reported that a conference on the topic of Black Lives Matter would be held on the 30th November, and its conclusions would form the basis of a future report. She added that Cllr. Angie Boyes had raised these issues with colleagues at the Council of Europe, and intended to report back in due course.

The Cabinet Member Economy and Development praised the report, stressing the council's responsibilities to offer equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and harassment, and to foster good relations between all individuals in the town.

The Leader of the Council agreed that it was an important report, and added that member training on equality and diversity was underway. The Cabinet Member Climate and Communities added that this training was very useful, as it helped members to understand how to best reflect and represent their constituents.

The Leader moved to a vote, where it was unanimously:

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The requests set out in the motion be noted, namely:
 - To support the organisation of a conference for BAME communities
 - To carry out a review of the council's policies and practices
 - To explore how we can support other councils via the LGA
 - To raise the issues of racism with the Council of Europe
2. Updates to these requests be received as set out in section 1.

6. FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2020-21

The Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety presented the report, noting that the council was required to produce a food safety service plan every year to improve accountability and ensure that key statutory functions continued to be delivered.

He drew members' attention to page 13 of the report, which compared yearly figures. In 2019/20, there were 37 food complaints in total, up from an average of 25 across the previous four years, while the 114 total hygiene complaints were roughly on par with the previous average. He stressed that this was good news as it demonstrated a vigilant approach and gave confidence that the council was on top of food safety and hygiene.

The Leader moved to a vote, where it was unanimously:

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The appended service plan for 2020-21 be approved.

7. CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY REVIEW

The Leader of the Council presented the report, noting that as per the food safety service plan, it was a legal requirement that the council took very seriously. There were no radical changes from the previous policy, just a number of small amendments to account for changes in the council's leadership structure.

The Leader moved to a vote, where it was unanimously:

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The updated Corporate Health and Safety Policy be approved.

8. REFRESH OF THE CHELTENHAM CHARTER WITH THE 5 PARISH COUNCILS

The Cabinet Member Climate and Communities presented the report, which set out the commitments made by the council to the parish councils within the borough, and vice versa. He added that local communities had really come together in recent months, and that he looked forward to attending meetings with all 5 parish councils later in the month.

The Cabinet Member Economy and Development added that it was important to maintain and build on strong relationships with parish councils, particularly with regard to community resilience and tackling climate change.

The Leader of the Council added that he had previously had parish liaison in his portfolio, and had seen for himself the clear benefits of the borough council and parish councils supporting each other.

The Leader moved to a vote, where it was unanimously:

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The charter (attached as appendix 2) and the commitments made within it be endorsed.

9. MINSTER INNOVATION EXCHANGE (FORMERLY WORKSHOP CHELTENHAM)

The Leader of the Council presented the report, in the absence of the Cabinet Member Finance, noting that several appendices were not in the public domain due to commercial sensitivity. He added that Cabinet had been supportive of the project since day one, and thanked Mark Sheldon for his role in making it possible. He praised it as a mix of cyber and culture that should be taken advantage of in order to maximise benefit for the town.

Earlier in the year, Cabinet had agreed in principle to a joint venture investing in the project, and it was now possible to make this a reality. The government launched the Getting Building Fund in July, from which the council received an allocation of £3.114m, which helped guarantee that the project would happen and ensure that the benefit could be spread across the whole Minster area. He reported that details continued to be worked out, and there would be a consultation on the masterplan around this. He asked Members to agree to take responsibility for the Getting Building Fund grant, confirm their willingness to enter joint venture, and take responsibility to make sure it happens. The overall budget commitment would go before full Council later in the month.

The Cabinet Member Economy and Development added that it was fantastic news for the town, and that having a Cheltenham-centric growth hub would support local businesses and encourage entrepreneurship.

The Leader moved to a vote, where it was unanimously:

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The council accepting the award of the Getting Building Fund grant from the GFirst LEP of £3.114m be approved, and authority be delegated to the Executive Director Finance & Assets, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Finance and the Borough Solicitor, to agree final terms and contract for the Getting Building Fund grant with the LEP;
2. The council accepting the award of the Tier 2 Growth Hub residual grant of £433,638 and taking over the role of promoter of the Growth Hub be approved, and authority be delegated to the Managing Director Place and Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Finance and the Borough Solicitor, to agree final terms and contract for the Growth Hub grant with the LEP;
3. The council entering into a joint venture (including the incorporation of the new limited liability partnership (LLP)) with WSC to manage MIE be approved, and authority be delegated to the Executive Director Finance & Assets, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Finance and the Borough Solicitor, to:
 - a. agree the final terms of the Joint Venture;
 - b. approve the form of and the council entering into any documents required to put in place or otherwise facilitate the creation of the Joint Venture;
 - c. take any decisions (to include, without limitation, the approval of all documents) considered necessary by the Executive Director Finance & Assets to facilitate the creation and/or operation of the Joint Venture.
4. The council entering into a contract with WSC for WSC to deliver the design and build of the MIE be approved, subject to the final terms being agreed and, in accordance with Contract Rule 6.2.1, it be agreed to waive the requirements of the council's Contract Rules to enable the design and build agreement to be entered into provided that the estimated value remains under the applicable threshold for a full procurement process determined by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015;
5. Authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Finance and Assets, in consultation with Cabinet Member Finance, to agree the final terms of the design and build agreement and such other documents as may be required relating to the construction and delivery of the MIE and to approve the council entering all required documentation, including a commercial lease to the LLP for the management of the MIE;
6. The public realm masterplan for the Minster grounds at Appendix 6, as outlined in section 8, be approved for consultation, and authority be delegated to the Managing Director Place and Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Finance, to respond to the feedback from the consultation;

7. It be recommended that Council approve the gross capital budget for MIE of £4,671,000, as per Appendix 5, to be incorporated into the council's budget and capital programme for 2020/21.

10. COVID RECOVERY REVISED BUDGET 2020/21

The Leader of the Council presented the report, in the absence of the Cabinet Member Finance, noting that it would also go to the full Council meeting on 16th November.

He added that over the last few years, CBC had worked hard to protect and enhance services while its funding decreased. Thanks to the hard work of many people, not least the finance team, it succeeded in changing its investment strategy, opening up a number of exciting opportunities including the Minster Innovation Exchange and Golden Valley. The budget was on track to become sustainable before the Covid crisis knocked this off track. The authority received various government grants but was still considerably down overall (about £1.8m down across this financial year) compared to pre-Covid projections. He acknowledged that this was likely to be an ongoing issue, as things like car parking revenue would remain low due to changing habits. It was important to see the positives in this, such as the reduced environmental impact of traffic in the town.

The revised budget sought to make maximum use of reserves where possible, and reviewed all reserves in order to do so. Assets that were not used for operational purposes or did not generate income were of particular importance. He stressed that it was not a definitive proposal at this stage, but rather a guideline of areas that would be looked at. He also emphasised that risks to the council's income would not stop at the end of the year, so the report looked at a three-year period to make finances sustainable. He particularly cited Golden Valley as an example of a project that had received significant investment and was hugely important for the town and region in terms of both jobs and homes. He reassured Members that funding had been set aside to ensure this would not have to be halted. He thanked the finance team, particularly Paul Jones (Executive Director Finance and Assets) and Rowena Hay (Cabinet Member Finance).

The Cabinet Member Economy and Development added that considering the financial stresses placed on local councils, this was a very positive budget proposal. The Leader of the Council agreed, and expressed his pleasure that other councils were seemingly taking note of CBC's strategy and incorporating similar ideas into their own financial plans.

The Leader moved to a vote, where it was unanimously:

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The estimated position in respect of collection rates for council tax and business rates for 2020/21 (paras 3.37 to 3.44) be noted;

2. The revised Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy as detailed in Appendix 2 (paras 4.12 to 4.16) be approved;
3. The revised capital programme with £1.7m capital receipts previously allocated to the High Street works to be reallocated to repaying the MRP as detailed in paras 4.19 to 4.20 be approved;
4. The identified asset disposals as detailed in paras 4.22 to 4.29 be noted;
5. The virements as summarised in Appendix 3, in order to produce a balanced General Fund (GF) revised budget for 2020/21 be approved;
6. It be noted that future budget monitoring reports will assess the position against this revised budget and further decisions may be required depending on the economic impact being experienced as the year progresses;
7. The additional budget and funding for Cyber Central (Golden Valley development) as set out in section 5 be approved;
8. The flexible use of capital receipts strategy as detailed in Appendix 4 (paras 5.21 to 5.26) be approved;
9. The budget-setting timetable at Appendix 5 be approved, and the 2021/22 budget process outlined in section 6 be noted;
10. The intention for this Council to remain in the Gloucestershire Business Rates Pool in 2021/22 as outlined in section 7 be noted, and it be noted that the Council reserves the right to withdraw after the local government finance settlement announcement;
11. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revised budget for 2020/21 as summarised in Section 8 be approved.

11. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Cabinet Member Economy and Development reported that she had submitted the council's response to the government consultation on Planning for the Future. She wrote to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Robert Jenrick, highlighting CBC's concerns. These included the lack of information given about climate change measures, the effect of centralised control on local democracy, proposals for enhanced design and build quality conflicting with local planning, and the proposed simplification of the system through zoning.

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles reported that the projection onto the Municipal Offices had been submitted to Imperial War Museum as an example of commemorating the WW1 centenary, and accepted as part of their 'mapping the centenary' webpage. She thanked everyone involved in making the projection possible, and expressed her pride that their work had been recognised. She added that the Food Network was doing important work in feeding families and providing them with bedding and other essentials at a time

of great need. Local support was hugely important, especially since the government was offering these families as little as £14.60 over four weeks.

The Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment updated Members on the Environmental Services Strategy, which was approved at the last Cabinet meeting. He stressed the importance of driving down residual waste and increasing recycling, and the importance of engaging with residents. He added that in the weeks to come, residents would see Ubico workers out and about with stickers reminding and encouraging them to follow proper recycling guidelines. He noted that residents just need assistance to make the right decisions, and that there was always more that could be done. He thanked Ubico workers for continuing to deliver a high quality service.

The Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety reported that he had contributed to the county council's consultations on potential improvements to Junction 10 of the M5. He was supportive of making the junction four-way, as it would boost Cheltenham's economy and give particular relief to residents. He stressed that any solution needed to be as accessible as possible, and that he would continue to consult local residents about their needs.

The Leader of the Council noted that the second nationwide lockdown was underway, which was not ideal but was unavoidable considering the rate of spread of Covid. He reported that there would soon be further government funding, as part of its plans to treat all council areas as though they were at Tier 3. He was expecting in the region of £2m discretionary funding which the council could allocate as it saw fit, as well as some specific grants. He emphasised that it was important to maximise the value of this funding and ensure that it lasts into the next financial year. He added that the Extraordinary Cabinet meeting on 17th November would meet to hopefully authorise the process and allow the finance team to get the funding out as efficiently as possible.

Decisions of Cabinet Members

The Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment reported that he had made a decision on the 14th October to join the Gloucestershire Resources and Waste Partnership, which replaced the Glos Joint Waste Committee. The decision came into effect on the 23rd October. He added that CBC had joined the Glos Joint Waste Committee several years ago, but ultimately deemed that it did not constitute value for money or meet its goals on improving recycling rates and cutting down on residual waste. This new partnership would enable CBC to meet with its partners to discuss ideas and move forward on its waste and recycling agenda, without incurring a financial cost.

Chairman