

## Council

Monday, 7th December, 2020

2.30 - 9.20 pm

Attendees	
<b>Councillors:</b>	Roger Whyborn (Chair), Sandra Holliday (Vice-Chair), Victoria Atherstone, Matt Babbage, Garth Barnes, Dilys Barrell, Angie Boyes, Nigel Britter, Jonny Brownsteen, Flo Clucas, Mike Collins, Stephen Cooke, Iain Dobie, Bernard Fisher, Wendy Flynn, Tim Harman, Steve Harvey, Rowena Hay, Alex Hegenbarth, Karl Hobley, Martin Horwood, Steve Jordan, Chris Mason, Paul McCloskey, Andrew McKinlay, Tony Oliver, John Payne, Louis Savage, Diggory Seacome, Malcolm Stennett, Jo Stafford, Klara Sudbury, Simon Wheeler, Max Wilkinson, Suzanne Williams and David Willingham

## Minutes

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Baker, Coleman, Jeffries and Parsons.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Boyes and Cooke declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 16. Councillor Babbage declared a personal interest in agenda item 16. Councillors Brownsteen, Whyborn and Wilkinson declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 20.

### 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

#### RESOLVED THAT

**The minutes of the Council meetings held on 20 July 2020, 29 July and 16 November 2020 were approved and signed as a correct record.**

### 4. COMMUNICATIONS BY THE MAYOR

The Mayor explained that it had been a very strange year since March with regard to engagements, with many cancelled or carried out virtually, or with very few attendees. He said he would be attending carols by car light and had already prepared the reading for the church carol concert.

He expressed his thanks to Members and officers for their hard work during these difficult times and said he had seen gestures of extreme generosity and encouragement. He cited that his Chaplain had made the observation that Cheltenham had really stepped up in terms of community support and much of this was credit to the networking of Cheltenham Borough Council staff and Members. He reported that the Community Champion at Morrisons would be preparing 200+ gift parcels for vulnerable children in schools in that area. He

was very encouraged by this and similar initiatives that were happening all over the town.

The Mayor reported that CBC had been awarded an IESE certificate for excellence in innovations in transforming local public services. The Leader joined the Mayor in congratulating all those involved.

The Mayor also paid tribute to Cllr Ann Melhado / Pennell who recently passed away and her widower had made a gift to the Mayor's fund. Cllr Melhado had been a member of the liberal democrats and a constituent of his, as well as a member of either Cheltenham or Tewksbury Borough council.

## **5. COMMUNICATIONS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

The Leader of the Council referred to the LGA renewal and recovery review report that had been recently circulated and wished to thank the LGA team for this and for their very positive feedback.

The Leader informed that he would be standing down from Cheltenham Borough Council in May 2021. He had been leader for 12 years and a councillor for nearly 30 years and he had been trying to put in place an orderly transfer to the new leader, especially as he realised this was not the best time to be handing over. However, on the basis of the LGA report he had every confidence that the council would be well placed under the new leader.

The Leader wished to express his thanks to many people and organisations, in particular to everyone in the Cheltenham community in helping to get through the recent difficult times of the pandemic. He paid tribute to all those in the Health and Social care services for their continued hard work and expressed his sincere thanks to the Chief Executive and the whole team at CBC for a successful LGA review. Looking to the future, the Leader felt things were looking positive; the council had many good things going on and the vaccine roll out had commenced. He wished to thank all partners that had worked with the council over the years and had supported him, as well as all Members of the council for their dedicated hard work, especially his cabinet colleagues past and present and in particular the deputy Leader.

He concluded that as a leader he had tried to make things happen and contribute positively to the environment and to base decisions on facts and evidence and trusted the council would continue in this vein.

The Mayor thanked the Leader for his comments and for his significant contribution to the council over the years.

## **6. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS**

None received.

## **7. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Question from Izaak Tailford to the Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	Given the increased public debate on active travel, what is the council doing to bring forward the proposals for the Cheltways scheme outlined in the Connecting Cheltenham report

	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>The Connecting Cheltenham report was submitted to Gloucestershire County Council as part of the Local Transport Plan review. We have received confirmation that the report, and its proposed local cycle improvements, has been considered. The LTP is due for publication in the new year.</p> <p>We are engaging with Gloucestershire County Council as the Highways Authority, highlighting the importance of investment in cycle schemes in the most urban centres which will benefit the most people.</p> <p>An action plan is currently being developed and finalised as a result of the Connecting Cheltenham report – which identified considerable funding needed to achieve aspirations. This action plan will help inform and develop “bid ready” projects in which to apply for funding should opportunities arise. The predicted cost of Cycle Cheltways, as identified within the Connecting Cheltenham report is estimated to be £5 to £20 million.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Question from Izaak Tailford to the Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	Given the lack of formal proposals for cycle infrastructure in Cheltenham from Gloucestershire County Council, the highways authority, is the council looking at any other ways to deliver off-road cycle paths like the Honeybourne line?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>See response to question 1.</p> <p>Officers are working with relevant teams within Gloucestershire County Council to agree priorities of cycle infrastructure; this will include exploring opportunities for off road cycle paths.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Question from Dan Harte to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	Cycling is my primary means of transport for short journeys around Cheltenham. And my 5-year-old son has just started riding to school. But many of the roads around our town can feel dangerous. What is the Council doing to provide high quality, segregated cycling infrastructure to keep myself, my son and other cyclists safe?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>Gloucestershire County Council is the Highways Authority and therefore responsible for undertaking any segregated cycling related works on the public highway.</p> <p>In 2019, CBC developed the ‘Connecting Cheltenham’ report this was informed by key stakeholders, including the County Council. This is being considered in GCC’s Local Transport Plan due for release in the new year.</p> <p>Additionally, we have for many years been working with partners on a southern extension of the Honeybourne Line to Lansdown Road. This information has been discussed publicly and I understand has been an</p>

	<p>ambition of local cycle campaigners for decades. Most recently, officers and cabinet members have been engaged in discussions with GWR and Network Rail about the project. I hope to be able to announce positive news soon.</p> <p>See response to question 1.</p>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Question from Sarah Pineger to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	<p>I've noticed a significant increase in families out cycling together during lockdown and, having participated, saw how popular the last critical mass cycle ride (along the A40 and into town) was. Cheltenham is a great town for cycling, being relatively flat and not too big. Would the Borough council consider supporting regular family cycling days with traffic reduction measures along key roads to encourage more families to try out cycling together and to gain experience of cycling around the town? One of the biggest barriers to people (especially women) cycling is traffic, this of course, becomes a self-perpetuating problem.</p>
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>Both the Think Travel team and the Highways Authority in Gloucestershire County Council would be responsible for running events of this nature. They are running three 'School Street' trials one each in Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury. This may lead to further initiatives of this nature.</p> <p>Within the Connecting Cheltenham report, community led projects were identified as a priority, with the community playing a key role in the delivery of key events such as play streets and parklets. A mechanism for establishing a pot of money and bidding process for communities needs to be developed.</p> <p>In 2019 the Borough Council led on 2 cycling events, both well received and very much aimed at the audience you have highlighted. We were planning a further cycling event for 2020 which unfortunately had to be cancelled due to Covid-19.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Question from Tom Godsmark to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	<p>Do you have any information on the increase in numbers of cyclists in Cheltenham during lockdown? It would be a good indicator of those with a propensity to cycle if infrastructure and highway safety were improved and the car was less dominant.</p>
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>According to pedestrian and cycle data collected in June over the last three years, there has been an increase in cycle movements by 14% from 2018 to 2020 and 46% from 2019 to 2020.</p> <p>Whilst this does show a positive increase in cyclist from last year, 2019 did see a drop in movements by 22% on 2018 data. This data is only collected from one section of the high street and over one week at the same time each year. This therefore cannot be seen as a complete and accurate representation of the overall increase in cycling due to Covid-19</p>

	<p>and the lockdown measures.</p> <p>The Propensity to Cycle Tool is being used by GCC to assist transportation planners and policy makers to prioritise investments and interventions to promote cycling. It has also been used to develop our Cycle Cheltways aspirations within the Connecting Cheltenham Strategy report.</p>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Question from Tom Godsmark to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	Are you able to share any insight on the plans for the Active Travel Fund allocated to Gloucestershire. How much is allocated for Cheltenham and what schemes?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	Gloucestershire County Council applied for a Tranche 2 DfT Emergency Active Travel Fund of £10.5million. A priority within the bid was the progression of a cycle route between Cheltenham and Gloucester, via the B4063. The County Council received £864,750. That amount falls some way short of the figure needed for the County's priority project. We have contacted the County Council to ask how it plans to spend the money it has received, and whether it might be allocated to Cheltenham projects such as the Cheltways scheme.
<b>7.</b>	<b>Question from Hamish Breach to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	<p>I am a Parish Councillor in Prestbury and wanted to ask what the plans are from CBC to enhance the number off-road cycling networks throughout the town, to improve uptake of cycling as an alternative to car driving? Several local residents have stated to me that they would cycle more if they felt safe in doing so, but worry about narrow main roads, and the risk of injury from cycling alongside motor vehicles.</p> <p>In addition, I understand there is a possibility that the Honeybourne Line could be extended north of its current termination point, near the Prince of Wales stadium, up towards Swindon Lane and the racecourse, which would increase connectivity for residents within Prestbury Parish. Would you be able to comment on whether this would be a viable option?</p> <p>Prestbury Parish Council have just launched a Climate and Environment committee, of which I am a member, and we are very keen to work together with CBC to embrace carbon neutral policies, to tackle the climate emergency. Encouraging walking and cycling would seem a sensible first step, and expanding current networks such as the Honeybourne Line would strike me as potentially a cost-effective solution.</p>
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>See response to question 1.</p> <p>The West Cheltenham Transport Improvement Scheme (WCTIS, led by GCC, has plans for Phase 3 and 4 to deliver segregated cycling and footway from the Arle Court roundabout to the Lansdown Road/Gloucester Rd junction (by the Shell garage).</p>

	<p>There is work currently being undertaken exploring potential for extension of the Honeybourne Line both North and West. In terms the route north, the protected corridor is currently inaccessible, unused and unusable as a cycle path or pedestrian link. I have walked the line myself after a suggestion from a local resident.</p> <p>The path follows the former railway line and is not in the ownership of the Borough Council, nor is it highways land. A future northern extension could link to homes around the boundary of Swindon Village and Prestbury parishes, extending this important piece of cycle and walking infrastructure northwards and opening up more green areas to local residents.</p>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Question from Mark Beaney to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	<p>Leckhampton Rovers Football Club (LRFC) is partnering with Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) to refit the pavilion at the Burrows Fields, Moorend Grove, Cheltenham. LRFC has secured the majority of the funding for this. The building is undergoing a complete refit and as part of this LRFC want to maximise sustainability/renewable energy options. The club has identified a possible grant that is available to CBC for this very purpose, "The Decarbonisation Grant Scheme" which is being administered by Salix (<a href="https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/PSDS">https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/PSDS</a>).</p> <p>The club would like confirmation that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CBC will allocate resource to identify if it qualifies for the Grant. This needs to be committed quickly as the grant fund is running out.</li> <li>2. If CBC does qualify for the Grant, an application will be made to try and secure it"</li> </ol>
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>I am supportive of the efforts being made by LRFC and the Council to achieve a much improved facility at The Burrows. I welcome the Club's willingness to explore this scheme. The council will certainly support bids for this kind of initiative and we hope our bids to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund will allow us to do so.</p> <p>We are in the process of exploring our options to apply for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund. We will explore the opportunity to include this project within the bid, if it meets the fund criteria.</p>

## 8. MEMBER QUESTIONS

<b>1.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Karl Hobley to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	<p>Residents are increasingly demanding more cycle infrastructure. I understand that the highways authority is Gloucestershire County Council. However, in the absence of any proposals from the County, what is Cheltenham Borough Council doing to</p>

	develop proposals for consultation on segregated cycle schemes in line with the governments Gear Change report?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>During 2019 we worked on a transport plan for Cheltenham, working with key stakeholders, including the County Council. The Connecting Cheltenham report was submitted to Gloucestershire County Council as part of the Local Transport Plan review. We have received confirmation that the report, and its proposed local cycle improvements, has been considered. The LTP is due for publication in the new year.</p> <p>The West Cheltenham Transport Improvement Scheme (WCTIS), led by GCC, has plans for Phase 3 and 4 to deliver segregated cycling and footway from the Arle Court roundabout to the Lansdown Road/Gloucester Rd junction (by the Shell garage).</p> <p>An action plan is currently being developed and finalised as a result of the Connecting Cheltenham report – which identified considerable funding needed to achieve aspirations. This action plan will help inform and develop “bid ready” projects in which to apply for funding should opportunities arise – including the mentioned government Gear Change report.</p> <p>The predicted cost of Cycle Cheltnways, as identified within the Connecting Cheltenham report is estimated to be £5 to £20 million.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Karl Hobley to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	The Honeybourne Line is the key piece of cycle infrastructure in our town and it runs to the edge of my ward in St Paul's. There is a protected corridor north of there which would make an ideal extension. Will the Cabinet member work with officers and other partners to investigate the ownership of the land and explore opportunities for developing it as a cycle path and pedestrian link?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>The protected corridor is currently inaccessible, unused and unusable as a cycle path or pedestrian link. I have walked the line myself after a suggestion from a local resident.</p> <p>The path follows the former railway line and is not in the ownership of the Borough Council, nor is it highways land. A future northern extension could link to homes around the boundary of Swindon Village and Prestbury parishes, extending this important piece of cycle and walking infrastructure northwards and opening up more green areas to local residents.</p>
	<b>Supplementary question</b>
	Would the Cabinet Member be willing to look into the ownership of the strip of land concerned, and potentially contact them to see if they would be interested in discussing plans relating to the cycle route?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	I would be happy to look into this, consulting the relevant officers. This is an important topic with great benefits for the town, and I encourage our county council colleagues to take it forward too.

<b>3.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Iain Dobie to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	Is CBC investigating where it can deliver cycle infrastructure - not necessarily on highways land. I ask this with particular reference to Bournside Green Corridor and the Honeybourne Line north of the Prince of Wales Stadium.
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>The Connecting Cheltenham report identified a cycle network 'Cycle Cheltways'. This report has been submitted to Gloucestershire County Council as part of the Local Transport Plan review. We have received confirmation that the report, and its proposed local cycle improvements, has been considered. The LTP is due for publication in the new year.</p> <p>I understand Gloucestershire County Council has undertaken a feasibility study looking at the Bournside Green Corridor and would be happy to discuss this further with Councillor Dobie. The area could become a sustainable transport path and linear park to enable quicker, healthier and safer journeys to school for local children, linking with existing paths in the area.</p> <p>See response to question 1.</p>
	<b>Supplementary question</b>
	Will the Cabinet Member agree to visit the site with me and the GCC Highways Manager, to walk the ground and fully appreciate why delivery of the Bournside Green Corridor would be valuable for the town?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	I would be happy to visit the site with you in person.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Iain Dobie to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	Is CBC intending to drive the agenda on delivering a properly segregated cycle infrastructure, in line with the Cheltways suggestion in the Connecting Cheltenham report?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	See response to questions 1 and 3.
<b>5.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Paul McCloskey to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	<p>At the start of lockdown I took up cycling after a gap of 50 years. So, I've been following Gloucestershire County Council's £10million Emergency Travel Fund Bid avidly.</p> <p>Was the Cabinet Member as disappointed as I was that GCC were only awarded a derisory amount of £864,750, particularly after the Government published its 'Gear Change' cycling and walking Strategy</p> <p>And could the Cabinet Member please tell me:</p> <p>a) What CBC is doing to drive a pro-cycling agenda from the bottom up to influence GCC and ensure that the views of local residents are reflected in</p>



	<p>anything that is proposed?</p> <p><b>b) What CBC is doing to investigate where we might deliver cycling infrastructure of our own on our own land, as it seems we may have to wait a long time for GCC to deliver</b></p>
	<p><b>Response from Cabinet Member</b></p>
	<p>The latest funding was allocated nationally to Highways Authorities, which meant Cheltenham Borough Council was unable to bid directly. That was the responsibility of Gloucestershire County Council, as Cllr McCloskey notes in his question. According to the Transport Secretary the latest allocations were made based on the success of the implementation of previous schemes. I feel this was a missed opportunity to drive change at a time when our communities were actively engaged in the walking and cycling agenda.</p> <p>Even if the County Council had received its full indicative allocation from the government, it would have been millions of pounds short of the amount needed to deliver the Cheltenham to Gloucester cycle path. While I would always welcome strategic cycle infrastructure linking the town and the city, Cheltenham will only be able to fully embrace cycling if there is suitable investment in segregated cycle schemes within the town. As we have made clear Cheltenham Borough Council is keen to work with the County Council on the delivery of schemes, starting with ensuring we have a pipeline of shovel-ready projects to deliver. I have met with the County cabinet member Nigel Moor and subsequently written to a senior officer and Councillor Moor to offer our support.</p> <p>Officers are awaiting announcement of funding opportunities outlined within the 'Gear Change' publication, which is a separate fund to the Emergency Travel Fund.</p> <p>See response to questions 1 and 3.</p>
	<p><b>Supplementary question</b></p>
	<p>Thank you for your full and detailed response. I recently returned to cycling at the beginning of lockdown, and have found that going around Cox's Meadow is very tricky due to the combination of dogs and toddlers there. It is not just a case of separating cyclists from cars, but also from pedestrians and dogs. Will this be taken into account in the future?</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member also commit to removing the chicane railings that block the entrance to many off-road cycle paths?</p>
	<p><b>Response from Cabinet Member</b></p>
	<p>I agree that it is important to ensure that vulnerable road users (including pedestrians, particularly children, and dogs) are safe. I also agree that these metal chicanes can be frustrating, but they do also serve a useful function in preventing motorised traffic entering these sites. We need to take into account the needs of residents, and this includes making adjustments for things like larger cargo bikes which some people use to carry their shopping. In some cases, this will be a highways issue that is up to the county council, but CBC will help where possible.</p>
<b>6.</b>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Jo Stafford to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b></p>
	<p>Cycling is a sustainable and COVID safe form of transport. Will Cheltenham Borough Council commit to driving the debate on cycling locally by beginning</p>

	consultation on Cheltways, a fully segregated network of cycle routes as referenced in the 'Connecting Cheltenham' report which would support safer cycling across the town?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	In order to have an informed conversation more detailed work is needed on the Cheltways proposal. See response to question 1.
<b>7.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Jo Stafford to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	Cycling as a mode of transport and form of exercise is sustainable and COVID safe. Are CBC looking at ways to deliver non-highways cycling infrastructure, and is there any scope to extend the popular Honeybourne Line path further northwards?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	See response to question 2.
<b>8.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Angie Boyes to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	A number of residents have contacted me regarding what action we are taking to develop schemes for more cycle routes in Cheltenham, such as extensions of the Honeybourne Line. If we are serious about being net carbon zero by 2030, then we need to be working now to get more cycle routes implemented. Please can the Cabinet Member update the Council as to the progress being made regarding new and extensions of cycle routes in Cheltenham.
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	See responses to questions 1 and 3.  Additionally, we have for many years been working with partners on a southern extension of the Honeybourne Line to Lansdown Road. This information has been discussed publicly and I understand has been an ambition of local cycle campaigners for decades. Most recently, officers and cabinet members have been engaged in discussions with GWR and Network Rail about the project. I hope to be able to announce positive news soon.
<b>9.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Diggory Seacome to Cabinet Member Corporate Services, Councillor Alex Hegenbarth</b>
	Since we have been broadcasting various Council committees to the general public for some time, can we please have the viewing figures for the following?  Full Council  Planning  Licensing (all committees)  Overview and Scrutiny.  I appreciate that they will not all be of actual debates in the chamber.
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>

The viewing figures for recent meetings of each committee are as follows. Please note that figures may include officers and Members watching live proceedings via YouTube and for Cabinet and Council may include subsequent views as the recordings of these meetings remain online for a specified period.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>YouTube views</b>
22nd July	Audit	14
11th November	Audit	3
14th May	Cabinet	124
9th June	Cabinet	67
7th July	Cabinet	51
28th July	Cabinet	27
15th September	Cabinet	47
13th October	Cabinet	63
10th November	Cabinet	34
17th November	Cabinet	8
15th June	Council	169
20th July	Council	181
29th July	Council	66
16th November	Council	66
24th June	Licensing	18
2nd September	Licensing	8
2nd July	Licensing Sub	44
21st July	Licensing Sub	13
5th August	Licensing Sub	25
11th August	Licensing Sub	13
24th September	Licensing Sub	24
4th November	Licensing Sub	38
4th November	Licensing Sub	8
27th July	O&S	25
2nd November	O&S	12
28th May	Planning	70
18th June	Planning	32

	16th July	Planning	63
	20th August	Planning	29
	17th September	Planning	204
	19th November	Planning	11
	3rd July	Standards	26
	13th August	Standards	6
	25th November	Standards	9
	<b>Supplementary question</b>		
	Thank you for these figures. Would the Cabinet Member consider publishing this information regularly in the future, perhaps every six months?		
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>		
	I would be happy to make this information regularly available, as part of our commitment to being an open and transparent council.		
<b>10.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Diggory Seacome to Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</b>		
	<p>From the last week in July to the first fortnight in September (60 days) and innocuous sounding outfit called Soul Circus operated in Montpellier Gardens.</p> <p>As well as Yoga it also included a bar, which broadcast loud music in the evenings, especially at the weekends, and it was this music (along with the taking of trade away from already struggling Montpellier bars) which generated more email correspondence for the Lansdown Councillors than normal.</p> <p>Can we hear please who sanctioned this use of the Gardens? The Chairman of the Licensing Committee knew nothing about it, and it was not referred to the newly formed Events Committee, and it appears there was no Member involvement. I understand that it took the place of the Literature Festival events planned, and so the 70 day maximum allowed on events in the Gardens was not breached, but the music element should have meant that the licensing committee was consulted.</p>		
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>		
	<p>The event followed the approved CBC event consultative process including a meeting on 3 July 2020. In line with the normal process, ward councillors have a standing invite to the meeting. A separate meeting was arranged on site with local ward members, the Friends of Montpellier Gardens, event organiser, and members of the Council's green space team to discuss the event. The event was put in front of the Safety Advisory Group for discussion and advice. The organisers event plan was found to be satisfactory by the ECG and the organiser took on board advice from the SAG. A tenancy at will agreement was then entered into with the event organiser. The event organiser set up regular weekly meetings for local residents, the Friends of Montpellier Gardens, and ward members to attend and discuss any issues. The event operated under the existing premises licence for Montpellier Gardens. No breaches of either the licence, noise conditions, or social distancing rules were recorded, and the organiser paid for the full repair of the grass at the end</p>		

	of the event.
	<b>Supplementary question</b>
	The invitation to ward councillors was sent the day before the meeting, and was not worded in a way that conveyed the importance of the meeting. Could these be issued sooner and be more clear about the nature of the meeting in the future?  Additionally, was it a committee decision or a single person decision?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	I am happy to take the point about notice into account in the future. With regard to who made the decision, I cannot add further detail to the original response.
<b>11.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Louis Savage to Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles, Councillor Flo Clucas</b>
	At the Council meeting on 15th December 2015, the Council voted unanimously to sign up to the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge.  In so doing, it agreed to prioritise the mental health of the community, and to commit to parity of esteem between mental and physical health.  Increasing evidence is emerging of the harm inflicted on mental health by COVID restrictions, with Professor Wendy Burn, President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, warning of an impending “ <i>tsunami</i> ” of mental health problems. ( <a href="https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/news-and-features/latest-news/detail/2020/05/15/psychiatrists-see-alarming-rise-in-patients-needing-urgent-and-emergency-care">https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/news-and-features/latest-news/detail/2020/05/15/psychiatrists-see-alarming-rise-in-patients-needing-urgent-and-emergency-care</a> ).  Given the above:  -What steps has CBC taken over the course of the pandemic to ensure it honours commitments made under the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge?  -What steps can CBC and its partner organisations take to ensure that the adverse mental health impact of COVID restrictions are given the consideration they deserve?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	The commitment we made in 2015 to the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge remains a high priority for Cheltenham Borough Council.  Over the course of the pandemic Cheltenham Borough Council has met frequently with its partners to identify and mitigate community risks via a community impact assessment process. Consistently through the different phases of the pandemic, CBC and its partners have identified mental health as one of the highest risks to our community. To mitigate this we have taken a number of steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have worked in partnership to promote self-help resources, existing support services, contact information and information about newly commissioned services to support people’s mental health during the pandemic through both our website and social media channels.</li> <li>• No Child Left Behind through its web presence and local school partners had a large push in July on mental health support for children and families</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the Community Help Hub that our staff managed, we made contact with many people who were experiencing poor mental health. This could be anything from low mood to suicidal thoughts. To offer them the support, we formed close partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Group’s lead safeguarding nurse, the local police team and Cheltenham Borough Homes tenancy management team. This enabled us to refer people to direct support through welfare checks, support to help with their individual living circumstances or direct clinical support.</li> </ul> <p>I would like to acknowledge the fantastic support from partners we received at this time which enabled us to support our communities and also to thank the Council staff who managed the help hub supporting people in distressing situations with great kindness and empathy despite most having little experience in this area of work prior to the pandemic.</p> <p>At the most recent community impact assessment meeting partners continued to identify mental health as the greatest risk moving forward both for residents and staff.</p> <p>We will therefore propose at this month’s Communities Partnership that we focus on Mental Health as a priority for 2021 reinvigorating the successful Heads Up Cheltenham campaign. I would like to invite the Elected Member Mental Health Champions to meet with myself and relevant officers to update you about the discussion at the Communities Partnership and plan next steps for Cheltenham Borough Council.</p>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Louis Savage to Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles, Councillor Flo Clucas</b>
	<p>In 2018 Cheltenham Borough Council’s No Child Left Behind project (<a href="https://nclbcheltenham.org.uk/">https://nclbcheltenham.org.uk/</a>) identified that 4400 children and young people in our town are living in poverty, and at risk of poor mental and physical health.</p> <p>In her recent report ‘Childhood in the time of COVID’ (<a href="https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/report/childhood-in-the-time-of-covid/">https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/report/childhood-in-the-time-of-covid/</a>) Anne Longfield, the Children’s Commissioner for England, highlights that children from disadvantaged backgrounds have suffered disproportionately from COVID restrictions.</p> <p>Given the emerging evidence of the harm suffered by disadvantaged children described in this report:</p> <p>-Can CBC ensure that it heeds the advice from the Children’s Commissioner and keeps vital services for children open wherever and whenever possible, including children’s centres and council-owned facilities used for children’s groups and activities?</p> <p>-What steps can CBC and its partner organisations take to mitigate the harmful physical and mental health impacts of COVID restrictions on the most vulnerable children and young people in our Borough?</p>
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>As we approach Christmas with a bit more optimism that life may return to some kind of normality in 2021, we must not forget the very real impacts of Covid among the town’s children and young people. This is something I will be working hard with</p>

a wide range of partners to address in 2021.

In terms of the first question – although CBC does not directly provide services to children and young people, we will work with Gloucestershire County Council and children’s services providers to assess the risks to any services and then do whatever we can to support their retention.

In terms of the second question, the focus for our work to support the most vulnerable children and young people is through our No Child Left Behind programme – which has continued to be incredibly proactive during the course of the pandemic.

In September NCLB launched the Community Agreement and to date 50 organisation from all sectors have formally signed up to the agreement. It promotes the importance of empathy, kindness and being trauma-informed along with a specific reference to the importance of valuing the wellbeing of children and their families.

To help partners fulfil their commitments under the agreement, we are organising a programme of webinars for signatories. The first took place last week and gave frontline worker insight into trauma and helping children build resilience. Future sessions will focus on topics such as restorative practice, kindness and strengths based approaches.

Through its web presence, NCLB has also promoted resources to support children’s and young people’s mental health as well as opportunities for families to get out and about together and take part in activities that are Covid secure.

NCLB has also supported the holiday hunger scheme and supported local food banks by collecting donations from CBC allotments to ensure children and young people were getting appropriate nutrition during the pandemic

As Covid restrictions ease NCLB will work again with its partners on initiatives to promote physical activity and physical health among Cheltenham’s families.

I would also like to update council on two other important strands of work that I participated in last week that are relevant to the question:

The Cheltenham Change conference, held last Monday, was organised by local community leaders in response to the motion agreed by council that committed us to work more closely with partners to challenge bias, both deliberate and unconscious and racism in all its forms.

I was really pleased to listen to partners talk about the importance of supporting young people of colour in the town, and there was a commitment to work with local schools to achieve this.

Secondly, the council and its partners are in the process of developing a culture strategy for Cheltenham. We held two stakeholder workshops on Thursday as part of our commitment to engage partners in the process. The draft strategy highlights the importance of empowering young people through culture.

There was widespread agreement among the workshop attendees that young people are absolutely critical and there is a strong commitment to do more to ensure that all our young people can not only benefit from cultural activities but be cultural leaders in their own right.

13.	<p><b>Question from Councillor Louis Savage to Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</b></p>
	<p>I thank the Cabinet Member for circulating the guidance issued by CBC to Community Protection Officers, also referred in this document as ‘Covid Ambassadors’ (email 17/11/2020).</p> <p>The description of the role of ‘Covid Ambassadors’ includes “<i>checks on the reasons people are out and about</i>” and “<i>to see if trips really are essential</i>”.</p> <p>This guidance document does leave several questions unanswered, and I would be grateful for his clarification on the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Other than the document circulated, have Covid Ambassadors been given any formal training or additional guidance?</li> <li>-What oversight and governance arrangements has CBC put in place for Covid Ambassadors?</li> <li>-Will audit-able data be kept on the number of interactions Covid Ambassadors have with members of the public, including reasons for approaching a given individual?</li> <li>-Will data be kept on the characteristics of the people being approached, including age, gender and ethnicity, to ensure that vulnerable and minority groups are not being disproportionately targeted?</li> <li>-Is there a formal complaint process for members of the public who feel they have been subject to an inappropriate, disrespectful, discriminatory or unlawful interaction with a Covid Ambassador?</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Response from Cabinet Member</b></p>
	<p>The Council has entered into a partnership arrangement with three of the other Gloucestershire local authorities (Gloucester City, Tewkesbury Borough and Stroud District Councils) and CBC is contributing £30,000 from its Covid-related surge funding allocation received from central government, for the period up until the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, for additional staffing resources to help reassure and advise the public about the ever changing rules concerning Covid-19. These staff are trained and experienced Community Protection Officers, normally operating as part of the Gloucester City Safe scheme. The staff concerned do not have formal enforcement powers delegated to them and are working in close co-operation with the police and local authority authorised officers, to whom issues are escalated if enforcement is being considered.</p> <p>The activities of Gloucester City Safe staff and of local authority Covid Compliance and Neighbourhood Officers are being collated on a weekly basis and reported through the Tactical Enforcement Group, which has been established by the Health Protection Board to help coordinate Covid-related enforcement activity.</p> <p>The collation of characteristics data for all interactions with the public would be disproportionate and its collection would itself be likely to give rise to concerns from members of the public about what that data would be used for.</p> <p>Any complaint relating to the activities of Gloucester City Safe or CBC staff operating in Cheltenham can be reported through the Council’s own complaints’ process and will be investigated.</p>



<b>14.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor David Willingham to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman</b>
	<p>The mature trees on streets like Gloucester Road, are attractive and good for our town's environment, but during autumn they drop a lot of leaves which can become a hazard and can block drains. Efficient mechanical street cleansing can only happen when streets (or sections of streets) are free of parked cars, but both parking and drains are the responsibility of Gloucestershire County Council.</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member please advise whether any progress has been made on getting Gloucestershire County Council to agree to support Cheltenham's work and coordinate it's parking and drain cleaning efforts with the street cleansing efforts of Ubico to allow this important work to occur?</p>
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>Cheltenham Borough Council and Ubico have been working closely with Gloucestershire County Council to co-ordinate street clearance works to ensure that a joined up approach delivers higher quality standards across the borough.</p> <p>This year, despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, Ubico have delivered a number of different street clearances, some of which have been in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council and we have had positive feedback from residents.</p> <p>Street clearance activity to October 2020 excluding normal mechanical sweeping activity and leafing works:</p> <p>09.06.20 Evesham Rd (Clarence Rd – Central Cross) – Street Clearance &amp; Weeding</p> <p>02.07.20 Old Station Drive – Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>13.07.20 Church Road – Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>30.07.20 St Lukes Rd – Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>06.08.20 Naunton Lane – Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>18.08.20 Orrisdale Terrace – Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>20.08.20 Fairfield Park Rd – Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>25.08.20 Langdon Rd – Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>27.08.20 Fairfield Av – Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>17.09.20 Fairfield Rd – Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>17.09.20 Fairhaven St - Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>24.09.20 College Rd (St Lukes – London Rd) – Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>24.09.20 London Rd (Keynsham Rd – College Rd) - Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>01.10.20 College Rd (London Rd – St Lukes) – Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>06.10.20 Dinas Close – Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>08.10.20 Moorend St – Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p>


	<p>08.10.20 Moorend Crescent – Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>08.10.20 Battledown Approach – Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>13.10.20 Upper Norwood St – Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>13.10.20 Croft St – Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>15.10.20 Francis St – Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>27.10.20 Fairfield Parade - Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>29.10.20 Naunton Lane (Revisit) - Street Clearance, Drains &amp; Weeding</p> <p>As more people work from home during lockdown, the amount of parked cars on the sides of roads has increased. This has worsened the situation with parked cars preventing access for kerbside collections as well as street clearances and there is perhaps more we need to do with Gloucestershire County Council to help us with this.</p>
	<p><b>Supplementary question</b></p>
	<p>The Cabinet Member is not present, but I would like to put my supplementary question on the record. Can we ensure that Gloucester Road (B4633) from the train station to the Honeybourne Way junction gets that treatment, because the large trees there have caused a muddy quagmire? This will require coordination between the parking and waste management departments, as well as Ubico.</p>
<p><b>15.</b></p>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Tim Harman to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b></p>
	<p>Can the Cabinet Member inform the Council of Cheltenham Borough Councils CO2 emissions last year and for the previous 5 years?</p>
	<p><b>Response from Cabinet Member</b></p>
	<p>Thank you to Councillor Harman for asking this important question. The matter of monitoring carbon output in response to our ambitious carbon neutral target has been mentioned on several occasions since I started my role as cabinet member in September.</p> <p>Cheltenham Borough Council's CO2 emissions in 2019/20 were 5,622 tonnes, which represents an increase of 562 tonnes from 2018/19. Three quarters of this increase is attributed to UBICO. And much of that appears to be a result of an improved data-gathering process, which has revealed a higher level of fuel consumption by the Ubico waste &amp; recycling fleet. The remainder can be attributed largely to a change in the calculation method for CBH fuel consumption and a minor calculation error found in the 2018/19 figures.</p> <p>Data capture and accuracy since 2018/19 has improved considerably and Ubico has done a lot of work ensuring the correct allocation of fuel to the correct fuel cards as well as investing in better systems for capturing the information, therefore it is likely that we have a more accurate picture now. It is also possible that the information previously drawn from fuel invoices crosses over two financial years, masking the true in year usage and emissions. This highlights the importance of having the right data recording methods.</p>

	<p>Ubico changed most of its waste and recycling fleet in October 2017 and the new vehicles have euro 6 diesel engines however there are still some older vehicles on the fleet and efficiency of hired vehicles is out of our control. All vehicles are gradually being fitted with telematics to help increase efficiency of fuel use.</p> <p>In 2018/19, additional vehicles were added to the fleet. This is the cumulative effect of increased volumes of all waste streams presented at kerbside and bring banks as a result of successful public awareness campaigns and housing growth. Clearly, the more vehicles that are being used, the more fuel is used and the more emissions will increase. Ubico is currently buying an average of 9337 litres of fuel per week (486,831 litres p.a.) which is very similar to 2019/20, taking into account the previous comments regarding vehicle numbers and mileage.</p> <p>Coming back to our carbon neutral target, the adoption of it means that the next time we are procuring a new fleet of waste collection vehicles it will have to be low or zero carbon emission – whether electric or hydrogen-powered. This demonstrates the value of having a higher commitment to the environment, when compared with other levels of government. The new fleet is due in 2024.</p> <p>Work is already underway to investigate how the Council can achieve a sustainable operations depot and heavy goods fleet, powered by alternative green fuels, ahead of our ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030 and this is a priority for both the Council and Ubico.</p> <p>In the meantime, we recognise that people want us to move faster, so measures have been put in place this year with the aim of reducing emissions. A review of the garden waste service has optimised the rounds to ensure that we only need 3 vehicles to service our increased customer base (as well as extra tonnage presented at kerbside) and some residents may have noticed a change to their collection day in the summer. This has prevented a 4th vehicle being required.</p> <p>Refuse and recycling, along with food waste, is also being reviewed and these optimised rounds will be rolled out next year as soon as the work is complete. Optimising the rounds results in more efficient collections and ultimately less unnecessary miles driven keeping emissions as low as possible with as few vehicles as possible too. More vehicles will also be fitted with telematics to improve efficiency and data availability in the next few months.</p> <p>We hope to have our first zero emission vehicles in 2021 – these are unrelated to waste collection activities.</p> <p>Looking to the future, we are looking at various projects to reduce our carbon output. This will inevitably include discussions around the future of the Municipal Offices and an exploration of carbon-efficient accommodation for the council – a project which ought to also save money in the longer run.</p>
	<p><b>Supplementary question</b></p>
	<p>This does not fully answer my question, as it lacks the comparable figures over five years. Could these figures be provided, and would he consider developing a key performance indicator so we can see how it progresses?</p>
	<p><b>Response from Cabinet Member</b></p>
	<p>Thank you for raising this question. Last week, the National Audit Office identified</p>

	<p>monitoring as one of the key barriers to reaching carbon neutral targets – so we must do it properly. The specific five-year figures will be provided by email once I have consulted the relevant officers. As mentioned by another Cabinet Member, it is important to be open and transparent about these processes.</p>
<b>16.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Tim Harman to Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</b>
	When will all Council owned Car Parks have Electric Vehicle charging points?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>I have asked officers to look at feasible options for the delivery of up to 40 Electric Vehicle charging points in appropriate locations across the Council's car parks.</p> <p>This would compare favourably with the GCC proposal to provide 200 on-street charging points across the county, which in percentage terms will be considerably lower. Whilst there are 2 EV charging points at the Arle Court Park and Ride site, GCC has so far provided only two on-street charging points in Cheltenham at Montpellier Street.</p> <p>Cllr Harman will be aware that there are already four EV charging points located in our multi-storey car parks, but these are often viewed as less visible and convenient than those located on-street.</p> <p>We are currently exploring procurement options and in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Size of preferred charging points i.e. standard, fast or ultra fast;</li> <li>• Optimal locations;</li> <li>• Lining and signing;</li> <li>• Options for payback – e.g. charging for parking, electricity consumption and offsetting capital cost</li> <li>• Any challenges around sufficiency of the local power supply (via Western Power Distribution).</li> </ul> <p>Officers have recommended that we look to phase the installation to help gauge demand, as if the spaces are not fully utilised, there is a risk of income loss (although not an issue whilst demand is suppressed due to the pandemic). This would mean installing 10-20 charging points next financial year at a cost of up to £50,000.</p> <p>We will look to offset some of our costs through any government grants that may be made available and through the charging arrangements. In theory, this could cover our installation/running costs, even if this does not cover lost parking revenue (due to space turnover downtime).</p>
<b>17.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Martin Horwood to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	<p>Will the Cabinet Member with responsibility for tackling the climate emergency support Leckhampton Rovers Football Club's ambitious plans for the improvement of Burrow's sports field and its pavilion, developed in partnership with this council, by making an application for funding under the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) launched by the Department of Business, Energy &amp; Industrial Strategy (BEIS) which could fund solar photovoltaic panels, air source heat pump, new windows and insulation, solar heating and/or battery storage for the pavilion, helping to reduce future costs and fight climate change for the benefit of the club,</p>

	the town and the planet?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>I have heard about this project and it is exactly the sort of community-led sustainability scheme that the council wants to promote. I welcome the Club's willingness to explore this scheme. The council will certainly support bids for this kind of initiative and we hope our bids to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund will allow us to do so.</p> <p>We are in the process of exploring our options to apply for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund. We will explore the opportunity to include this project within the bid, if it meets the fund parameters.</p>
	<b>Supplementary question</b>
	Thank you for your positive reply. The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme is only open to public bodies and not to voluntary clubs. Although the answer refers to supporting the bid, can you confirm that CBC will be making the bid itself as a public body? We are approaching the deadline for applications.
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	I have been in contact with Leckhampton Rovers Football Club, and it is clear how much passion those within the club have for this project and wider environmental concerns. It is great to see a community-led scheme, and it is right to devolve powers to local bodies like this. Resources will be put into the bid at the council level, and I will discuss it with officers in the coming weeks.
<b>18.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Victoria Atherstone to the Chair of Licensing, Councillor David Willingham</b>
	In the Council meeting of 29th July 2020, the Chair of Licensing said that he would write to Ministers about the "exemption loophole" in SEV licensing. Could he please provide details of any responses he has had from them on this issue?
	<b>Response from Chair of Licensing</b>
	I would like to thank Cllr Atherstone for her question about this important public safety issue which affects our town. On 30th July 2020, I wrote to The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government; Kit Malthouse MP, the Minister for Crime and Policing; and Victoria Atkins MP, Minister for Safeguarding. In my letter, I raised issues relating to the lack of any licensing protections to performers, customers and the public when the exemption is used, and I also requested that government should consider a National Register of Refusals and Revocations for those involved in operating Sexual Entertainment Venues. My representations to the MHCLG were transferred to the Home Office, and a reply was provided by Victoria Atkins MP. I have provided a copy of my original letter, and copies of the replies to be included supplementary to this written answer. In response to our concerns about the exemption, the Minister stated that "The intent of the legislation is to strike a balance between nuisance to the community and the reduction of onerous regulation being placed on small businesses." Furthermore, while the Minister noted our concerns, her reply regrettably stated that the Home Office "have no immediate plans to amend the legislation surrounding the licensing of Sexual Entertainment Venues".

	<b>Supplementary question</b>
	Thank you for your detailed response. Do you find the government's priority of deregulation over public safety to be concerning, and is there anything we can do as a council to improve public safety on this issue?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	I am disappointed by the government's lacklustre response to our representations. They are putting profit before public safety, and it is unfortunate that the policy of the Conservative group on this council is for SEVs to operate under a dangerously deregulated approach. A 'nil limit' policy is really a nil regulation policy. Locally, the best thing we can do is what the administration has done: implement a robust licensing policy with the support of the police. I hope we can work with the LGA to lobby for statutory minimum regulation for all venues that seek to use the exemption, and a campaign to extend the national register of revocations and refusals to all SEVs, so that anyone who wishes to evade scrutiny cannot just move elsewhere in the country.
<b>19.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</b>
	What consideration has been given to reducing council car parking charges to help support town centre shops, restaurants, pubs and other businesses?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	This option has been considered, but was rejected due to the financial pressures on the authority arising from the pandemic and the fact that the government has not underwritten all of our lost income.  The Council continues to support businesses during the pandemic, during the first wave of the pandemic, £23.1m support was paid out to 1,836 businesses in the Government grants scheme - plus £1.1m to 191 businesses for the discretionary scheme, making a total of £24.3m to 2,027 businesses. Further grant support is being administered in relation to the second lockdown.
<b>20.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</b>
	What consideration has been given to introducing free parking after 6pm in the run up to Christmas, to help support town centre shops, restaurants, pubs and other businesses?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	See answer to Q19.
<b>21.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman</b>
	What consideration has been given to issuing annual/seasonal fishing licences for Pittville park lake?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	The Council has no plans to introduce an annual fishing licence for its Pittville Park Lake. The current system allows for anglers to purchase a day ticket from the boat

	house where a check can be made that they possess a rod licence and are made aware of the rules. It also allows the Council to keep a record of how many people are using the lake for angling.
<b>22.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Chris Mason to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	<p>The borough council has committed to working with partner organisations towards planting 1,000,000 trees or equivalent by 2030. On average, this would planting 100,000 trees or equivalent pa from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020.</p> <p>How many trees have been planted by the borough council or its partners, on the council's behalf from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020?</p>
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Tree and Biodiversity Projects.xlsx</p> </div> <p>Thank you to Councillor Mason for asking this question. It's an important subject and one he has raised with me before in O&amp;S meetings. I'm sure he will acknowledged that however we approach this issue, a partnership approach is needed involving other councils, the private sector and the charitable/third sector.</p> <p>Having joined the Gloucestershire County Council-endorsed conference with Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership, my own understanding of this topic is much better. Indeed, we ought to all be aware that planting trees is not the quick-and-easy solution to environmental problems that is sometimes suggested. It is one of a number of things we should do, but other workstreams will ultimately be more valuable and more access to carbon footprint measuring will help us make the case for the behavioural change we will all need to undertake.</p> <p>The attached spreadsheet outlines where we are this year with planting projects; numbers, approximate costs, partners, event details and more information besides. It's a working document and we will keep it updated as we progress. Most of the trees are small: 60-90cm whips or similar. Whips are a cost effective way to plant lots of trees, and logistically easier especially when planting with schools. It's a well-established fact that a small tree will, given time and care, establish quicker and outgrow a standard. Standards are used on streets and in parks as specimen plantings where a more robust individual plant is required. The traditional tree planting season runs from around mid-October through to mid-March, so it is not easily possible to state tree planting figures for any particular calendar year.</p> <p>Clearly the council's alone will not amount to one million trees by 2030 or hit KPI's to that effect. However it is a positive contribution to a wider objective to increase tree cover across the borough and wider county that engages with schools and the local community.</p> <p>Last year CBC planted approximately 2,500 trees through similar projects.</p> <p>The Council has not explicitly committed to planting 1,000,000 trees itself, but it was a suggestion in the Carbon Neutral Cheltenham report that this could contribute to our carbon neutrality.</p> <p>As part of its work, the Council has noted the county-level target of planting 35</p>

	<p>million trees in the next decade. We are engaging with the County Council and Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership to find out what role we will be asked to play and are keen to play a role in partnership working, including public sector, private sector and the third sector.</p> <p>It is noted that Gloucestershire County Council's street tree planting for the upcoming winter planting season has been published and includes 70 new trees on the highway in Cheltenham.</p>
	<b>Supplementary question</b>
	How many trees were planted this year? Is the ballpark figure of around 2,500 cited at Overview & Scrutiny Committee still accurate?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	It has been approximately 2,000 in the current year, and will be a similar amount in the coming year. More work is emerging on this topic, and we are working with public and private sector partners to deliver our goals.
<b>23.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Chris Mason to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	Having regard to the question above could the cabinet member please provide some examples of "equivalent"?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>"Equivalent" will mean hedgerows. These are maples, hazel, holly, hawthorn or blackthorn planted as trees with the intention to maintain them as a hedge.</p> <p>"Equivalent" could also mean shrubs and other woody species. The definition of a tree is rather an academic question, because many shrubs and bushes are bigger than trees and can class as trees, for example: privet, Portugal laurel, lilac. Some trees could be viewed as bushes, for example: spindle, box and others.</p> <p>The common denominator would be "woody plants". This describes plants lasting more than one year, unlike annual bedding or hanging baskets. They all lock up carbon when they are alive.</p>
<b>24.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Chris Mason to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	The planting of 1,000,000 trees over a 10 year period should be a major project for this council. In order to meet this target, it is necessary to formulate a plan with a KPI on the number of trees to be planted each year until 2030. How many trees does the council or its partners (on the council's behalf) plan to plant in 2021 and 2022? What is the expected cost to the council for each year and where will the trees be planted?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>The 2021 planting will take place from January to March and October to Nov. The October to November planting has not yet been planned. However, it is fair to say that projected numbers of trees to be planted is increasing dramatically to the extent that it may become logistically difficult to achieve with the current resource.</p> <p>The Green Spaces Team and the Trees Officer have been seeking external sources</p>



	<p>of trees and resource. This includes the Woodland Trust planting bundles of trees, government grants, Cheltenham Tree Group and others. Trees are to be planted in parks, gardens, open spaces, CBH land, Highway verges and other areas.</p> <p>The Council facilitates and manages, where appropriate, self-seeding trees. There is anticipated natural regeneration of trees in woodlands and other peripheral land around the Borough.</p> <p>See also response to question 22.</p>
	<b>Supplementary question</b>
	If we go by the projected 2,000 trees per year figure, by the start of 2023 we will be lagging far behind our long term target. Does the council have a specific project in mind to plant a million trees by 2030, and if so could I see a feasibility study?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	There is no project to plant a million trees by 2030. Something like this may emerge over time, but it is not a specific commitment. All public authorities, including CBC, need to raise their game if they are going to reach their carbon neutral goals, and this must be based on various things including behavioural change, private and public sector decarbonisation and sustainable transport.
<b>25.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Chris Mason to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>
	Will the council or its partners be selecting indigenous trees that meet the regular standard (girth 8-10 cm, height 2:50 – 3:00 m)? If not could the cabinet member please give some guidance as to what will be planted?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>It is easier and more cost effective to establish small trees than larger ones. Certainly, less CO2 is created whilst establishing small trees, when one considers the cost of the reduced after care and maintenance of larger trees until establishment.</p> <p>In terms of carbon footprint for the life of the tree, it is important to select the most appropriate species for each location. Regular tree surgery throughout the life of the tree is expensive in terms of financial and human resource as well as carbon footprint. Ideally, one plants a tree and walks away until it is time to fell it after it has died. This is rarely the case, but minimal tree surgery can be undertaken if an appropriate species is planted at an appropriate location.</p> <p>In forthcoming years it is hoped to plant a wide variety of tree species. This means native and exotic, small and large trees, long and short lived. Best practice informs strategies that prevent the planting of a large percentage of any particular tree species. This helps ensure as good as possible continuous canopy cover in times of significant and devastating new pests and diseases, such as ash die back, Sudden Oak Death, Acute Oak Decline, Plane Wilt, horse chestnut bleeding canker and leaf miner. This approach also protects against hotter, drier summers, milder winters, increased property subsidence claims and storms.</p>
<b>26.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Chris Mason to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</b>

	Who are our partner organisations and what agreements have been made with them?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	CBC are working with Gloucestershire Highways, Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership towards the goal of 35,000,000 trees by 2030.
<b>27.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Angie Boyes to Cabinet Member Housing, Councillor Peter Jeffries</b>
	Many people, including children, are dying in their attempts to get to the UK to find safe sanctuary. As a town, it is vital, especially post-Brexit, to welcome refugees with open arms. Given the recent vote in Parliament, where MPs, including Cheltenham's, for a second time voted down an amendment to ensure that child refugees could be reunited with their families after Brexit, can Cllr Pete Jeffries, Cabinet Member for Housing please provide an update on the status of Cheltenham's Town of Sanctuary application?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>Cheltenham has a history of welcoming refugees who have contributed to and shaped our town and Cheltenham Borough Council are proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution through assisting refugees with homes and opportunities as well as supporting people seeking asylum.</p> <p>In 2015 in response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis the UK government launched the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme (VPR) with a pledge to rehouse 20,000 Syrian Refugees across the UK over a 5 year period. Cheltenham Borough Council quickly supported this initiative and since the scheme started more than 122 refugees have been successfully housed in Cheltenham.</p> <p>This has been as a result of close collaborative working with a range of partners, and our thanks go to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue service for co-ordinating this support,</li> <li>• Cheltenham Borough Homes in their commitment in sourcing accommodation and making a significant difference to people resettling in Cheltenham,</li> <li>• and to our local voluntary groups, in particular from GARAS (Gloucestershire action for refugees and asylum seekers), Cheltenham Welcomes Refugees and Cheltenham Volunteer Teachers, who have been instrumental in providing a warm welcome and ongoing support to people making Cheltenham their new home.</li> </ul> <p>The Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme will continue to run until the 20,000th person has been accepted into the UK by the Home Office and this scheme will then be superseded by the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) which will then rehouse refugees throughout the UK from all over the world.</p> <p>Cheltenham Borough Council has committed to support the new UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) when it commences with a commitment in the first year to rehouse approximately 24 refugees which will contribute to the countywide commitment to rehouse 45 refugees across Gloucestershire. (Please see link to cabinet member</p>

report - <https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1341>)

In addition, Cheltenham Borough Council are also committed to working with Cheltenham Welcomes Refugees and GARAS (Gloucestershire action for refugees and asylum seekers) to explore opportunities for larger properties for refugees in the private rented sector within the borough.

Unfortunately due to the unprecedented effects of the global coronavirus pandemic, resettlement arrivals have been paused since March 2020. This has delayed the arrival of the remaining families through the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement programme and the start of the new UK Resettlement scheme. However the government has reiterated its commitment to resettle 20,000 refugees affected by the conflict in Syria under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and recent announcements have confirmed that the Syrian Resettlement scheme is now restarting with plans for the majority of the cases to arrive from January 2021 and any urgent cases will be prioritised where possible.

In addition to the refugee resettlement programmes a cabinet member decision was made in February 2019 to enter into a collaborative arrangement with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) to source private rented accommodation in Cheltenham for households seeking asylum and for Cheltenham to become an asylum dispersal area. This decision estimated that the number of homes that will be sourced by UKVI in the first 12 months across Cheltenham will be around 10 properties or around 25 people and as of December 2020 there are currently 18 people residing across 4 properties in Cheltenham with a further property to accommodate an additional 4 people due to come on board shortly.

Due to the pandemic decisions on cases were halted for an extended period of time and the majority of clients remain in properties awaiting decisions on claims. However a high level of support continues to be provided for people seeking asylum who are residing in Cheltenham from the voluntary sector and strong working relationships have been brokered between Cheltenham Borough Council and the UKVI with regular partnership meetings and updates taking place.

Following a recent review of the Asylum Dispersal Scheme in Cheltenham, Cheltenham Borough Council were approached by UKVI with a request to increase the number of homes that they can source in Cheltenham for households seeking asylum - this is in line with a request to local authorities across the southwest to increase the supply of housing that can be made available for people claiming asylum.

To support this request, a decision has been made to increase the number of homes that will be sourced by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) to double our commitment and accommodate approx. 50 people within Cheltenham. This commitment will be reviewed again in a further 12 months (please see link to officer decision - <https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1426>). The South West Strategic Migration Partnership has thanked Cheltenham Borough Council for our ongoing support and for being a good practice example for other local authorities of how widening dispersal areas can work.

The work of resettlement is complex and Cheltenham Borough Council are privileged to have the dedicated support from a range of local voluntary groups in particular from GARAS (Gloucestershire action for refugees and asylum seekers) and Cheltenham Welcomes Refugees who provide a range of support including advocacy & advice on health, housing, benefits, immigration, law, education,

	<p>counselling provision for those suffering the effects of trauma; access to food, toys, furniture, household items &amp; bedding and community events to help families to meet up with one another and adjust to their new homes together.</p> <p>We are also really pleased that Cheltenham Welcomes Refugees were able to take part in the Cheltenham Change Conference held on Monday 30 November. This conference brought community and agency leaders together to listen and to discuss ways that we can move forward in tackling some of the inequalities that culturally diverse communities experience locally.</p> <p>Organised by Cheltenham residents and organisations from a variety of backgrounds, and working with Cheltenham Borough Council, the conference will lead to a range of positive actions being undertaken that will benefit Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities including refugees.</p> <p>Going forward, this seems like an opportune time for the council to work with Cheltenham Welcomes Refugees and GARAS to consider what additional steps we can take to more formally recognise Cheltenham as a Town of Sanctuary. We will pick this up with them in the near future.</p> <p>Cheltenham Borough Council is extremely grateful for the commitment of our local community groups and charities to helping families settle in the community and we look forward to continuing welcoming people to Cheltenham and providing ongoing sanctuary, safety and support.</p>
<b>28.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor David Willingham to Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</b>
	<p>As part of our town's drive to improve the environment and air quality, could I ask whether it would be possible to consider starting a cabinet member lead review our town's smoke control zones, with a view to examining the feasibility of whether it is possible to extend them to cover our town's entire urban area and planned urban extensions; and if so, looking at what would need to be done and how it could be funded and delivered?</p>
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>The requirements of Smoke Control Zones (SCZ's) apply to fixed appliances in residential properties and require that residents use either an "authorised fuel" or an "exempt appliance" to ensure that smoke emissions are minimised. Both fuels and appliances are tested, approved and publicly listed by the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).</p> <p>In practice, the enforcement of these requirements is just about impossible. The officer needs to prove that smoke was emitted for longer than an unspecified start-up period and what appliance or fuel was in use at the time, without having access to the premises.</p> <p>SCZ's cover large areas of the borough and were introduced in stages many years ago. The areas covered don't seem to follow any particular logic and in places, boundaries pass through houses, so what is legal at the front is illegal at the rear. I understand that as they were introduced, grant funding was available to encourage the replacement of open fires with suitable appliances, but when funding ran out, no further SCZ's were declared.</p> <p>The declaration process for a SCZ appears quite simple – the Council can declare all or part of the borough to be a SCZ. The simplest way of making this happen</p>

	<p>would be to revoke the existing list of SCZ's (I think there are 18 covering different areas) and declare one, new borough-wide zone.</p> <p>Central government has consulted on abolishing the SCZ provisions, most recently in 2018. This contributed to the following report:</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/air-quality-using-cleaner-fuels-for-domestic-burning/outcome/summary-of-responses-and-government-response">https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/air-quality-using-cleaner-fuels-for-domestic-burning/outcome/summary-of-responses-and-government-response</a></p> <p>This report contains various intentions relating to the sale and supply of solid fuel products, which are aimed at improving air quality. That seems to be the government's preferred approach, rather than encouraging a further expansion of SCZ's, or making enforcement more straightforward.</p> <p>The potential downsides of declaring a town wide SCZ would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The up-front officer resourcing of the process, which is likely to divert resources from more impactful air quality related work;</li> <li>• increasing public expectations that the council will take enforcement action, when this is widely considered to be impractical; and</li> <li>• that the measure would be unlikely to demonstrate a related impact on local air quality.</li> </ul> <p>On this basis, I am not persuaded that setting up a 'cabinet member-led review' is necessary, or that extending current SCZ arrangements to cover the whole borough would be sufficiently beneficial to make the action worthwhile.</p>
	<p><b>Supplementary question</b></p>
	<p>It's a shame that the government seems to have pivoted to a different means of tackling this. Is there anything we can do to help, or is our only avenue enforcement in order to move people onto less polluting heat sources?</p>
	<p><b>Response from Cabinet Member</b></p>
	<p>You are right that we are limited by what the government allows us to do. However, we can look to educate residents on the environmental impact of certain kinds of heating, which they may well be unaware of.</p>

**9. APPOINTMENT OF THE LEADER**

Councillor Jordan proposed that Councillor Rowena Hay be elected as the new Leader of the Council. He said he had known Cllr Hay for over 35 years and was confident that she would do an excellent job in helping the council through the difficult financial times that lay ahead. Cllr Hay had been a cabinet member for many years and latterly, the Cabinet Member for Finance and had a wealth of experience.

Councillor Brownsteen seconded the proposal saying Cllr Hay was an outstanding member of the council.

Upon a vote it was

**RESOLVED THAT**

**Councillor Rowena Hay be appointed as the Leader of the Council until May 2021.**

The Mayor invited Councillor Hay as the new leader to address the Council. Cllr Hay set out her plans and challenges for the council, saying she would ensure that communities would recover from the pandemic and prosper, by empowering them to support themselves. She spoke about pressing ahead with key projects despite the additional financial pressures put on the council by covid-19. She felt the groundwork had been laid for the future success of the town, which in no small measure was down to Cllr Jordan and his leadership.

She paid tribute to Cllr Jordan for his hard work and the volume of projects he had been engaged in during his time as leader in some very challenging times and outlined some of the changes during that period. His diligence, calmness, patience and sense of humour had earned him great respect not just within the council but also with local community groups, businesses and fellow council leaders across the county, earning him the reputation as one of the country's best council leaders. Cllr Hay wished him well for the future.

Cllr Hay confirmed that Cllr Peter Jeffries would continue to be the deputy leader until May 2021 and that cabinet member roles would also remain the same, with the addition of Cllr Jordan taking on the role as Cabinet Member Finance and Assets.

Cllr Harman, conservative group leader, paid tribute to the work and leadership of Cllr Jordan and congratulated Cllr Hay on her appointment and to their continued cooperation for the good of the town.

Cllr Payne, representative for the PAB party, also paid tribute to Cllr Jordan, to the huge number of projects he had succeeded on in such a calm manner for the benefit of the residents of Cheltenham and wished him all the best in retirement.

The Mayor wished Cllrs Hay and Jordan every success in their new roles.

**10. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Leader proposed Councillor Horwood for the position of vice-chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Mason seconded this nomination.

Upon a vote it was unanimously

**RESOLVED THAT**

**Councillor Horwood be appointed as vice-chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

**11. SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES AND OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S), firstly took the opportunity to thank the members of the task group that had undertaken the detailed work, and the officers that had supported it.

He reminded Members that O&S were asked to consider the issue and in turn established a task group. The task group considered advice from the Legal Officer on the Regulations relating to Members' Allowances and found that where a Member took the position of Director or Trustee on an outside body, they then attended those meetings in their capacity as a Director or Trustee, rather than 'representing the authority'. As such the Regulations weren't triggered and a Special Responsibility Allowance could not be paid. The task group came back to O&S to ask if any further work should be undertaken on the subject and the decision was no. Council were asked to note the recommendations of O&S Committee.

There were no questions.

The Leader thanked both O&S and the task group for their work on this subject. He explained that he had made the original request in recognition that much of what the council now did in terms of the 'day job' was delivered by third party partners (e.g. CBH, Ubico, Publica and the Cheltenham Trust) and in many cases member representatives were appointed to those bodies. Clearly, once appointed to those bodies (as Directors or Trustees), they had different legal responsibilities meaning that the authority could not pay a SRA, but he still felt that there was a case for paying those members an allowance in recognition of what they do for partner bodies that deliver council services.

Despite the conclusions of the task group, Councillor Horwood, as chair, made clear that the outside bodies themselves were not prevented from paying an allowance to those members that were appointed and felt that wholly appropriate that they be treated in an equitable way as any other Directors or Trustees.

The Mayor advised that he had not declared an interest in this item as there was an obscure clause within the Airports Act which meant that neither, the authority or Airport itself were permitted to pay an allowance to member representatives, of which he was one. Whilst he was a strong advocate of voluntary work, he acknowledged that some responsibilities were quite onerous and that without some form of allowance, some members would find it difficult to spare the time, in financial terms.

Upon a vote it was

**RESOLVED THAT**

**the report be noted.**

## **12. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20**

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S), was pleased to present the 2019/20 Annual Report for O&S. He very much enjoyed his role as Chair and thanked members for approaching the work of the committee in a non-political way. He thanked officers for their support and took the opportunity

to thank Councillors Parsons and Wilkinson, who had sat on the committee during the period the report covered, and welcomed Councillors Britter and Horwood, who he looked forward to working with in the future.

Over the last 12 months, the committee had been striving to make the committee meetings more effective and efficient and as part of this, guests were expected to produce a report in advance and permitted only 5 minutes to provide an overview of highlights as way of introduction, with the rest of the allotted time dedicated to question and answers; this was undoubtedly a working progress, but he felt that progress was good. The most significant aspect of the 2019/20 report was the review that had been undertaken by Campbell Tickell, which had been searching and unafraid of asking challenging questions. All of the recommendations had been accepted by O&S and the most important for him personally, was the recommendation that O&S should focus its time and resources on issues where Cheltenham Borough Council could control or influence the outcome, and the committee had been looking to do this; and would continue to adopt this approach going forward.

There were no questions.

Councillor Wilkinson reflected on his time on the committee, which had proved more effective and efficient of late, having in his opinion, become far too parochial in the past, which was not where he felt scrutiny ought to be. He echoed the comments of the Chair in relation to the committee being non-political and felt that Councillor Mason demonstrated the value of opposition led scrutiny, commending his ability to hold people to account. He felt that Members should be proud of scrutiny at Cheltenham Borough Council and hoped that the Campbell Tickell recommendations would further inform and improve process and outcomes.

As the previous vice-chair of O&S, Councillor Sudbury thanked Councillors Mason and Payne for their support, she had enjoyed the role and wished Councillor Horwood luck.

Upon a vote it was unanimously

#### **RESOLVED THAT**

**the Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny (2019/20) be noted.**

#### **13. ADOPTION OF LICENSING ACT 2003 POLICY STATEMENT**

The Cabinet Member for Cyber and Security introduced the report. He outlined that Section 5 of the Licensing Act 2003 required the Council to review, determine and publish its Licensing Act 2003 Policy Statement every five years. The current policy statement was last adopted by Council in December 2015.

The Cabinet Member reminded Members that the policy covered licensing requirements for the sale of retail alcohol, the supply of alcohol by clubs, the provision of late night entertainment and late night refreshments and further stated that the council was obligated to promote its four licencing objectives. He advised there were no significant changes to the policy, but pointed out that a more proactive stance was recommended going forward. Most of the changes



were as a result of national changes in policy and all the revisions were outlined in the report.

A review of the current policy statement had been undertaken as well as the consultation process and council were asked to adopt the revised licensing statement.

A Member had a point of clarification regarding the number of temporary events notices that a premises could apply for, which the Licensing Officer duly explained and clarified. The point in question related to statutory legislation and the member asked that this matter be raised with government. The issue would be further looked at by the Licensing Team. A Member suggested raising concerns with the Institute of Licensing and the Local Government Association's Safer Community Board to try and get national lobbying to central government.

One Member wished to place on record his thanks to the Licensing Officers for the hard work they had put in to getting this policy reviewed, as keeping it compliant with the law was a very important part of the work of the council. He also expressed his disappointment that the Licensing Committee were the only ones to have responded to the consultation process, when it had been shared and was on the council's website. However he praised it as a good policy for the council.

#### **RESOLVED THAT**

**the revised licensing policy statement be adopted.**

#### **14. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2021/22**

The Leader introduced her report and explained that each year the council was required to consider its Local Council Tax Support Scheme for working age customers for 2021/22. Consultation had been undertaken although no significant changes are being proposed to the scheme for 2021/22.

The number of working age council tax support recipients had increased during 2020/21 due to the impact of Covid-19. On 1st March 2020 the number of recipients was 3,984 and this increased by almost 20% to 4,805 at the end of October 2020.

As part of the measures of assistance in relation to COVID-19, the Government had provided a Council Tax Hardship Fund grant to local authorities to support economically vulnerable people and households in their local area. Cheltenham received a grant of £851,709. As part of this fund the Government paid an additional £20 p/w Universal Credit or Working Tax Credit during 2020/21 to help council tax support recipients.

As it was not legally possible to change the council tax support scheme when this extra income was announced, the hardship fund has been used to top the level of support back up to the amount before the additional income was included.

The total amount of council tax support being paid to working age recipients at 31 October amounted to £4.4m which included top up hardship awards of £306,000.

The Leader expressed that without hardship funding it would not be possible to top up the level of support and she wished to ensure that the level of support to those most in need remained at today's level.

#### **RESOLVED THAT**

- 1. the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2021/22 for working age customers in Appendix 2 and summarised in Appendix 3 be approved**
- 2. the Executive Director for Finance and Assets, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Finance, be authorised to uprate income levels in line with any uprating of Welfare Benefits by 31 January 2021, if required.**

#### **15. TREASURY MID-TERM REPORT 2020/21**

The Leader introduced the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 202/21 which had been approved at a meeting on 23rd March 2020. She explained that the Council had borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and was therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk remained central to the council's treasury management strategy. The Council had pursued its strategy of keeping borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing, in order to reduce risk and keep interest costs low.

The coronavirus pandemic had dominated the world economy and had had a detrimental effect on investment returns. Investment income in the Council's budget for 20/21 was set against a very different economic backdrop. The Bank Rate, which was 0.75% in January 2020, now stood at 0.10%.

Income on investments was predicted to be £127,500 down. Cash was earning as little as 0.02%, but the council was returning an average rate of 1.77%

Cheltenham Borough Council was however a net borrower. This had resulted in temporary borrowing becoming very cheap and had favoured the borrowing costs, estimated to be a saving of £125,000.

Overall though, the treasury budget was now expected to come in on target as the borrowing cost saving matched the investment losses.

Pooled Funds at the start of the financial year had taken a big hit on their capital valuations. This had remained throughout the first six months although the dividend returns had been in excess of 4%, however since the announcement of the vaccination, stocks/equities across the UK and indeed the world had climbed. The UK FTSE had now risen by 16% since the vaccination announcement which in turn had seen capital values of the council's pooled funds increase by £280,000 in one month.

There was still the added complication of the end of the Brexit transition period on 31st December and what a trade deal may or may not look like that could also have an impact.

The Cabinet Member concluded that overall the mid term report that the Council was being asked to note was a pleasing result given the difficulties of Covid and Brexit on the investment strategy and added that the Treasury Management Panel had discussed and supported this report at its recent meeting in November.

The Mayor thanked the Cabinet Member for her report. There were no questions, but a Member commented that she felt Members should be proud of the position they were in given the circumstances and again thanked the officers and Member for the report. The Cabinet Member expressed her thanks to the council's financial advisors who had worked closely alongside the treasury management team.

#### **RESOLVED THAT**

**the contents of the summary report of the treasury management activity during the first six months of 2020/21 be noted.**

#### **16. NHS FIT FOR THE FUTURE CONSULTATION-COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles introduced the report, stating this followed on from the debate held on the Council motion at the last Council meeting on 16 November about the hospital trust consultation 'Fit for the Future' on how things should work out at Gloucestershire hospitals over the next few years.

The report set out the council's recommendations as part of the response to the Fit for the Future consultation which had to be submitted before 17 December.

The Cabinet Member stated that changes proposed to provision at Cheltenham General Hospital needed careful consideration, evaluation and response. It was therefore critical that the Council agreed its formal response to the consultation and made its position clear not only as a key stakeholder but also as a critical friend. Comprehensive NHS provision in Cheltenham was critical for not just the people of Cheltenham but also those service users who received treatment from Cheltenham General Hospital throughout Gloucestershire and surrounding areas.

The Cabinet Member wished to place on record her thanks to all those working in the health care services for their commitment and humanity in doing such an incredible job. She also referred to the unenviable timing of reorganising medical services during the current pandemic.

The Cabinet Member cited a couple of examples of incidents regarding use of Gloucester hospital as opposed to Cheltenham and the large number of patients waiting at Gloucester A&E whilst Cheltenham A&E was empty as it was now a minor injuries unit. This situation caused pressure to staff and stress to

patients. She felt it would be logical to move elective surgery to Cheltenham as Cheltenham was fully equipped to do this and then both hospitals would be fully functional. This would also assist with proper planning for the future for the hospitals.

The response to be submitted by the Council was set out in Section 6 of the report and the Cabinet member wished to thank senior Doctors in the county who had assisted with compiling this report. The Fit for the Future document was appended to the report but the way the questions were posed at the end of the document was queried as it was felt they guided you to vote a particular way. The Cabinet Member urged Members and the public to read the document and to speak up as employees of the NHS were sometimes afraid to do so.

The Member hoped the Council would agree and support the response to this consultation.

There being no questions, the following points were raised by Members:

- Agreed this was not the right time for such a major consultation and that there was definitely a capacity issue at Gloucester. Thanks were expressed to all staff across the health services and the council needed to ensure they worked with the Trust. The Conservative group were happy to support the response.
- Thanks was expressed to the Cabinet Member who had been proactively working on this and had brought it to Members' attention. One slight typo in section 6.1 was pointed out.
- Concern was expressed about the shift of the acute medical take and general surgery to Gloucester, which would undermine the long term future of any A&E at Cheltenham.
- There was clear medical evidence that increased journey and waiting times at overstretched A&E departments did impact patients' health.
- The issue of health and equalities was raised, as although Cheltenham was perceived as an affluent town, there were many elderly and disadvantaged residents who would struggle with transport to get to or from Gloucester.
- Concern was expressed about the NHS management's handling of community responses and the fear that the bad timing of the consultation could be used as an excuse to bypass many views.
- Change is good if it benefits all but this doesn't. Cheltenham needs its A&E department. Need to consider everything for the best interests of the people of Cheltenham.
- Misleading phrasing in the Fit for the Future document leads to answers the management actually want.
- The Fit for the Future leaflet was also misleading and could be interpreted as being about a new community hospital for the Forest of Dean.
- Hope that there was robust data to support views made as anecdotal data would be counterproductive.
- Centres of excellence should be built upon.
- Irrespective of party, need to unite and make a strong recommendation not just to the Trust but also to the Minister.

- Cheltenham, as it expands with the west of Cheltenham development, and the surrounding area to the north, deserves better and it is really important that people have access to a type 1, consultant led, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, hospital with A&E.
- Commendation was given to a robust response to the consultation.
- Tone of report constructive, points out differences of opinion but is acting as a critical friend and this is how we make our case.
- Many Members expressed their support for the report.

In summing up, Councillor Clucas thanked Members for a constructive debate, for their support and the comments made and she hoped to be able to include some of these into the final submission. She also expressed her thanks to the officers involved for their work into this response.

The Chair thanked Councillor Clucas and moved to the vote.

**RESOLVED that:**

- **The issues highlighted in section 6 of this report form the basis of the Council's response to the Fit for the Future consultation to be submitted before 17 December.**
- **The report should also be forwarded to Gloucestershire County Council's Health & Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) for their consideration.**

**17. NOTICES OF MOTION**

**Motion A : Proposed by Councillor Horwood, seconded by Councillor Harvey**

*This Council:*

*Welcomes the celebration of Bonfire Night, New Year's Eve, Diwali, Eid, Chinese New Year and other festivals and celebrations at which fireworks are traditional.*

*Nevertheless notes that the noise from modern consumer fireworks can legally reach 120 decibels and that professional displays can exceed 150 decibels, both far above the threshold for possible permanent human hearing loss of 85db, causing distress to household pets, horses, birds and other animals and potentially discomforting and distressing people with PTSD, auditory and other conditions*

*Further notes the RSPCA campaign 'Bang Out Of Order' and the concerns regularly expressed by the RSPCA, British Horse Society, RNID and many local residents, as well as hundreds of thousands of signatories to parliamentary petitions*

*Further notes the potential negative impact of plastic and other non-biodegradable firework debris on wildlife and the environment*

*Notes the current law which forbids the setting off of fireworks between 11pm and 7am on most nights of the year and forbids the sale of any fireworks to under 18s but otherwise offers few powers to the Police or local councils to mitigate the impact of the noisiest and most environmentally harmful fireworks*

*Is disappointed in the government response to fireworks petitions and campaigns to date have focussed on little more than raising public awareness*

*Therefore asks Cabinet to urge government to again review the current law with a view to banning or more seriously restricting fireworks causing noise in excess of 90db, and imposing a ban on non-biodegradable components, and to report back to Council on the government's response*

*Further asks Cabinet to explore with local partners such as the BID and Chamber of Commerce the feasibility of a scheme to encourage the sale and purchase of quieter and more environmentally friendly fireworks for private use in Cheltenham, and the advance advertisement of public displays and to report back to Council.*

In proposing the motion, Councillor Horwood stated he enjoyed fireworks, but felt there was no reason for households or small public displays to be letting off very loud fireworks, which had a detrimental impact on wildlife and pets, including horses, as well as people with some medical disorders. He pointed out that the noise limit in the UK was much louder than in other countries, being 120 decibels which is very loud as permanent hearing damage can occur at 85 decibels.

He continued that there were very few powers that a local council had to be able to do anything about fireworks and as many councillors received complaints, a change in the law was needed. He proposed it was necessary to urge the government to ban non-biodegradable elements in fireworks and to impose a decibel level along the lines suggested by the RSPCA of 90 decibels.

He also proposed looking into the feasibility of a local scheme, together with the BID and Chamber of Commerce, to encourage the purchase of quieter and more environmentally friendly fireworks. He felt these would be positive steps and commended the motion to council.

Several Members spoke in support of the motion, and the following points were made:

- Concern was expressed about the practicalities of enforcement if there was a change in legislation, especially if it was an informal display or a display just outside borough boundaries. It was already difficult to enforce as it was often difficult to identify the source of the firework.
- A Member referred to the RSPCA campaign which suggested councils could do things but in fact councils didn't have the legal powers to do much and this wasn't helpful.
- It was proposed to lobby and work with the LGA as Cheltenham wouldn't be the only council experiencing these problems.
- It was pointed out that fireworks are covered by the explosive acts so this was an even better reason for them to be regulated by government, and that they should not be sold without regulations. However, too many regulations could lead to more being sold on the black market and must ensure imported fireworks meet the relevant safety requirements as there is no control over who buys fireworks.
- Several Members were concerned about the danger and trauma to livestock, wildlife and pets that loud fireworks produced.

- One Member felt strongly that the sale of fireworks should be banned to all, other than to organisers of licensed displays and responsible bodies.
- Many agreed with a lower decibel level, however one Member expressed concern that reducing the level to 90 decibels could be slightly on the low side for a proper display and didn't want to deprive future generations of the pleasures of firework displays. However it was pointed out that some large scale displays, such as in Cheltenham's twin town of Annecy, were beautiful but not overly noisy.
- Members supported working with the BID and Chamber of Commerce and not only by encouraging the use of lower decibel fireworks but also the length of time residents were exposed to excessive noise from firework displays.
- Public recognition that local councils did not have the power to do much but that they were working together with partners to try and reduce the nuisance factor was encouraged.
- Members felt this was a good start but more needed to be done.

Cllr Harvey wished to second and support the motion and stressed the motion was not about banning fireworks, as a large organised display was very different to ones that go off in a neighbouring garden. The first step was to try and reduce the noise of the fireworks and he acknowledged how distressing loud noises were not only to pets and wildlife but also to people suffering from PTSD and other disorders whereby loud noises affected them. He suggested that national guidance and legislation was needed so that neighbouring areas would have the same regulations.

In summing up, Councillor Horwood thanked Members for their contributions. He acknowledged that enforcement was a difficult issue especially when fireworks were set off privately, but he said the motion was not to ban the private purchase of fireworks but more to encourage the public to be more responsible and set off fireworks safely and quietly. In this respect the focus was to urge the government to regulate noise level at manufacture, to reduce the noise level to 90 decibels and to improve their environmental suitability. Councillor Horwood was grateful for Members comments and support.

**Upon a vote the motion was carried.**

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

None.

**19. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 -EXEMPT INFORMATION RESOLVED THAT**

**“in accordance with Section 100A(4) Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining agenda items as it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, if members of the public are present there will be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in paragraph 3, Part (1) Schedule (12A) Local Government Act 1972, namely:**

**Paragraph 3; Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)**

**20. A FINANCIAL MATTER**

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets introduced the report and outlined the background to the proposals.

Members asked a considerable number of questions and discussed the proposals in great depth.

**RESOLVED THAT**

**The recommendations be approved.**

Roger Whyborn  
**Chairman**