

Cabinet

Tuesday, 26th January, 2021
6.00 - 6.50 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Rowena Hay (Leader of the Council), Flo Clucas (Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles), Chris Coleman (Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment), Alex Hegenbarth (Cabinet Member Corporate Services), Peter Jeffries (Cabinet Member Housing), Steve Jordan (Cabinet Member Finance and Assets), Andrew McKinlay (Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety) and Max Wilkinson (Cabinet Member Climate and Communities)
Also in attendance:	Gareth Edmundson, Paul Jones, Darren Knight, Tim Atkins, Sarah Farooqi, Steve Slater, Judy Hibbert

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. Atherstone sent apologies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets raised a point of accuracy regarding the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd December 2020. Regarding his briefing in item 14, he suggested that it be made clearer that the urgent decision to refurbish part of the Municipal Offices had been taken by an officer, and that he had reported it to Cabinet as required by the council's constitution. He also added that it had been Gloucester City Council who had agreed the package of investment in the airport company. Cllr. Wilkinson noted that in his briefing in the same item, 'Norton' should have read 'Naunton'.

Subject to these changes, the minutes of the 22nd December meeting were approved as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

Two public questions were received from Mr Dave Phillips, both for the Cabinet Member Finance and Assets. The Cabinet Member's responses were taken as read as the questioner was not present at the meeting.

5. DRAFT UPDATED CORPORATE COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK POLICY

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services presented the report, noting that while CBC was committed to providing excellent customer service, there would always be times when those contacting us would not be completely satisfied.

The corporate complaints and feedback policy was last reviewed 10 years ago, and it was important to update it to account for the latest guidance.

The main change in the draft updated policy was to move from a three-stage process to a two-stage process, as favoured by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. This approach would seek to be dynamic and flexible, with each complaint investigated on its own merit. He acknowledged that complaints can be a useful barometer of public opinion and an early warning of problems within the system, and thanked Judy Hibbert for her work on the report.

The Leader of the Council added that it was important to clarify that the two stages of the updated process were independent of one another.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. **The updated draft Corporate Complaints and Feedback Policy be adopted;**
2. **Key Performance information be regularly reported using the Clearview reporting system with an annual report to Overview and Scrutiny and the Executive Leadership team together with a summary of learning;**
3. **Authority be delegated to the Customer Services Manager, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, in respect of future updates to this policy.**

6. STRATEGIC HOUSING REVIEW

The Cabinet Member Housing presented the report, noting its relevance to the priorities laid out in the council's Place Vision, Corporate Plan and Recovery Strategy, all of which sought to have a transformational and positive impact for everyone in the borough. Key aims for the future included solidifying Cheltenham's position as the cyber capital of the UK, the Golden Valley development delivering new businesses, housing and jobs, as well as the goal of net carbon zero by 2030 and the £180m investment in providing new and affordable homes.

He stressed the importance of housing services as a fundamental part of this agenda. With this in mind, an independent housing service review was undertaken to ensure that the council was best placed to meet its current and future ambitions. The review concluded that Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH) should be retained as an Arms-Length Management Organisation (ALMO) and that an ambitious programme should be undertaken to evolve and strengthen the partnership between CBC and CBH in the future.

He acknowledged the impact of the Covid crisis on communities, but noted that housing services in Cheltenham continued to be strong and resilient. The report included an updated management agreement and business plan, aiming for a lasting positive impact and a resilient, inclusive and sustained recovery from

Covid-19. He thanked officers involved for their part in what was at heart an honest and constructive conversation, and asked members to endorse the report.

Gareth Edmundson, Chief Executive, added his thanks to CBH for their continuing partnership, particularly in terms of how they had identified areas of improvement to constructively build on. He emphasised the importance of engaging partners, stakeholders, tenants and customers in decision-making processes, and the need to identify efficiencies and give themselves a genuine choice of options for either savings or future investment. The aim was for the council to look back in 5-10 years and see that the review was a key step in tackling future challenges.

Steve Slater (Cheltenham Borough Homes) echoed the Chief Executive's words, describing it as a comprehensive and rewarding review. He stressed the importance of the CBC-CBH partnership and the need to push on in the future to continue delivering for all those concerned.

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles thanked officers and the Cabinet Member Housing for their efforts in producing a significant piece of work, and asked whether the government's Social Housing White Paper would be restrictive or beneficial. SS responded that they had looked closely at all its requirements, and believed they could work with these and build on them. He added that the council's role would be particularly important, with a clear trend towards more responsibility being put in the hands of local authorities since Grenfell. It was important to give tenants support and reassurance.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets added that he fully supported the report, and that CBH had been a reliable and valuable partner over the years.

The Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety added that the report was very well-timed, and not just because of Covid. Housing services would be an integral part of the Golden Valley development, and it was important to know that the council's partners were up to the job of delivering this at a high standard.

The Leader added that this was just the start of a long journey, and one part of a pioneering agenda. Housebuilding commitments were planned long into the future.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. The Independent Strategic Housing Review Report provided by Campbell Tickell (Appendix 2) be noted;**
- 2. The key recommendation within the Campbell Tickell report to retain Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH) as the Arms-length Management Organisation (ALMO) as the model of housing service delivery for Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) be agreed;**
- 3. Authority be delegated to the Managing Director for Place and Growth in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and CBH to review and establish appropriate governance for an ambitious transformation programme that will seek to:**

- a. **Implement identified opportunities within the Campbell Tickell Report and subsequently by CBC and CBH that will evolve and strengthen the partnership between the Council and the ALMO to deliver improved outcomes for CBH tenants, customers and Cheltenham's communities;**
 - b. **Deliver annual efficiencies for reinvestment and/or savings of up to £487K by the end of the financial year 2023/24 while requiring £175K of transformation costs.**
4. **Authority be delegated to the Managing Director for Place and Growth in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing to update the current CBH Management Agreement, HRA Business Plan and associated documents to:**
 - a. **Deliver a strong partnership that enables the delivery of shared corporate priorities and a high quality service;**
 - b. **Support the implementation of identified opportunities and efficiencies set out within the CT report and identified by CBC/CBH;**
 - c. **Support the implementation of the CBH Board Effectiveness review;**
 - d. **Allow for appropriate monitoring of delivery against priorities and milestones.**

7. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Cabinet Member Climate and Communities reported that the Cheltenham Zero conferences had been a huge success earlier in the month. The conferences were facilitated by the council and administered by its partners at Vision 21, and incorporated independent experts on a wide range of topics from energy and transport to biodiversity. He thanked everyone who gave their time to help out, and hoped that the partnerships and alliances formed would be built on in the future.

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services thanked all officers and staff for their hard work in a difficult situation, adding that the council would do all it could to support them. The Leader echoed this

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles reported that the Burrows Field development was going ahead. Over the next two years, the field would be enhanced to benefit local people and Leckhampton Rovers Football Club. She thanked all the officers involved in delivering this valuable project.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets added that the budget consultation process was drawing to a close, with the deadline a couple of days after the meeting.

Decisions of Cabinet Members

Six Cabinet Member Decisions had been taken since the last meeting.

Cabinet Member Finance and Assets (Cllr Jordan)

22nd December:

Provision of a reactive and planned maintenance service for the door entry systems within the domestic housing stock together with a replacement key fob management system

Cabinet Member Finance and Assets (Cllr Jordan)

23rd December

Shareholder Decision-Appointment to the role of Managing Director of Gloucestershire Airport Limited (GAL).

Cabinet Member Finance and Assets (Cllr Jordan)

20th January

To extend the Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme to 31 March 2021.

Cabinet Member Housing (Cllr Jeffries)

19th January

Award of contract to design and deliver the new build housing scheme at 320 Swindon Road, Cheltenham.

Cabinet Member Housing (Cllr Jeffries)

19th January

To approve changes to the Local Lettings Plan for the Veteran housing scheme at Jupiter House, Swindon Rd, Cheltenham (incorporating 6 and 8 Brunswick Street).

Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles (Cllr Clucas)

20th January

To update the CBC volunteer policy with information on one-off volunteering.

Chairman