

Cabinet

**Tuesday, 16th February, 2021
6.00 - 6.35 pm**

Attendees	
Councillors:	Rowena Hay (Leader of the Council), Victoria Atherstone (Cabinet Member Economy and Development), Flo Clucas (Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles), Chris Coleman (Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment), Alex Hegenbarth (Cabinet Member Corporate Services), Peter Jeffries (Cabinet Member Housing), Steve Jordan (Cabinet Member Finance and Assets) and Andrew McKinlay (Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety)
Also in attendance:	Gareth Edmundson, Paul Jones, Gemma Bell, Abi Marshall, Stafford Cruse, Wayne Sedgwick

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr. Wilkinson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th January 2021 were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

There were none.

5. REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARES

The Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety presented the report, noting that under Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the authority was permitted to set fares for taxis it licensed. The last review prior to this had taken place in 2017, and this report sought approval to implement the new finding. He added that all the figures relating to fare increases were outlined in Appendix 2, with an overall increase of 2% in line with inflation.

The Leader added that it was important to closely look at these issues, especially considering the difficult recent circumstances for taxi drivers.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. A 2% increase in the maximum fares charged by a Cheltenham**

licensed hackney carriage be approved;

2. **Authority be delegated to the Licensing Team Leader to carry out the necessary advertising requirements to comply with section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976;**
3. **Subject to there being no substantive amendments being made following consultation, authority be delegated to the Director of Environment to adopt the proposed fares.**

6. KIOSK OPPORTUNITIES - CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets presented the report, noting that it followed directly on from the previous report approved by Cabinet in December. This report specifically focused on the S123 notice regarding the disposal of open space and any public objections. He added that both sites would be used for a trial period of up to 9 months and were tenancies at will, making it a reasonably simple and flexible plan.

He noted that the deadline for objections was the 18th February, two days after the meeting. No official feedback had been received as of 16th February, but the report delegated authority to respond in case any feedback was received after the meeting.

The Cabinet Member Economy and Development added that she was pleased with the focus on both local businesses and local communities.

The Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment noted the unprecedented use of parks and green spaces was a rare positive of the Covid crisis, and emphasised that the council had a role to play in ensuring that this continued. He thanked those involved in maintaining the parks, and praised this proposal for offering further opportunities to residents.

The Leader added that it was an exciting proposal, and that she was looking forward to seeing the Leckhampton site.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. **The objections received to the S123 Notices to date be considered;**
2. **Authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Finance and Assets, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Finance and Assets and the Borough Solicitor, to consider any further objections received to the S123 notices for the remainder of the consultation period from the Cabinet date of 16 February 2021 to and including the 18 February 2021, and (subject to consideration of such objections) to authorise the entering into of one or both of the proposed Tenancies at Will.**

7. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2020/21 - POSITION AS AT DECEMBER 2020

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets presented the report, noted that it related to the budget period up to December 2020 and compared the current

situation to the emergency budget passed in November. He thanked the Head of Finance, Gemma Bell, for her work in putting the report together. He acknowledged that the second and third national lockdowns had cost the council around a net £100k, but noted that this was less than could have been expected given the circumstances.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. **The contents of this report be noted, including the key projected variances to the COVID-19 recovery revised 2020/21 budget approved by Council on 16 November 2020 and the expected delivery of services within budget;**
2. **It be noted that these variances have been incorporated into the revised budget 2020/21 for approval by Full Council on 22 February 2021.**

8. FINAL GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2022

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets presented the report, which formed the final stage of the council's budget proposals and would be put before full Council on 22nd February. He highlighted the key changes, which included a further £21k investment into the base budget to support climate change projects and the wider economic recovery. This was supported by a minimal rise in council tax, equating to under 10p a week at Band D.

He added that the Planned Maintenance Program had been reviewed by the Asset Management Working Group, which had responded positively to its proposals. Various organisations including the C5 Parish Councils Group had been briefed on the proposals too, with positive feedback. These partners had emphasised a number of topics, including climate change, the widening of the socio-economic gap during the pandemic, and the importance of playing an active role to support key sectors, including voluntary work.

He added that only three public responses had been received, likely due to the November budget review having happened relatively recently. These responses, as well as the relevant member's replies to them, were included in the report. The budget proposals were also considered by the Budget Scrutiny Working Group, which had presented its feedback to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. He added that CBC's planned council tax rise of £5 a year (2.34%) was relatively low in comparison to other nearby councils.

The Cabinet Member Economy and Development praised the base budget investment in an apprenticeship program and wider economic development, and noted that it supported the objectives of the Economic Recovery Task Force.

The Leader described the report as outstanding considering the challenges faced in the last year, and praised officers for their work.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The revised budget for 2020/21 be approved;
2. The budget assessment by the Section 151 Officer at Appendix 2 be considered in agreeing the following recommendations;
3. The final budget proposals be approved, including a proposed council tax for the services provided by Cheltenham Borough Council of £219.08 for the year 2021/22 based on a Band D property (an increase of 2.34% or £5.00 a year for a Band D property), as detailed in paragraphs 4.17 to 4.22;
4. The growth proposals at Appendix 4 and outlined in Section 6 be approved;
5. The savings / additional income totalling £400,000 and the budget strategy at Appendix 5 be approved;
6. The use of reserves and general balances be approved, and the projected level of reserves as detailed at Appendix 6 be noted;
7. The capital programme at Appendix 7 be approved;
8. The programmed maintenance programme at Appendix 8 be approved;
9. The flexible use of capital receipts strategy as detailed in Appendix 9 be approved;
10. It be noted that the Council will remain in the Gloucestershire business rates pool for 2021/22 (paragraphs 4.6 to 4.16);
11. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) detailed in Section 5 and Appendix 10 be approved;
12. The Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22 be approved, including the continued payment of a living wage supplement at Appendix 11;
13. A level of supplementary estimate of £100,000 for 2021/22, as outlined in Section 14, be approved.

9. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - REVISED FORECAST 2020/21 AND BUDGET PROPOSALS 2021/22

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets presented the report, thanking Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH) for their hard work on behalf of the town. The report outlined an investment program totalling £24m, of which £15m related to new builds in 2021/22. This figure would hopefully increase to £30m in the subsequent two years. Within that, £500k had been initially allocated to the carbon neutral pilot scheme, and CBH was providing wider management to support climate change work.

He added that the planned rent rise was less than originally expected, which was good news for residents. He also highlighted Appendix 5, which took a

broader look at CBH's work. The Leader agreed that this was a valuable resource.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. **Council be recommended to:**
 - a) **Note the revised HRA forecast for 2020/21;**
 - b) **Approve the HRA budget proposals for 2021/22 (shown at Appendix 2) including a proposed rent increase of 1.5% and changes to other rents and charges as detailed within the report;**
 - c) **Approve the HRA capital programme for 2021/22 as shown at Appendix 3.**

10. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Cabinet Member Economy and Development thanked Marketing Cheltenham for their work on the Christmas and Great Taste campaigns, which had seen proper engagement with residents and positive results.

The Leader noted the recent government announcement regarding the extension of shielding to 31st March and the expansion of the clinically extremely vulnerable list. The Help Hub would continue to support this in the coming months.

Decisions of Cabinet Members

The Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety reported that he had taken a decision to extend the appointment of Trowers and Hamlins LLP for the provision of legal services (via the NHS framework) to support the delivery of the Golden Valley Development, the details of which were available online.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets added that he had taken two decisions, the first of which was to award a contract for supplying and installing new lighting columns, lamps, trenching and power supply in three council-owned car parks to Ardagh Management Ltd. The second decision was to amend the Additional Restrictions - Discretionary Business Grant Scheme for the second round of applications. This would open the day after the meeting, and would apply to the period between 5th January and 15th February. He noted that despite being discretionary grants, there were relatively firm guidelines regarding the distribution of the money, though CBC had sought to broaden it as much as possible. The funding was earmarked for business support, particularly in the hospitality sector, rather than income support, which he hoped the government would make available soon. He added that this tranche of grants would also apply to taxi drivers and businesses that did not have a specific premises.

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles had also taken a decision to add several names to the War Memorial on the Promenade, while the Cabinet Member Climate and Communities had taken a decision to accept grant funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Demonstrator competition.

Chairman