

Cabinet

Tuesday, 15th June, 2021
6.00 - 6.55 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Rowena Hay (Leader of the Council), Peter Jeffries (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member Finance & Assets), Victoria Atherstone (Cabinet Member Culture, Wellbeing & Business), Flo Clucas (Cabinet Member Safety & Communities), Mike Collins (Cabinet Member Housing), Iain Dobie (Cabinet Member Waste & Recycling & Street Services), Martin Horwood (Cabinet Member Customer & Regulatory Services), Andrew McKinlay (Cabinet Member Cyber & Strategic Transport) and Max Wilkinson (Cabinet Member Climate Emergency)
Also in attendance:	Tim Atkins, Sarah Farooqi, Simon Hodges

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th April were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

There were none.

5. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - SHARED OWNERSHIP SALES AND STAIRCASING POLICY

The Cabinet Member Housing introduced the report and drew attention to its key points. It was important to make it easier for people to purchase their own homes, and various mechanisms were in place to make this easier. Shared ownership arrangements tended to range from 25% to 75% ownership, and were generally 45% in Cheltenham, while the rent criteria on unsold equity was 2.75%. He noted that the third recommendation allowed for amendments to the policy to be made if the government changed anything to do with it before the full policy was up for review in three years' time.

The Cabinet Member Climate Emergency described the policy as an important step, noting that Cheltenham was not an affordable place to live. In a difficult

housing market it was important to make a difference, especially for young people and families who were struggling to buy a home or afford to rent.

The Cabinet Member Cyber and Strategic Transport added that the need for affordable housing would only grow larger considering the council's future projects. Home ownership was becoming more difficult and these initiatives make a difference. The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets agreed that it was important to use every tool available to make homes more affordable and accessible.

The Cabinet Member Housing thanked members for their contributions. He added that 27 affordable homes at Monkscroft Villas, some of which were shared ownership, had been snapped up very quickly, demonstrating the demand for housing in the town.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Shared Ownership Sales policy be approved;
2. The Shared Ownership Staircasing policy be approved;
3. Authority be delegated to the Lead Commissioner Housing Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Housing, to make necessary changes to the current policy in order to comply with government guidance until the policy is subject to a full review in three years' time.

6. COMMISSIONING YOUTH WORK 2021

The Cabinet Member Safety and Communities said she was delighted to present the report to Cabinet. Throughout the Covid crisis, a significant number of young people had been out on the streets, becoming involved in anti-social behaviour and at risk of exploitation by criminal gangs, partly because they had little else to do. She stressed that young people should feel like part of Cheltenham and know where they can seek help and talk to people about their problems.

She noted that the key question was how the council could make a difference when youth provision in many places had been cut over the years. She thanked a number of partners for providing financial support, and highlighted key elements of the report like the introduction of trained detached youth workers, who would specialise in particular areas but be able to help people all across Cheltenham.

She hoped that it would be the first step of a long and successful project that could be built across Cheltenham, and emphasised that children and young people must have access to quality youth workers who can support them as they grow as individuals.

The Cabinet Member Housing added that young people were one of the town's most valuable assets, and that government funding cuts had long-term consequences. In his ward, the loss of youth provision over the years had had a genuine negative impact. He asked whether the Cabinet Member Safety and Communities would be willing to speak at one of his residents' association's meetings about this.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets emphasised that it was important to speak up for those who did not have much of a voice, and that he hoped it would be the first step of a successful process.

The Cabinet Member Waste, Recycling and Street Services agreed that the gradual loss of youth provision over the years had contributed to antisocial behaviour in the town. It was good to see council-led initiatives making a difference, and he hoped he would see an impact in the Warden Hill area.

The Leader praised the report and highlighted the importance of bringing about long-term, sustainable change.

The Cabinet Member Safety and Communities thanked colleagues for their words, and emphasised that funding would be an essential factor in the future. She added that she would be happy to meet with residents' associations to hear their views and discuss how they could build on projects like this in the future.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The decision to grant £55,000 from the Commissioning Youth Work Fund to Inspire to Aspire C.I.C to carry out a programme of detached youth work across the borough for 12 months from July 2021 be approved;
2. Authority be delegated to the Executive Director of People and Change to agree the terms of and sign the grant agreement, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Safety and Communities;
3. It be recommended to Council that the grant of £20,000 to Cheltenham Performing Arts Festival in 2020, which could not go ahead, is approved to be used as the council's contribution to the Commissioning Youth Work Fund as part of the financial out turn report.

7. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Cabinet Member Safety and Communities reported that on the 18th June, she would be chairing a session at a European conference about the Covid recovery and contributing insight on what Cheltenham had done. Heads Up Cheltenham had been recently launched, which was a project looking at helping people with mental health issues. On the 17th June she would be visiting IT Schools Africa, a Cheltenham-based organisation which collects IT technology and distributes it to those in need across the world. She thanked the former Mayor, Roger Whyborn, for his hard work in raising a significant amount of money over the last year through the Mayor's Fund. Finally, she noted that Cheltenham A&E had been reopened, and although it was likely to be temporary she thanked the Restore Emergency At Cheltenham General Hospital (REACH) campaign for their work.

The Cabinet Member Culture, Wellbeing and Business thanked Marketing Cheltenham for launching the Cheltenham: Find Your Happy Place campaign, and noted that the response so far from residents and businesses had been very positive. The Parks team was working on community payback schemes, including travelling round Cheltenham and repainting railings. The Cheltenham Economic Recovery Task Force was bringing in businesses and community

support groups to tackle the topics of hospitality and the visitor economy, to figure out how to most effectively support these sectors.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets noted the extension of coronavirus restrictions until the 19th July and the lack of additional support measures from the government thus far, which he hoped would change soon.

The Cabinet Member Climate Emergency reminded members of the motion brought to Council in March by Cllrs. Horwood and Boyes on the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill. He had recently written to Alex Chalk MP and Laurence Robertson MP about it, and both had sent detailed replies without yet committing to support the bill. He added that a county-wide climate enforcement officer was now in post, and would be an important role based on partnership working. Finally, he added that Thursday 18th June would be Clean Air Day, and urged everyone to do their bit.

The Cabinet Member Housing thanked his predecessor (Cllr. Jeffries) for his work on the housing portfolio. He added that he had met with lead officers and key partners, and stressed the importance of housing as a key part of the carbon neutrality by 2030 pledge.

Decisions of Cabinet Members

The Leader moved onto the Cabinet Member Decisions taken since the last meeting on 27th April. The former Cabinet Members for Finance and Assets and Clean and Green Environment (Cllrs. Jordan and Coleman) had taken decisions relating to the Additional Restrictions - Discretionary Business Grant Scheme and the disposal of commercial waste. The Cabinet Member Safety and Communities had taken a decision to allocate the Winter Grant Scheme funding, while the Cabinet Member Finance and Assets had amended the Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme. The Leader reported that she had taken three decisions regarding the remuneration of Ubico's non-executive directors, the surrender of a lease of a telecommunications site in West Cheltenham and Ubico's five year vision. The Cabinet Member Climate Emergency added that he had awarded a contract under the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund to a company which would provide integrated metering networks across 8 council premises, targeting a reduction in energy consumption of up to 25%. This complied with the council's carbon neutral objectives, and he thanked Alex Wells, the Climate Emergency Project Support Officer, for making it possible.

8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXEMPT BUSINESS

9. GIFT TO CHELTENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL AS A RESIDUARY BENEFICIARY OF AN ESTATE

Members resolved to move into exempt session.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets introduced the item, which related to a gift to Cheltenham Borough Council as a residuary beneficiary of an estate. Simon Hodges, Senior Asset Management Surveyor, explained the background of the item and updated members on recent developments.

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

RESOLVED THAT

The recommendations be approved.

Chairman