

## Cabinet

**Tuesday, 13th July, 2021  
6.00 - 7.35 pm**

<b>Attendees</b>	
<b>Councillors:</b>	Rowena Hay (Leader of the Council), Peter Jeffries (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member Finance & Assets), 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) and Max Wilkinson (Cabinet Member Climate Emergency)
<b>Also in attendance:</b>	Sarah Farooqi, Tim Atkins, Gemma Bell, Darren Knight, David Oakhill

## Minutes

- 1. APOLOGIES**  
Apologies were received from Cllrs. Atherstone and McKinlay.
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
There were none.
- 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**  
The minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> June were approved and signed as a correct record.
- 4. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**  
There was one public question. As the questioner was not present, the response was taken as read.

<b>1.</b>	<b>Question from Nick Fisher, Cheltenham Hackney Carriage Association to the Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services, Councillor Martin Horwood</b>
	I refer to the recent petition submitted to the Council and note that any change in the decision to amend the WAV taxi policy lies with the cabinet. I would therefore ask that the cabinet reconsider the implementation of this policy. I see from the minutes of the council meeting that many of your colleagues were sympathetic to the taxi drivers and could understand the difficulties we are experiencing. I would like to correct you on some of the information you quoted. I understand that you are new to this position so were probably only using information provided by you predecessor. It was mentioned that 40,000 taxi drivers had so far switched it was not mentioned that that figure was 45,759 (2015) and has been steadily decreasing every year latest figures from the ONS 38,915 (march 2020 pre pandemic) You say that for disabled passengers in London, Birmingham or anywhere in the West Midlands, every single taxi was wheelchair accessible , the first 2 are correct as they are both cities but according to the ONS the average for the west midlands is 0.6 per 1000 people, exactly the same as Cheltenham.

	<p>(adjusted to reflect Cheltenham figures provided by licencing) According to the ONS the national average per 1000 people for Urban with town or city is 0.5 per 1000 people Cheltenham already exceeds this figure. You said that with the National Star college campus in Cheltenham we have a relatively large disabled population. The majority of Wheelchairs at the star college are motorised and either will not fit or are too heavy to go in the vehicles we are expected to provide. The Star college have their own fleet of vehicles specifically to meet the needs of their students. You commented that you believed electric WAV would fall sharply in price and become more widely available. To follow that comment to its conclusion. Drivers are expected to purchase a WAV vehicle now that will be almost exclusively diesel and they would need to be replaced in the very near future and that the vehicles they will purchase now will have little or no value on the second hand market as they would be superseded by EV's.</p> <p>My question is: given all the facts above, are you still in support of this policy considering the climate emergency that has been declared, the difficulties the trade has undergone through this pandemic and knowing the number of drivers this will put out of business?</p>
<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>	
	<p>The data cited in the last Council meeting was taken from the Department for Transport data sheet Taxi0104 dated 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, but this has now been updated as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/taxi-statistics">https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/taxi-statistics</a>).</p> <p>The latest data shows a dramatic drop of 48,594 (-16%) in the overall number of licensed vehicles in England &amp; Wales in the last year. The largest numerical drop of 38,755 (-17%) was amongst non-WAV private hire vehicles.</p> <p>The drop amongst wheelchair accessible vehicles was 7,247 (-18%) but this reduces to 1,709 (-8%) if London is taken out. The fall amongst London cabs alone, all of which are wheelchair accessible, was 5,538 (-29%).</p> <p>Longer term data from the Department for Transport shows the overall number of licensed vehicles rising steadily in recent years before the sharp drop in the last year. This almost certainly demonstrates a major economic impact on the trade from the pandemic. Although hackney cabs had been declining slightly in recent years, including in London, the drop in the last year was more pronounced. The relative decline in hackney cabs may reflect the rise in app-based competition and other pre-pandemic factors.</p> <p>In Cheltenham, the data shows a drop of 51 (-30%) in the last year amongst private hire vehicles, almost all of which are non-wheelchair accessible. The fall amongst non-wheelchair accessible vehicles was 24 (-14%) but the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles rose by 8 (+15%).</p> <p>The data shows that the following authorities in England had achieved at or near 100% WAV hackney cab fleets (figures in brackets show WAVs, non-WAVs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blackburn with Darwen (70, 0)</li> <li>Burnley (33, 0)</li> <li>Preston (187, 0)</li> <li>West Lancs (34, 0)</li> <li>Knowsley (221, 0)</li> </ul>

<p> Liverpool (1426, 0)  St Helens (55, 0)  Wirral (217, 0)  Bolton (102, 0)  Bury (47, 0)  Manchester (1084, 0)  Salford (92, 0)  Stockport (135, 0)  Tameside (150, 0)  Trafford (119, 0)  Cheshire West &amp; Chester (305, 0)  Kingston upon Hull (170, 0)  Bradford (215, 0)  Doncaster (164, 0)  Sheffield (648, 0)  Derby (190, 0)  Nottingham (420, 0)  Rushcliffe (18, 0)  Lincoln (30, 1)  South Holland (36, 0)  Leicester (300, 0)  Corby (114, 0)  Kettering (51, 0)  Northampton (110, 0)  South Staffs (2, 0)  Shropshire (62, 1)  Telford &amp; Wrekin (21, 0)  West Midlands (2117, 0) includes Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall &amp; Wolverhampton  Wyre Forest (61, 0)  Norwich (208, 0)  Peterborough (122, 0)  Luton (165, 0)  Bedford (63, 0)  Central Beds (178, 0)  Hertsmere (6, 0)  Three Rivers (14, 0)  Harlow (48, 0)  London (13423, 0)  Oxford (107, 0)  Bracknell Forest (52, 0)  Reading (216, 0)  Wokingham (69, 0)  Basingstoke &amp; Deane (55, 0)  Rushmoor (109, 0)  Epsom &amp; Ewell (36, 0)  Dartford (74, 0)  Maidstone (48, 0)  Chichester (33, 0)  Bristol (455, 2)  Plymouth (319, 0)  On 15 July this week, I will be meeting both the licensed trade's representatives </p>
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	and also, separately, National Star amongst others at the Accessibility Forum. I will be happy to discuss both the further issues raised in the question. Further meetings with the trade are also being scheduled. Council unanimously endorsed my response to the petition that confirmed the policy implementation on 31 December 2021 but which also promised to continue engagement and dialogue on the issue.
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**(A) Matter referred from Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Cllr. Barrell referred a matter from the June meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. She explained that there had been concerns regarding the changes at Cheltenham General Hospital, and the committee had suggested that the Leader could write to the hospital and to other councils who would be affected by and involved in these changes. The Leader had sent this letter and a positive response had been received, which had been circulated to Cabinet Members.

Cllr. Barrell added that she had attended a meeting of the county council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) earlier that day, and that the papers for this meeting suggested that all concerns regarding the Fit For The Future programme had been addressed. She did not believe that this was the case.

**5. HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN**

The Cabinet Member Housing presented the report and noted that when an updated report or action plan was presented to Cabinet, the tracked changes would normally be the main focus. However, in this case, the amount of raw data coming from a wide variety of sources made it impossible to present the changes in this way. Instead, he sought to highlight some of the key issues.

The Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-23 was approved by Cabinet in July 2018, and consisted of a five year strategy which set out both the council's vision and its priorities in order to achieve the desired outcomes. During 2020/21, 80 new affordable homes were provided, while significant progress had been made to identify a wide range of sites for the potential delivery of CBC-owned affordable housing across the borough. A pipeline was in place to deliver around 371 affordable homes within 5 years from April 2021.

During the first few months of the new financial year alone, the council and CBH had already delivered 27 new affordable homes at Radford Court, Hesters Way. This was in addition to the land recently acquired at Monkscroft School (potentially delivering 70 affordable homes) and the recent acquisition of land at Swindon Road (subject to planning permission being awarded), which had the potential to provide a further 24 affordable homes.

It was expected that approximately £89m would be invested from the Housing Revenue Account on new affordable homes over 3 years to March 2024. The Cyber Park/Golden Valley development in West Cheltenham would also see the provision of up to 3,700 new homes, of which 35% would be affordable covering a variety of tenures.

He added that during the last year, nearly 300 homes in the private sector in Cheltenham had been made safer, while 13 long term empty homes were been brought back into use. CBH had completed its fire door renewal programme, installing over 6,000 new doors across properties over the last 5 years. It was anticipated that the window replacement and boiler programme would be completed during 2021/22. These improvement programmes had so far contributed to a further uplift in the SAP energy efficiency rating of their homes from 72.02 in 2019 to 72.96 in 2021. Following a funding bid to the government's Decarbonisation Fund Demonstrator Project, CBH were successful in securing a £40k grant to finance the transformation of two low energy performing homes through a 'deep retrofit' pilot, which should be implemented during 2021/22.

He moved onto the topic of tackling homelessness and rough sleeping, acknowledging that the Covid crisis had meant that 2020/21 was a challenging year, particularly during the first national lockdown when housing pathways were significantly reduced. During the year, CBC and CBH responded positively to the government's 'everyone in' message by making 125 placements into emergency, hotel accommodation for those who were either rough sleeping or at imminent risk of rough sleeping. CBC also collaborated closely with partners across the county to bid for funding for the provision of accommodation and the joint commissioning of services for rough sleepers, including £3.8m county-wide funding from the government's Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP). This funding was going towards providing approximately 50 additional new homes in the county for rough sleepers, along with specialist support services to help with tenancy sustainment. The funding also included £24k to furnish 6 CBC homes to be made available specifically for rough sleepers with highly complex needs, and £868k funding from the government's Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI4), which would enable key services for rough sleepers to continue across the county between July 2021 and March 2022, specifically including the maintenance of existing Somewhere Safe to Stay Hubs in Gloucester and Cheltenham and the larger Assertive Outreach Team. There would also be a Hospital In-Reach worker to ensure rough sleepers going into hospital were not discharged onto the streets. The funding also included a £112k Enhanced Placement Fund, incorporating funding for the winter of 2021/22, to ensure that rough sleepers would always have an off the street accommodation offer.

Finally, he pointed members towards the section on improving the health and wellbeing of communities at part 2.4, and the planned next steps for the year ahead at part 3.1, and asked that members approve the recommendations.

The Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services praised the report and criticised the national government's unwillingness to tackle the homelessness crisis. The affordable homes that the council was providing would make a huge difference to people's lives, as would the support network around them.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets suggested that the topic of housing and homelessness was complex and vast, but the report did a good job of covering it.

The Leader added that she was proud of how the council dealt with homelessness and how it supported people who were hard to reach. She acknowledged that some would remain homeless by choice, but they would do

as much as they could to eradicate homelessness. She thanked the Cabinet Member and the officers involved for their work. The Cabinet Member Housing added his thanks to officers both at CBC and CBH.

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

**RESOLVED THAT:**

1. The Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan Update for 2021 be approved.

**6. CABINET APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Leader of the Council presented the report, noting that there was a slight update in that Cllr. Seacome had withdrawn from nomination to the Everyman Theatre. This meant that this would not need to be decided by Council, as previously thought.

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

**RESOLVED THAT:**

1. Nominations/appointments be made to the outside bodies as set out in Appendix 2A in accordance with the following principles:
  - All nominations are made on the basis that the nominee/appointee is a representative of Cheltenham Borough Council insofar as that is compatible with any overriding legal duty to the outside body;
  - Cabinet/the Leader reserves the right at any time to withdraw/terminate a nomination/appointment which it has made;
  - A nomination/appointment to an outside body is referred to Council for determination where consensus on that nomination/appointment cannot be achieved between the political Group Leaders.
2. Appointments be made to joint committees as set out in Appendix 2B;
3. The Cabinet Member responsibilities for the bodies/groups listed in Appendix 2C be noted;

**7. LOCAL DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS RATES RELIEF SCHEMES**

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets presented the report, reminding members that the government had implemented a 100% business rates discount to eligible businesses as part of its Covid support measures. In its budget on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021, the government announced that this would continue at 100% until 31<sup>st</sup> June, falling to 66% until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, and then down to 0%. The reliefs were a temporary measure and legislation was not amended, so councils were expected to use discretionary powers to adopt a scheme using government guidance. Details of the schemes were attached at Appendices 2, 3 and 4.

The Leader thanked officers for their quick and effective responses throughout the Covid crisis, which made a real difference for local businesses.

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

**RESOLVED THAT:**

1. The business rates Expanded Retail Discount scheme for 2021/22 as detailed in appendix 2 and the detailed guidance in appendix 4 be approved;
2. The Nursery Discount scheme for 2021/22 in line with appendix 3 and the detailed guidance in appendix 4 be approved;
3. The Head of Revenues and Benefits be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Finance and Assets, to implement any further changes in 2021/22 made by the Government to the reliefs detailed in appendix 2;
4. Due to the volume of cases, decisions relating to the application of these reliefs be delegated to the Head of Revenues and Benefits and officers in the Business Rates team. In the case of a dispute reconsideration is to be made by the Executive Director Finance and Assets.

**8. FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2020/21**

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets presented the report, which would go on to full Council on 19<sup>th</sup> July. After a decade of austerity, the council's budget monitoring position had been solid, but then came another challenge in the form of Covid-19. A unique, innovative and ambitious response was required. During the first national lockdown, it was estimated that Covid would create a budget deficit for the council of £1.813m in 2020-21 through additional expenditure and income losses. Council therefore passed a recovery budget in November 2020, including a strategy to review assets for disposal in order to close the income gap. This budget made assumptions about how much the crisis would cost, with an ultimate underspend of £394k compared to this budget. Had the recovery budget not been passed, members would be discussing an enormous overspend at this meeting. Some of the underspend would be used to fund the first steps of a long-term, sustainable recovery for the town.

The Leader added that given the position local authorities found themselves in last year, it was remarkable to end up with an underspend. Income had been lost and things had slowed down, but no services had been cut. It was important to be careful about where this money was spent.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Assets thanked the finance team for their hard work.

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

**RESOLVED THAT:**

Council be recommended to:

1. Receive the financial outturn performance position for the General Fund,

summarised at Appendix 2, and notes that in delivering services in 2020/21, there was an underspend of £394,663 against the recovery budget approved by Council in November 2020;

2. Notes £609,345 of carry forward approved by the Section 151 Officer under delegated powers at Appendix 5;
3. Approve the proposal for the use of the underspend after the carry forward requests outlined in Section 2.10 of this report and delegates authority to the Executive Director of Finance and Assets in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance and Assets to ensure the underspend is spent in line with this proposal;
4. Note the annual treasury management report at Appendix 7 and note the actual 2020/21 prudential and treasury indicators;
5. Note the capital programme outturn position as detailed in Appendix 8 and approve the carry forward of unspent budgets into 2021/22;
6. Note the year end position in respect of Section 106 and CIL agreements and partnership funding agreements at Appendix 9;
7. Note the outturn position in respect of collection rates for council tax and non-domestic rates for 2020/21 in Appendix 10;
8. Note the outturn position in respect of collection rates for sundry debts for 2020/21 in Appendix 11;
9. Receive the financial outturn performance position for the Housing Revenue Account for 2020/21 in Appendices 12 and 13 (as detailed in Section 11) and approves the carry forward of capital budgets in 2021/22 as set out in paragraph 11.9.

## **9. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS**

The Cabinet Member Safety and Communities reported that she had taken a decision to get the council involved in the Summer of Play, which provided activities for children and families in the town's parks and gardens. She updated members on the Laptops for Learning program, which had received 50 laptops from DXC and a £2,000 donation from CityFibre. The laptops would be refurbished and allocated to children who did not have one at home. She thanked all those who had donated to the scheme.

The Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services reported that he had recently approved a revised Gambling Policy, which would go to consultation very shortly. The reduction of stakes on fixed odds betting terminals had made a difference, but there was still more to be done. He added that he was proceeding with the promised engagement on the council's WAV policy, and would meet with the taxi trade and the Disability Forum in the coming weeks. Proposals for a larger Christmas market, in order to fit in all the licensed stalls, had been approved. Clubs would reopen shortly, and he hoped that government guidance would be forthcoming on this.



The Cabinet Member Waste, Recycling and Street Services reported Cheltenham had been chosen to work with Keep Britain Tidy on a waste reduction project for communal residences, building on work with CBH in Lansdown and Monkscroft.

The Cabinet Member Housing added that the council had recently agreed to take in up to 7 Afghan families for services to British forces, as part of up to 35 families taken in across the county. In the past, similar schemes were administered by the Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service, but they would not be involved in this scheme. CBC had contacted partners to cover several key posts.

**10. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXEMPT BUSINESS**

Members resolved to move into exempt session.

**11. EXEMPT MINUTES**

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> June were approved and signed as a correct record.

**12. A PROPERTY MATTER (1)**

In the absence of the Cabinet Member Cyber and Strategic Transport, the Leader presented the report, which related to a confidential property matter.

She moved to a vote, where it was unanimously:

**RESOLVED THAT:**

1. The recommendations be approved.

**13. A PROPERTY MATTER (2)**

In the absence of the Cabinet Member Cyber and Strategic Transport, the Leader presented the report, which related to a confidential property matter.

She moved to a vote, where it was unanimously:

**RESOLVED THAT:**

1. The recommendations be approved.

**14. THE CHELTENHAM TRUST - CAPITAL GRANT AWARD TO SUPPORT THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE WILSON ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM**

In the absence of the Cabinet Member Culture, Wellbeing and Business, the Leader presented the report, which related to a capital grant award to support the redevelopment of The Wilson Art Gallery and Museum.

She moved to a vote, where it was unanimously:

**RESOLVED THAT:**

1. The recommendations be approved.

**Chairman**