

Cabinet

**Tuesday, 13th September, 2022
6.00 - 6.30 pm**

Attendees

Councillors: Rowena Hay (Leader of the Council), Peter Jeffries (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member Finance & Assets), Victoria Atherstone (Cabinet Member Housing), Mike Collins (Cabinet Member Cyber, Regeneration and Commercial Income), Iain Dobie (Cabinet Member Waste, Recycling & Street Services), Martin Horwood (Cabinet Member Customer & Regulatory Services) and Alisha Lewis (Cabinet Member Climate Emergency)

Also in attendance: Judith Baker, Howard Norris, Paul Jones, Harry Mayo, Gemma Bell and Councillor Diggory Seacome

Minutes

Before the meeting started, a minute's silence was held to commemorate the passing of Queen Elizabeth II.

The Leader added a few words about the sadness shared across the world, highlighting the Queen's duty and dedication to the nation and Commonwealth. She had always referred to Prince Philip as her strength and stay, and it was this role that she had played in our lives as well. She was a proud mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, a warm and compassionate lady, with a mischievous smile, twinkling eyes and a strong faith. The Leader concluded by wishing the new monarch a fulfilling future in his new role as King.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Clucas and Wilkinson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the 12th July meeting were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

Two public questions received from Mr Alan Bailey were taken as read.

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| 1 | Question from Alan Bailey to the Cabinet Member for Customer and Regulatory Services, Councillor Martin Horwood |
| | As a result of their appeal, the Kendrick work can start on Shurdington Road and |

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| | <p>given the other work that has started there are a number of questions that need urgent answers by the Planning Authority.</p> <p>Can the Council explain what steps are being taken to ensure that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. residents along Shurdington Road are kept fully informed? b. the work continues in a safe manner? |
| Response from Cabinet Member | |
| | <p>I share the questioner's concerns that the public should be kept informed by those responsible and that the work is carried out safely. Planning permission was originally granted for the construction of 12 new dwellings, to include road and drainage infrastructure, parking and landscaping through an outline planning consent in June 2020 (19/02303/OUT). Following this a Reserved Matters application was submitted in January 2021 and prior to determination of that application an appeal was lodged by the developers for non-determination. The decision making on the application has then transferred to the Planning Inspectorate and a decision to allow the appeal was made on 17th June 2022.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Residents were consulted throughout the planning application process both at outline and reserved matters stages and their comments taken into account by the Council and Planning Inspector in making their decisions. The onus is now on the developer to carry out the development in accordance with the planning permission and conditions attached. Should there be any deviation to the approved scheme residents can alert the Planning Enforcement Team and we will investigate. It would be good practice for the developer to keep their neighbours informed as work progresses. (b) The Local Planning Authority do not cover the remit of safety in terms of construction and the onus is on the developer to ensure that they carry out the development in a safe manner. Notwithstanding this the Council did attach a planning condition requiring the developer to agree a Construction Method Statement which provides for information relating to the construction phase i.e. hours of operation, parking, routes for construction, methods etc. The Council has recently considered and subsequently approved an application to agree to the details of this condition following consultation with the Highways Authority Gloucestershire County Council (Discharge of Condition application reference 22/01185/DISCON). The Construction Method Statement specifically includes details of the hours of work as well as information including Community Liaison and Complaints Procedure. A display board will be on site and include all relevant information in connection with the works and the developer will undertake a letter drop and include signage to inform local residents. Furthermore there is a requirement on the developer to engage with the Highways Authority as part of a Section 278 agreement to make alterations to the public highway and in that respect the Highway Authority take a lead on ensuring that the works to the highway are safe. |
| 2 | Question from Alan Bailey to the Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, |

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| | <p>Councillor Alisha Lewis</p> <p>All Councils have agreed to create safer streets. In response to questions by me CBC said they were working with GCC. In response to a question by me GCC said that money was going to be available. Given GCC has said money will be available.</p> <p>What progress has been made toward safer streets in Leckhampton?</p> |
| | <p>Response from Cabinet Member</p> |
| | <p>CBC is supportive of safer streets and has proactively engaged with GCC through the process of developing the latest iteration of the Local Transport Plan, with our formal consultation response being informed by the 'Connecting Cheltenham' report commissioned by this authority.</p> <p>This response sought the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the local transport network to put people first; • Prioritisation of walking and cycling for short trips, as well as effective public transport for localised journeys; • A shift towards low carbon geographic connectivity (trains and vehicles) for longer journeys; • A step change improvement in sustainable travel. <p>We suggested a target outcome: 'that the way people move around Cheltenham should enhance and not harm health and wellbeing.'</p> <p>At the moment, we recognise that in some locations the speed, volume, noise and air quality issues caused as a result of the way people move around Cheltenham in vehicles harms living conditions and discourages playing out, walking and cycling.</p> <p>The report suggests a range of measures to try and address this, including the introduction of 20 mph zones in the town centre and within local centres on key radial routes.</p> <p>Full details of the Connecting Cheltenham report can be found here:</p> <p>https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/61/climate_and_sustainability/1649/connecting_cheltenham</p> <p>Whilst CBC can make constructive suggestions about improvement issues relating the town's roads and encourage increased support for sustainable transport modes, we are not the Highways Authority and ultimately, investment decisions are made by GCC.</p> <p>GCC has many issues to balance in deciding how to prioritise highway-related investment and is having to grapple with a backlog of disrepair and a deficit in national funding, as well as considering how to assist with the necessary transition to a low carbon future in light of the growing climate crisis.</p> <p>I have shared your concerns with Jason Humm, the new Director of Transport and Highways at GCC and he has requested that his team respond to you</p> |

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5. HEATING AND ENERGY POLICY

The Cabinet Member Climate Emergency introduced the report, highlighting two important aspects of the new policy. The first was the climate decision wheel, which was a fantastic new tool developed in conjunction with officers at West Oxfordshire District Council, and would have a significant impact on how decisions were made in the future. The other aspect was energy usage at key sites across Cheltenham, which was a broad first step in the right direction. It was important and necessary to consider the council's energy use at a time when every household was doing the same. She thanked Alex Wells and the property team for their work on the report.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. Council be recommended to approve the Heating and Energy Policy included in Appendix 4;
2. Responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the Policy be delegated to the Director of Climate Change, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Assets (Deputy S151 Officer).

6. LICENSED VEHICLE EMISSION AND WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

The Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services noted that a non-substantive amendment to the recommendations was needed, as the paragraph numbers had changed slightly during redrafting. The first recommendation should have referred to 4.3.1 to 4.3.3 rather than 3.3.1 to 3.3.3, and in the covering report rather than Appendix 3, while the second recommendation referred to the next steps in part 4 instead.

He explained that this policy was the result of their ongoing work to get to a taxi fleet that was both accessible to those with disabilities and on track to meet their climate change commitments by 2030. In order to ensure that they were listening carefully to those affected, they were undertaking extensive consultation, but some steps needed to be taken in the short term. These were namely removing the most polluting vehicles from the fleet and clarifying a particular technical detail about the exceptional circumstances in which 'like for like' replacement vehicles could be allowed. He stressed that they were not finalising the complete policy today, but rather taking a few immediate and necessary steps.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. Following consultation and engagement, the policy sections outlined in paragraphs 4.3.1 to 4.3.3 be adopted with immediate effect;
2. The next steps and further consultation outlined in paragraph 4 of the report be adopted.

7. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2022/23 - POSITION AS AT 31 JULY 2022

The Cabinet Member Finance, Assets and Regeneration introduced the report, noting that the last paper he had brought before Cabinet was the outturn report for 2021/22 back in July. At that point, inflation stood at 9.1% and it had just been announced that interest rates would be increased for the third time in a year. Since then, inflation had further increased to 10.1%, and was expected to hit 13% in the winter of 2022. Interest rates had also increased again to 1.75%. The council had declared a cost-of-living emergency, the impact of which made this budget monitoring report for the first four months of 2022/23 sober reading.

The forecast for the year was an overspend of over £2.8m against a budget which, when approved, was prudent and realistic for a town recovering from a pandemic. The most significant cost of living pressure they were facing was the predicted cost of energy as they entered the crucial winter period. The government's recent announcement on the energy crisis would change the current projections, and they would have to work through the details to understand by how much.

During the energy crisis, the focus of Cabinet and finance team was to support the delivery of services by controlling the controllables. They could not control the cost of energy, but they could control how much of it they used to run their buildings. The installation of smart meters and improved data now meant that they could work with partners to make changes to the energy usage in key buildings, while they were also using the Green Investment Fund (previously approved by Council) to upgrade their building management systems and reduce unnecessary energy usage.

They had also been working closely with their energy broker to implement an energy purchasing strategy which took advantage of the short-term dips seen in the market. In addition to this, there were longer-term plans to invest in improvements to the fabric of the leisure centre to become more energy efficient for years to come. He thanked all involved in the work done, and expressed his confidence that the council would continue to provide direct support to those in the town that needed it, as they had previously done through times of adversity.

The Leader agreed that it was a sober report, and that she hoped the public would understand that the influence of the pandemic was still being felt within it.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The contents of this report be noted, including the key projected variances to the 2022/23 budget approved by Council on 21 February 2022 and the actions to ensure overspends are reduced as far as possible by the end of the financial year.

8. FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN

The Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services introduced the report, explaining that the council was required to produce a food safety service plan

every year in order to meet their statutory obligations regarding food safety in the borough. It included support for the food economy while also ensuring that food sold within the borough was fit for human consumption. It involved giving business owners advice on best practice and enabling consumers to make informed choices on where to eat and purchase food.

The report included both the action plan and the resources required to deliver it, which were slightly more complicated this year due to the pandemic recovery process. It was worth noting that some food service places had closed due to the pandemic, but they were seeing lots of new registrations now too. The resources deployed to support this had also changed due to organisational change of our own.

The Leader added that it was good to see how many food and drink businesses engaged in this process and took pride in their safety and hygiene ratings.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The appended Food Safety Service Plan 2022-23 be approved.

9. AWARD OF RENT SUPPORT GRANT TO THE PLAYHOUSE CHELTENHAM

The Cabinet Member Finance, Assets and Regeneration introduced the report, explaining that as part of the council's wider ambitions to support a thriving voluntary and community sector, it enabled VC groups to rent its properties through offering a rent support grant scheme. An application for a rent support grant had been received from The Playhouse Cheltenham, with the proposed level of rent support grant set out in the report.

Under the rent support grant process, an 80% discount could be applied, with an additional 10% at the discretion of Cabinet in exceptional cases. Given the Playhouse's aims and aspirations with the work they had underway, along with what was planned (as set out in the assessment document in Appendix 2), he believed this met the threshold of an exceptional case, and recommended that Cabinet apply the additional 10% discount.

The Leader added that she had received a really positive email from the chairman of the Playhouse thanking them, and that she looked forward to seeing what they did with the money they raised. The voluntary sector was a key part of the town, and the Playhouse attracted thousands of visitors, so they needed to do what they could to support it.

RESOLVED THAT:

1. A rent support grant of 90% of current market rent totalling £27,720 per annum to the Playhouse Cheltenham be agreed;
2. Authority to agree the terms of a rent support agreement with the applicant be delegated to the Participation and Engagement Team Leader, in consultation with the Director One Legal and the Cabinet Member Finance and Assets.

10. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Leader expressed her gladness that Cabinet had still met to make these important decisions at a time of national mourning.

Decisions of Cabinet Members

Cabinet Members had made a total of ten decisions since the last meeting on 12th July.

The Leader reported that she had taken a decision on the 19th July to make appointments to outside bodies.

The Cabinet Member Finance, Assets and Regeneration had made five decisions. On 21st July, he had agreed to a variation of an existing Gas Servicing, Maintenance and Installation contract with British Gas Social Housing Limited, and on the 27th July had approved Phase 2 of the Discretionary Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme. On 26th August, he had approved the sale of Arle Nursery, on 1st September he had amended the COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) Scheme, and on 2nd September he had appointed a firm of suitably qualified and experienced Property Development Specialists to review the options for bringing forward development of Chelt Walk Car Park.

The Cabinet Member Cyber, Regeneration and Commercial Income had taken a decision on 3rd August to extend the council's contract with Avison Young, who were assisting them on the Golden Valley Development.

The Cabinet Member Waste, Recycling and Street Services had taken a decision on 16th August to approve a mid-year inflationary increase in fees and charges of 5% with effect from 1 October 2022. This included an increase in the garden waste collection charge from £47/year to £50/year per bin for new subscriptions and renewals, and a 5% increase for bulky waste collections, commercial waste and all other waste and recycling related charges set out in the fees and charges schedule. There would be no change to the number of collections per household per year.

The Cabinet Member Waste, Recycling and Street Services had also taken a decision on 25th August to enter into a three-year contractual agreement with Future Recycling Limited and Suez Recycling & Recovery Ltd for the trial collection and recycling of flexible plastics from the kerbside in the borough, at no cost to Cheltenham Borough Council. He added that this was part of their commitment to reduce waste and increase recycling across the borough, and was a collaboration agreement much like that of Podback for coffee pods. CBC was the first local authority to sign the collaboration agreement, and collection in selected parts of the borough only would begin on 7th October 2022. Residents who would be able to take part would receive information through the door shortly. Over the three years, he hoped that all residents in the borough would be able to benefit from the scheme. The trial, part funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, would help them understand how to introduce the scheme across the country.

In the absence of the Cabinet Member Safety and Communities, the Leader reported that she had taken a decision on 17th August to award a community grant of £15,000 to #FeedCheltenham to enable the recruitment of a shared worker to support the community food network and Inspiring Families.

Chair