

Cabinet

Tuesday, 17th April, 2012
6.00 - 6.55 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Steve Jordan (Leader of the Council), John Rawson (Cabinet Member Built Environment), Klara Sudbury (Cabinet Member Housing and Safety), Andrew McKinlay (Cabinet Member Sport and Culture), John Webster (Cabinet Member Finance and Community Development), Roger Whyborn (Cabinet Member Sustainability) and Colin Hay (Cabinet Member Corporate Services)

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

None received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March be approved and signed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

No public questions or petitions were received.

5. PROMOTING CHELTENHAM FUND 2012

The Leader of the Council introduced the report which had been circulated with the agenda and explained that the Promoting Cheltenham fund had been introduced in 2011 to support events, projects and initiatives that would stimulate economic and business growth in Cheltenham. Feedback received to date had been positive.

The Leader explained that the funding was to have been allocated in two tranches. However, an overwhelming response had been received with £150k out of £180k being allocated in the first phase. A bid has been developed to use the remaining funds of £28 000 to support the creation of a new tourism website for the town.

The Cabinet Member Sport and Culture added that there were several issues with the current tourism website including poor navigation and inability to provide quick and reliable updates. In addition there was a need to respond to a changing web environment in terms of compatibility with handheld devices and responding to social networking sites. A new website would also provide key

organisations in the town with an access portal. The Cabinet Member referred to questions raised by the Chamber of Commerce, the assessment panel and other partners, the responses to which were laid down in an updated paragraph 3.7 circulated at the meeting.

The Leader proposed an amendment to the end of recommendation 2 of the report to include that “any remaining funds be allocated to the 2012-2013 scheme”. This was supported by members. He also referred to an addition to the criteria of the scheme to provide more flexibility to applicants with the following paragraph to appendix 4 of the report: “We would expect the projects to take place in Cheltenham, though we would consider projects that are delivered outside Cheltenham where there are direct benefits for the borough.”

Members expressed their support for an updated tourism website which would generate business for the town. Encompassing new technology was welcomed in terms of mobile capability, not just for the tourists of Cheltenham but for those living in the town.

The Cabinet Member Sustainability made particular reference to Section 5.4 and encouraged bids in respect of the design, production and marketing of a Cheltenham bag for life which had generated great interest among elected members.

The Leader of the Council referred to the timescales outlined for the new scheme in Appendix 4 of the report and encouraged people to come forward with bids.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. The review of projects funded from the 2011 round at appendix 2 be noted.**
- 2. The proposal to use £25,000 from the 2011 Promoting Cheltenham Fund to support the creation of a new tourism website as laid down in appendix 3 be approved and any remaining funds be allocated to the 2012-2013 scheme.**
- 3. The guidelines and process for allocating the 2012 Promoting Cheltenham Funds as laid down in appendix 4 be approved.**

6. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT POLICY FOR CONSULTATION ON MEASURES TO CONTROL STREETSCENE ACTIVITIES IN CHELTENHAM – STREET TRADING, ETC

The Cabinet Member Housing and Safety introduced the report which sought approval for a revised draft policy on measures to control street scene activities in Cheltenham - Street trading, Objects on the Highway and Charitable Collections for the purpose of consultation. The revision aimed to ensure the policy was fit for purpose and as clear and transparent as possible.

The Cabinet Member outlined the proposed policy changes as laid down in Appendix 4 and explained that there would be a 12 week consultation period. A list of consultees could be found in paragraph 7.2 of the report but she highlighted that this list was not exclusive. She added that Gloucestershire

Association for Voluntary and Community Action (GAVCA) would be included in this list.

Members welcomed the proposed changes to the policy and hoped it would provide clarity and flexibility to traders in the town. The contribution of street trading to the wellbeing of Cheltenham was recognised as too was the importance of smaller niche businesses which brought diversity to the town. Members would welcome feedback from the consultation process.

RESOLVED THAT:

The draft “Policy on Measures to Control Street Scene Activities in Cheltenham - Street Trading, Objects on the Highway and Charitable Collections” be approved for consultation.

7. QUARTERLY BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Cabinet Member Finance and Community Development updated Members on the council’s current financial position for 2011/12.

He explained that the budget monitoring report to the end of August 2012 had projected an overspend of £476 400. The Senior Leadership Team were then instructed to reduce spend on supplies and services to essentials for the remainder of the financial year. The anticipated outturn position would deliver a saving of £302 700 against this revised budget after the Section 151 officer had agreed to carry over projects not completed during the financial year. The outturn figures would be available in June and full Council would then decide how the underspend should be deployed.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Community Development highlighted that Business and Council tax collection rates had held up well despite the current economic difficulties and requested that finance officers make a comparison with similar sized authorities in their next report.

The Cabinet Member Sport and Culture highlighted that under paragraphs 2.10 and 2.11 of the report the underspends relating to the Town Hall and Pittville Pump Rooms was somewhat misleading. He clarified by saying that the underspends were not as a result of cuts to services but to service improvements as they strived to become as commercial an operation as possible and thus minimise public subsidy.

The Cabinet Member Sustainability informed the meeting that in terms of operations the County Council would be cutting the highways budget by £35k. Officers were currently working hard to find savings to bridge this gap but there would be a £10k gap on highway maintenance which should be considered at outturn.

Members commended finance officers on the projected outturn during this very difficult period and also paid tribute to the hard work of the Cabinet Member Finance and Community Development in delivering a revised balanced budget.

As this was his final meeting as Cabinet member for Finance and Community Development Councillor Webster wished to put on record his thanks to the

finance team for their hard work over the last three years. He warned that further tough decisions would have to be made again next year.

RESOLVED THAT :

The contents of this report including the key projected variances to the revised 2011/12 budget and the projected total budget saving of £302,700 be noted.

8. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services reported that all data for GO Shared Services had now been loaded and the service was now on track despite early teething problems. The project had been receiving national attention and he wished to commend the cross authority project team.

The Leader and Cabinet Member reiterated their thanks to the efforts made to establish GO and which would produce vital budget savings to protect services in the future.

9. DECISIONS OF CABINET MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

The Cabinet Member Finance and Community Development reported that he had made a decision that day to authorise the payment of a grant of £21 900 to Cheltenham Housing Aid Centre (CHAC) to provide an Assertive Outreach Service for 1 year. It also agreed in principle to the payment of a further grant to CHAC for the following 2 years, subject to CHAC complying with terms of the Conditional Offer of Grant agreement during year 1, CHAC's ability to meet any additional grant award criteria the authority requires; and the availability of funding when the outturn report is considered by Cabinet and Full Council in June 2012, having regard to any competing spending priorities.

On behalf of the Cabinet the Leader of the Council wished to thank all officers for their hard work for the Cabinet, the Council and the town. He also expressed his thanks to his Cabinet colleagues for their hard work and paid particular tribute to Councillor Hay who would be taking up the role as Mayor in the new municipal year and Councillor Webster who would be retiring as a councillor at the forthcoming election.

Chairman