

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet

Minutes

Meeting date: 13 June 2023

Meeting time: 6.00 pm - 6.30 pm

In attendance:

Councillors:

Rowena Hay, Peter Jeffries, Victoria Atherstone, Iain Dobie, Alisha Lewis and Max Wilkinson

Also in attendance:

Paul Jones (Executive Director of Finance, Assets and Regeneration)

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Clucas, Collins and Horwood.

2 Declarations of interest

There were none.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

The public minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2023 were approved as a true record and signed accordingly.

4 Public and Member Questions and Petitions

Two public questions had been received.

The Cabinet Member response to the first question, concerning CBC's twinning relationships, was taken as read.

Ms Claire Dovey, who asked the second question, thanked the Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling and Street Services for the positive response to her question. She

said her group acknowledged the improvements in residents' health, biodiversity and the climate crisis the council has made through its Wild Gloucestershire campaign, and by moving to a 50% reduction in its use of glyphosates. She welcomed the leadership CBC has shown in its proposed improvements to stop cutting grass around trees and consequent removal of the need for spraying, and said Pesticide-Free Cheltenham would like to accept the offer to work in partnership on a strategy to help engage the public, landowners, businesses, on the reduction and ultimate stop of use of pesticides across Cheltenham and make the town a role model for others.

As her supplementary question, she asked if CBC would commit to setting up a regular pesticide-free forum, to meet before the end of June for preliminary drafting of the forum's terms of reference?

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling and Street Services, thanked Ms Dovey and welcomed the presence of Pesticide-Free Cheltenham at the meeting. He said it is clear that they and CBC are on same side, trying to get to the same end point, and emphasised that a phased approach is the right way forward. In that context, he welcomed the suggested meeting with the group and his senior officer as soon as practically possible, if possible before the end of June or early July.

5 Food Safety Service Plan

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Customer and Regulatory Services, the Leader read the following introduction to his report:

I am presenting this report on behalf of Cllr Horwood who is on leave and who wanted to me to mention, for complete transparency, that his wife works for the UK Health Security Agency which is referred to in the report.

In the area of food safety Cheltenham Borough Council operates within a strict framework of British law which, I'm pleased to say, is still complying with high European food safety standards, at least for now.

This work covers a wide variety of food businesses and they paint an interesting picture.

There are 1,102 registered food businesses in Cheltenham this year, which is a little down on last year's total of 1,113.

I'm happy to report that the number of restaurants and cafés is up from 280 to 294 although the number of takeaways is down from 111 to 101 and the number of pubs and clubs providing food is down one to 99. The number of supermarkets selling food is up one from 32 to 33 while the number of small retailers doing the same is down two to 124. There were 66 schools and colleges providing food and 34 guest houses - both unchanged. The number of food manufacturers, packers, distributors

and importers or exporters was down a little from 36 to 31. These numbers may represent some long-term trends in food business but also short-term fluctuations as some businesses close or merge and others open. Overall they still paint a picture of the local sector that is very healthy - in both senses of the word.

As a council, we inspect food premises, we investigate complaints and provide advice to festivals and events. We administer the Food Hygiene Rating System locally and we pro-actively visit new businesses. We also exercise important powers in relation to infectious disease control covering areas such as food poisoning outbreaks and water-borne diseases following standard procedures set out by the UK Health Security Agency, UKHSA. We collect food samples and pass them to specialist labs at the Public Analyst Scientific Services in Wolverhampton and at UKHSA. We take a risk-based approach that we hope isn't burdensome to the well-run businesses that we want to thrive in Cheltenham. So we will continue to focus our resources on the highest risk food activities and the food businesses with the poorest records, with the aim of constantly improving standards across Cheltenham.

Although the Covid Recovery Plan has now finished, there are some elements of it that still apply to food safety and government is currently consulting on an improved permanent system which might, for instance, include more flexibility in the methods and techniques of official controls that can be used to risk rate food establishments and allow some officers who do not hold a 'suitable qualification' for food hygiene to undertake some tasks as long as they are competent to do so. We hope government won't be lowering standards or allowing loopholes to creep into the system. As a council I would like to emphasise that we remain committed to the highest possible standards of food safety.

I am happy to commend this report to cabinet.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Tourism and Wellbeing commented on the huge importance of this piece of work, and the reassurance it gave. People could have confidence that the chances of getting food poisoning from a take-away or restaurant were absolutely minimal, and Cheltenham could be proud of its thriving hospitality sector and the work the council does to help.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets said it was easy to forget the depth and breadth of the amount of work the council does every year in support hospitality businesses, yet the statistics are staggering. He thanked the relevant officers on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Customer and Regulatory Services, and also commended CBC's media team for highlighting food safety awards via social media, supporting the industry in a different way.

The Leader agreed, saying that people were rightly proud of their 5-star ratings, and sharing via social media and on signs would encourage others to aspire to the same. She also thanked officers for their work.

RESOLVED THAT:

- **the Food Safety Service Plan 2023-24 is approved**

6 Household Support Fund

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities, the Leader read the following introduction to her report:

The Household Support Fund is channelled to Cheltenham through Gloucestershire County Council.

Together with our local partner organisations, we work through how we can best support our children, pensioners and families who need extra help. We met on 18th May and I am delighted that our partners confirmed their willingness to be part of the programme.

This will be the third tranche of funding received in the last twelve months and as you can see from the report, we will continue to support people with their energy costs together with the Food Network; Household Essentials and Children's Centres, CCP and Unstoppable In addition increased advice capacity through Citizens Advice will be supported.

The Cabinet Member for Housing said that the report shows how many amazing local community groups we have in Cheltenham, supporting residents through tough times, in particular the pandemic and the cost of living crisis. She gave a shout-out to these organisations, which do such a great job in providing necessities such as food, heating and clothing.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets said the figures are staggering, and considered it a shocking indictment of the government that such help was needed by so many people.

RESOLVED THAT:

- **the framework for the award of grant funding for the Household Support Fund is approved;**
- **authority is delegated to the Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities, to determine the agreed amounts to be awarded to individual organisations.**

7 Briefing from Cabinet Members

The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency took the opportunity to highlight an exciting event taking place on Tuesday 27 June – the CheltenhamZero Sustainable Travel Showcase, 9am-1pm at the Park Campus. There will be talks, demos, and exhibitors, including CBC. The event is free, and tickets are available from Eventbrite.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Tourism and Wellbeing reported that:

- the #FeedCheltenham leisure pass was launched a few weeks ago, enabling families to enjoy sports and leisure activities free of charge or at reduced rates. So far, 12 families have registered, but there is capacity for up to 600, so he encouraged those registered with the food bank to take advantage and register for this very positive scheme;
- Cheltenham Open Studios is underway, with 200 local artists displaying their wonderful artwork in a wide range of venues. He thanked Niki Whitfield for organising the launch event, and commended it to everyone;
- Cheltenham Science Festival recently took place, where he attend the launch of the DataFace scheme, sponsored by CBC among others, which explores creative ways to use digital information and data, and encourages young people to this career pathway with marketable skills for the job market of the future;
- he recently attended an event at The Love Food Hub in Charlton Kings, where Nadine and Amy are doing good work to sustainably offer meals to people in need. Last week was the latest Cynam event, which focussed on a key priority of CBC - using cyber security to solve climate crisis – and was a fascinating evening;
- Cheltenham resident Mike Newby recently became World Shin-Kicking Champion 2023 – congratulations to him.

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling and Street Services reported that hundreds of fish in Pittville Park Lake have died, due to hot weather conditions and to flash floods washing pollutants from roads into the lake. The oxygenators are being switched on for longer than usual to improve levels, but it is worth noting that Pittville Park Lake is normally a very healthy environment, as demonstrated by the fact that there are now otters living on the island. He was confident that the ecology of the lake would be restored, but felt that the current situation was a result of climate change.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets confirmed that the property team is working on financial out-turn report and close-down position, and will have a report to consider next month.

The Cabinet Member for Housing said she had been really impressed by the videos produced by CBH, in partnership with CBC's comms team, which break down the

HRA business plan into a digestible format. In this way, the key objectives – including sustainable homes, stronger and more resilient communities – can be communicated to a wider audience.

The Leader said she had made a video to highlight the sixth anniversary of the Grenfell Tower fire, saying it was important that organisations learnt from the disaster. CBH works closely with its tenants to ensure their health and safety, and that all measures are adhered to.

8 Cabinet Member decisions since the last meeting

Members reported on their decisions taken since the last meeting, as follows:

25 May 2023 – Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities, Councillor Clucas
[To allocate Coronation Fund grants](#)

09 June 2023 – Leader, Councillor Rowena Hay
[To submit CBC's response to the technical consultation on the Infrastructure Levy](#)

12 June 2023 – Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling and Street Services, Councillor Iain Dobie
[To award a contract to Mobus Commercials for the supply of 3 x electric cage-tippers](#)

12 June 2023 – Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets, Councillor Peter Jeffries
[External renovation and improvement of Cornish-type properties at Pitman Road, Cheltenham](#)

9 Briefing Note: Health and Safety Service Update, 2023-24

This was circulated for information only. There was no debate on this item.

10 Local Government Act 1972 - Exempt Minutes

RESOLVED THAT:

- in accordance with Section 100A(4) Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining agenda items as it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, if members of the public are present there will be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in paragraph 5, Part (1) Schedule (12A) Local Government Act 1972, namely:

Paragraph 5: Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings

11 Exempt Minutes

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2023 were approved as a true record and signed accordingly.