

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet

Minutes

Meeting date: 28 May 2024

Meeting time: 6.00 pm - 6.40 pm

In attendance:

Councillors:

Victoria Atherstone, Flo Clucas, Mike Collins, Iain Dobie, Rowena Hay, Martin Horwood, Peter Jeffries, Alisha Lewis and Izaak Tailford

Also in attendance:

Gareth Edmundson (Chief Executive)

1 Apologies

There were none.

2 Declarations of interest

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing and Culture declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 6: he is a patron of Cheltenham Open Door, but has no management or pecuniary involvement so will remain in the Chamber for that item.

There were no further declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 02 April were approved by those who attended, and signed accordingly as a true record.

4 Public and Member Questions and Petitions

No public questions or petitions had been received. One Member question was submitted, as follows:

1. Question from Councillor David Willingham to Leader, Councillor Rowena Hay

In the Internal Audit progress report presented to Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee on 17 April 2024, there is an outstanding “open agreed action”. This action is as follows:

The Built Environment Local Enforcement Plan (Planning) has not been recently reviewed.

This item was raised in the 2020-2021 municipal year, and deadlines for its completion were missed on 31 July 2021, 30 April 2022, and 31 December 2023. The officer update from 17 November 2023 suggested that it would be added to the Forward Plan and dealt with after the May 2024 elections.

Could the Cabinet Member please confirm whether this item is now on the Forward Plan and confirm what the schedule is for its completion?

Response from Cabinet Member

In liaison with the former Cabinet Member for Customer and Regulatory Services, it was agreed that a full review of the Enforcement Plan be undertaken. This coincided with a permanent Head of Planning being appointed. We are currently in a position of having a draft enforcement plan, and now that elections have been completed, the next step is to draw together a member group to review the redrafted enforcement plan; once this has been completed, the plan to proceed to Cabinet. This is scheduled on the Forward Plan for the meeting on 09 July 2024.

There was no supplementary question.

5 Updated Climate Action Plan

The former Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency presented the report, saying it was a great privilege to have worked on it and made a meaningful contribution to the council’s current position regarding the climate emergency. She said she is frequently asked whether CBC will achieve its net zero target by 2030, and this fantastic report shows and explains the progress of the last few years and highlights all that the council is doing and can do to achieve its goals. It is an ambitious document and the new Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency will have the immense privilege of delivering it. She thanked the excellent officer team, in particular Debbie Baker, for their work.

The incoming Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency commended all the work involved in delivering the paper, saying it was an immensely important document, created under the guidance of an experienced figure of national standing, and setting out the draft roadmap to net zero in Cheltenham. He said the challenges are immense and the goals huge, but that all the targets are achievable if we think globally and act in Cheltenham.

The Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities thanked officers for a thorough report, setting out the journey to date, and in particular the sharing of advice and guidance through the climate impact assessment tool which is helping other councils to achieve their climate emergency goals.

She took the opportunity to mention that although e-scooters are a great and green mode of transport, in St Peter's and elsewhere they can be misused and some local residents are fearful of anti-social behaviour related to their use. She suggested that it would be helpful if the new Cabinet Member could pick up conversations with Gloucestershire County Council to find out what is happening with regard to enforcement and how this can be used to reduce ASB relating to e-scooters.

She also commented that the council had been successful over the past few years with the social housing decarbonisation fund, but the cost is astronomical and the challenge for local government is to ensure the funds come forward from central government to help achieve these goals and reduce energy costs for residents.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets agreed that e-scooter enforcement is important but complicated, and it is important to be flexible enough to take advantage of opportunities without undermining them. She also considered that bringing CBH back in house would help the council move forward with investment and tackling poverty.

The Cabinet Member for Major Developments and Housing Delivery thanked officers and the former Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency for this extensive piece of work, and also the previous Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, former Councillor Wilkinson, who started the process when in office. He welcomed the action plan, and was pleased to see the council showing leadership across the town.

RESOLVED THAT:

- **the updated Climate Emergency Action Plan is approved and published.**

6 Rent Support Grants to Voluntary Sector

The former Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets said it had been a privilege to hold the portfolio, and this report showed how the council directly supports its communities. Open Door has impact across the town - its door is always open - it had been a privilege to visit and meet with them. It gave him great pleasure that this report for a rent support grant was his last report in post.

The incoming Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets said this report is the pinnacle of her predecessor's work, and a good example of how under his leadership, CBC used its assets to flex its muscles and help organisations doing good work across the town. She said the portfolio is mostly about spreadsheets and balances but CBC's commercial strategy still excels in taking every opportunity to do good and make Cheltenham better. She thanked him for his work, leading a socially-motivated finance team.

The Leader said supporting community organisations, from scout groups and football clubs to Open Door, is a challenge and costs the authority a huge amount of money, but the value to the wider community is immeasurable and invaluable.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. a rent support grant of 72% of current market rent to Open Door for 39 Grosvenor Street is approved;**
- 2. authority is delegated to the Participation and Engagement Team Leader, in consultation with One Legal to agree the terms of a rent support grant agreement with the applicant.**

7 Briefing from Cabinet Members

The Leader thanked Members for accepting their new portfolios, all of which were invaluable to the administration, saying that learning a different portfolio and widening skills was invaluable to the administration, allowing everyone to be more collective and understanding, and to share knowledge from the past for use in the future.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture and Wellbeing had nothing specific to report yet, but said he was staggered by the richness and diversity of Cheltenham's cultural, artistic and sporting organisations. He said we are all lucky to live in the town and he will do his best to enhance it further.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services said what happens in Cheltenham is something that towns and cities all over Europe watch, knowing that they can do the same and use our experience to help them rebuild and reinvigorate their own communities. The fact that CBC does what it does while still balancing its books says much about the commitment and operational abilities of Members, and the care and concern of the Cabinet to fund initiatives to help the ordinary people in Cheltenham. She thanked all colleagues for enabling people to learn without incurring risks.

The Cabinet Member for Major Projects and Housing Regeneration said he was enjoying getting his feet under the table with this exciting portfolio, and particularly looking forward to continuing work on rent social value, with the forefront of our community in mind. He said Golden Valley is the biggest development in the southwest and will clearly have a huge impact on the town; the social value element

and how we can support areas across the town is key, and he looks forward to talking more about this in the future.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency agreed that what Cheltenham is doing is at the leading edge of what is happening nationally, including recycling, which was part of his previous portfolio, with a wider range of kerbside recycling than elsewhere in the county. He said he is privileged to be taking on this portfolio, as climate change touches everything we do in the council, and although our climate change targets are far more ambitious than those of the national government, the people of Cheltenham are behind us, with a wealth of goodwill from the people, other parties and individual councillors. We are at the forefront of delivering on our goals, and will not be out-greened by anywhere else in the country.

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling and Public Realm was delighted to be joining the Cabinet, saying he was getting to grips with his new role, had had meetings with officers, and the handover was going well. He added that there were a few exciting things to come, as well as some challenges.

The Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities thanked CBC and CBH officers, local businesses, schools and community groups who have supported the project to redistribute pre-loved school uniform. This has been hugely successful, thanks to the fantastic donations of every type of uniform from families across Cheltenham. The scheme continues until 31 May, with Dunelm on Tewkesbury Road as the donation point.

She also wanted to raise awareness of a £41k fund for organisations in the Cheltenham and Gloucester area with expertise and passion for detached youth work, providing opportunities to support young people over the age of 13 who are at risk due to vulnerabilities and anti-social behaviour. The process is open for applications until 18 June.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets was excited and nervous to be taking on this portfolio, but with so much going on in Cheltenham, she was looking forward to working out how to best use the council's funds and assets to enhance the long-term sustainable future of Cheltenham.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control was also excited by the challenges ahead, and was happy to begin with the good news that the Arle Court transport hub is on target to be fully operational by August. This is, of course, and county-led project, but as other Members have said, Cheltenham must work with partners, and this fantastic initiative will help us achieve our climate ambitions, resulting in fewer car journeys to the town centre. In addition, people's concerns about the loss of trees has already been addressed with the re-planting of sustainable vegetation, resulting in biodiversity net gain. He added that Junction 10 remains a huge challenge, and looked forward to working with colleagues to resolve the issues.

The Leader thanked everyone for their enthusiasm in their new roles and for their contributions.

8 Cabinet Member decisions taken since the last meeting

The Leader invited Members to comment on decisions taken since the last meeting on 02 April 2024.

09 April 2024 - (Former) Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Victoria Atherstone

- i. [To award a small grant to Gloucestershire Action For Refugees and Asylum Seekers \(GARAS\)](#)
- ii. [To award grant funding for Gloucestershire Nightstop](#)
- iii. [To award a small grant to Cheltenham Welcomes Refugees as part of Cheltenham Borough Council's Commitment in Council Motion B, 23 June 2023](#)

Councillor Atherstone thanked GARAS, Cheltenham Welcome's Refugees, and Nightstop for the fantastic work they do in our communities, and was happy that CBC is able to support their work with these small grants:

10 April 2024 – (Former) Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets, Councillor Peter Jeffries

[To agree to the disposal of 45 Grosvenor Street from the HRA portfolio](#)

10 April 2024 – Leader, Councillor Rowena Hay

[Leader Resolution – Cheltenham Borough Homes](#)

Councillor Hay said that the dissolution of CBH will happen in due course, following this council resolution to wind it up.

12 April 2024 - (Former) Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets, Councillor Peter Jeffries

[Interior design work on Goldfoot House Sheltered Scheme](#)

Councillor Jeffries confirmed that this work is in line with the HRA capital programme, agreed at the February budget meeting.

25 April 2024 – (Former) Cabinet Member for Customer and Regulatory Services, Councillor Martin Horwood

[To change the official street name of Yarnolds Terrace to Yarnold Terrace](#)

Councillor Horwood was happy to confirm that a historical streetname anomaly had now been corrected, and thanked Councillor Willingham for his attention to detail in bringing this forward.

29 April 2024 - (Former) Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets, Councillor Peter Jeffries

[To enter into a contract with Rand Associates Consultancy Services](#)

Councillor Jeffries confirmed that this decision was for a condition survey across the council's housing stock.

09 May 2024 – (Former) Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Councillor Alisha Lewis

[To submit a funding bid to Phase 5 Public sector Low Carbon Skills Fund \(LCSF\)](#)

Councillor Lewis said this was an important consideration in the move towards net zero, working out how young people will transition. This decision supports that.

10 May 2024 - (Former) Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling and Street Services, Councillor Iain Dobie

[To award a contract for Playground Improvements](#)

Councillor Dobie said it gave him great pleasure to approve this decision, which is part of an ongoing programme covering several locations across Cheltenham, and symbolic of the money the council invests in communities, young people and green places. He said there is more to come, and noted that everything the council does touches on the climate change agenda. He looked forward to further dialogue in his new role.

14 May 2024 - (Former) Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets, Councillor Peter Jeffries

[To appoint Adapt Architects to deliver professional retrofit design services](#)

Councillor Jeffries confirmed that this appointment was funded by the social housing decarbonisation fund.