

Cheltenham Borough Council Cabinet Minutes

Meeting date: 11 March 2025

Meeting time: 6.00 pm - 7.01 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:

Paul Jones (Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer))

1 Apologies

There were none.

2 Declarations of interest

There were none.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2025 will be approved at the next meeting.

4 Public and Member Questions and Petitions

There were no questions or petitions on this occasion.

5 UK Shared Prosperity Funding 2025-2026

The Leader introduced her report, saying that the government announced one more year of UK Shared Prosperity Funding in its autumn budget, with a further announcement in December 2024 that in April 2025, CBC will receive an allocation

of £385,390, being £72,155 capital and £314,235 revenue funding, to be spent on activities taking place between 01 April 2025 and 31 March 2026. This is a tight deadline, and although not a huge amount of money, it could make a difference to a lot of organisations. The recommendation is for allocation of the funding to be delegated to the Leader, in consultation with the UKSPF assessment panel and Cabinet Members.

Members will note from the recommendations that she has already allocated £102,848 to two contracts to continue delivery of the Cheltenham Growth Plan.

The Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities welcomed the award, which goes a little way to help support and deliver vital projects in the coming year, including NCLB and other brilliant initiatives.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. the award to the council of £385,390 UKSPF funding for 2025-26 is noted;**
- 2. acceptance of the UKSPF funding is approved, noting the reporting requirements and delivery arrangements imposed by the Funder;**
- 3. the decision by Councillor Rowena Hay, Leader of Cheltenham Borough Council, to allocate £102,848 of the funding to enter into two contracts to continue the delivery of Cheltenham Growth Hub is noted;**
- 4. authority is delegated to Councillor Rowena Hay, Leader of Cheltenham Borough Council, in consultation with the UKSPF assessment panel and Cabinet members, to allocate funding for delivery of projects in line with UKSPF criteria and corporate plan priorities.**

6 Cheltenham Ice Rink 2024-25

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing and Culture introduced his report, saying that overall the 2024-25 Cheltenham Ice Rink was a fantastic overall success, thanks largely to Helen Mole and her team who secured more sponsorship than before. He also thanked Lidl GB, the main sponsor, S3K, the operator, and the 22 locally-recruited staff.

He ran through the highlights as set out in the report, including:

- the positive economic impact, calculated at an additional £530k spent in the town;
- the environmental impact, with 98% less greenhouse gas emissions than 2021 through sustainable fuel and electric power – despite a slight glitch towards the end which impacted the financial goals;

- the social impact, with 500 free tickets, and special sessions for a wide range of users, making it more inclusive and accessible than before;
- the financial impact, which after the UK Prosperity Fund was deducted, was just £24k;
- most importantly, a lot of people had a lot of fun, and the event has become part of Cheltenham's calendar.

He confirmed the recommendations as set out in the report, and hoped that Members would be happy to approve.

Members thanked the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing and Culture and congratulated all involved. They made the following comments:

- the reduced environmental impact, in line with CBC's Net Zero targets, is especially welcome, with an update on further progress anticipated, which will totally remove the need for a generator for all festival events;
- the dialogue and consultation between Marketing Cheltenham, CBC and local residents to ensure their needs were considered and concerns addressed was very welcome;
- the ice rink is huge fun to visit and a highly enjoyable experience, and its economic benefits are really pleasing. Its social value and support for NCLB is superb, and as is its vital contribution to making Cheltenham a better destination town for Christmas shopping;
- although it didn't quite hit its budget target, there can be no price tag on the joy and fun it brought, particularly for people not otherwise able to access it;
- the impact of the ice rink is incredible, for businesses and for people young and old. It is pleasing and humbling, a great benefit to Cheltenham, and hopefully will get even better over the next three years and provide even more children with the opportunity to take part;
- the dedicated sessions for people with a wide range of accessibility requirements is a particular highlight, and not offered by many places;
- it is great to have something extra to offer Christmas shoppers, and the ice rink is a prime example of what CBC is doing to increase business income and make the town more viable.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing and Culture thanked Members for their positive comments and support, saying that Helen Mole and her team make every effort to align with the council's goals and ensure positive engagement with local residents, and agreed that it is impossible to put a price on fun.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. the information about the outputs of the 2024/25 ice rink is noted;**
- 2. the decision by Councillor Martin Horwood, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture and Wellbeing, for Cheltenham**

Borough Council to apply for planning permission to run a Christmas Ice Rink for the 2025, 2026 and 2027 Christmas periods is noted;

- 3. the decision by Councillor Martin Horwood, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture and Wellbeing, to approve an extension to the contract with S3K Limited for 12 months (to 02 July 2026), if planning permission is awarded, to enable delivery and management of the 2025-26 Christmas Ice Rink, is noted;**
- 4. a total potential financial commitment for 2025/26 as set out in section 4 of this report is approved;**
- 5. officers are progressing new procurement activities and, subject to planning permission, authority is delegated for appointments of contractors to the Director of Communities and Economic Development, as per section 5 of this report.**

7 Revised Social Value Strategy for the Golden Valley Development

The Cabinet Member for Major Development and Housing Delivery introduced his report, reminding Members that the social value strategy first appeared when the Golden Valley development funding agreement was signed in 2022. He said that work has been ongoing in the Golden Valley team since then to get it moving, and to drive the maximum social value for residents and communities across Cheltenham out of the development. Five key principles run throughout the whole strategy to maximise the social value, and he highlighted the Social Value Charter which sets out to businesses and tenants what is expected of them. The report includes some of the activities already under way, and what is planned for the future, demonstrating the shape and change of what we can expect from the Golden Valley investment.

He invited Members to endorse the report and strategy, which will be agreed with our development partners.

Members thanked the Cabinet Member for Major Development and Housing Delivery for his report, and made the following comments:

- when the council first signed the development agreement, there was concern about how it could commit to spending such a huge amount of money without considering the social value for Cheltenham. Engagement sessions subsequently took place throughout the town and the first draft of the social value strategy was formulated. We only have one chance to get this right; hopefully all will go to plan;
- one of the strongest economic driving forces of the council is that every penny it spends is doing the most it can for the people of Cheltenham. This new version of the social value strategy is a testament to the principles of the Cabinet Member for Major Development and Housing Delivery, which will be carried forward regardless of what happens with devolution;
- a huge amount of inspiring work has gone into this strategy, with the Golden Valley team engaging with communities and meeting with various partners to better understand how it can deliver on behalf of Cheltenham residents.

Activities and social value are monitored in the social profit calculator, which shows this is starting from a solid foundation. This is really great work and a pleasing document;

- protection and enhancement of the natural environment and biodiversity is welcomed, and will have positive benefits for nature and for residents;
- the statement of development commitment to environmental sustainability and biodiversity, eco-friendly design, carbon footprint reduction, commitment to sustainable transport are all welcome. The Social Value Charter should be available for all partners to sign – they will be proud to do so;
- this is another example of the council choosing to establish a positive investment strategy for Cheltenham, linked to local value, skills, training, procurement, health and wellbeing, engagement with residents, the local environment and more. It aligns with Liberal Democrat principles, and is to be commended;
- in five years' time, the council will look back with pride at doing something so positive for its residents, in particular the potential employment for young people who want to build a future in Cheltenham.

The Cabinet Member for Major Development and Housing Delivery thanked Members for their kind words, and gave credit to the team behind it, led by Amy Keates. He said it is unusual to be talking about something on paper and calculating the impact it will have on lives in 20 years' time, but said the critical thing is the clear principles set out in the Charter. He wishes everyone involved could be forced to sign it to prove their clear commitment, but with all tenants on board he was confident that we can make it work.

RESOLVED THAT:

- **the amendment of the current Development Agreement (DA) to incorporate the revised Social Value Strategy version 2 is endorsed.**

8 Briefing from Cabinet Members

The Leader invited Members to present their briefings.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control said he had attended various meetings, in particular the CIL Neighbourhood Panel meeting at which he was an observer. He said protocol, terms of engagement and guidelines were discussed, with lessons learned from the previous round where 16 groups were successful in their bids. Of those, the majority have received their money, 3-4 are still in progress have experienced some delays, but one successful recipient wasn't able to complete their project and has returned its £10k for next time. It was agreed that they can bid again if they wish, although there is no guarantee that their bid will succeed. When the panel knows what money is available, it will decide which of the wide-ranging bids – from residents associations to schools – are successful. He hopes that this scheme will continue for a long time.

The Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities had several updates to share:

- a safe haven has been launched for under-18s who can be overwhelmed in the busy town centre during race week. The feedback from the recent youth survey was that many young people do not feel safe in the town centre during race week, and the safe haven offers them a calm place to go if needed. Staff from The Rock are also carrying out detached duty work in the town centre, looking out for young, vulnerable people;
- the licensing team works extremely hard before and during race week, together with GCC, the police, the Jockey Club and more to ensure a successful event. They advise people to book taxis in advance to ensure these are licensed, and help people know how to identify a Cheltenham taxi. Taxi marshals will work at two of the ranks until 4.00am for added security;
- she has been out and about with Max Wilkinson MP, promoting CBC's War on Wee campaign, which is also supported by the Jockey Club. It is upsetting when race-goers do not respect the town, and with many additional toilets installed, she encouraged people to enjoy themselves but to act responsibly;
- bidding for enrichment grants opened a couple of weeks ago and will continue for two months, with £30k available to be shared in £500 awards, to enable extra-curricular activities and technical skills for 4-18 year olds. Individuals and groups are encouraged to apply.

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling and Public Realm shared the following:

- Ubico staff are ready to go to step up street cleaning during race week, restoring the town as quickly as possible;
- there has been a lot of discussion with the county council about its plans for the Promenade outside Cavendish House. It is under no obligation to consult with CBC on highways maintenance matters, but has responded to requests to engage by inviting CBC, the BID and the Civic Society for a meeting to discuss the issues arising from the ongoing need to replace the York stone paving on the Promenade. This stone is expensive and increasingly less available, now a different colour from previously, and does not sit well on sandy ground. The problems caused by heavy vehicles driving over it to set up markets, make deliveries, collect rubbish and so on, have resulted in tarmac infills. The Civic Society is particularly keen to prevent this, and GCC's initial plan to introduce an experimental TRO with bollards to block vehicle access to the Promenade was opposed by the police.
GCC has subsequently proposed a running track through the middle of the paved area. The Civic Society did not attend the GCC meeting to share its concerns; CBC and the BID raised many issues, and although we have no decision-making power, it was good to engage. Some enhancements to the proposal resulted such as improvements to the tree pits, biodiversity gains, and the promise of better communications. CBC has pushed for more engagement with businesses and residents, but ultimately it is the county's scheme;
- offices at the Cemetery and Crematorium have been refurbished and are now more warm and welcoming, both for the people who work there and the people who visit at a challenging time. New staff also been recruited, and more signage and a painted utility box have improved the experience and the area for everyone;

- volunteers in the town's parks and green spaces are all invited to a thank-you event at the end of the month, in appreciation of all the valuable work they do. It is a good opportunity for them to connect and share experiences;
- work on the Long Gardens has commenced, with the flower beds being moved round and in due course planted up with perennials.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services said she is proud to have made two presentations – at a United Nations committee for gender equality and women's empowerment and at a commonwealth committee – about all the work undertaken in Cheltenham to promote safety for female councillors and for women throughout the town. She will make the same presentation at the Congress of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in the near future, and feels privileged to be able to share with the rest of the world everything that Cheltenham does in this important respect.

The Cabinet Member for Major Development and Housing Delivery said he recently had the pleasure of attending a public consultation event at the former Monkscroft School site, following on from a previous consultation where communities were heard and their concerns addressed. It was good to see issues including biodiversity, the quality of the homes and transit points being taken into account, and the interaction between the team and local residents.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing and Culture had several updates:

- a great deal of work has gone into making the town clean and safe during Gold Cup week – this is one of the finest jump racing festivals in the world, enormously important in bringing huge economic value to the town, worth hundreds of thousands of pounds. He will be joining Max Wilkinson MP at the end of the week, as part of English Tourism Week, to encourage people to stay on and sample some of the other delights the town has to offer;
- a panel has met to consider health and wellbeing grants - over £100k funding through local NHS partners - and invite community projects to come forward with ideas to tackle key health issues. He said the range is inspiring, including the Archie Matthews Trust, a local charity doing innovative work to support young men's mental health in imaginative and sensitive way;
- the council is aiming to extend the activity pass which formed part of last year's grants round, enabling young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to experience facilities at Leisure@, by including further facilities such as the sports centre at the former Christ College and thus spreading the scope around the town in a positive way;
- he has visited the *Common Ground* exhibition at The Wilson, which tells the story of the land and its connection to people, culture, folklore and politics, and includes Neolithic skulls, landscape painting, excellent modern sculpture, the Leckhampton Rioters, and Boss Morris, a new and radical contemporary Morris-dancing group;

- people are invited to take part in the Big Museum project, a consultation on the future of the museum, including how and what it displays in the future. The consultation will run all year, and can be completed on line or in person;
- a new volunteer venture – [Music at Cheltenham](#) - has been launched to highlight upcoming classical music events in Cheltenham, teaming up with Visit Cheltenham to ensure that data and information are exchanged. It is great to see classical music promoted in this way.

The Leader said that she had no briefings on this occasion, having concentrated all of her time since December on local government reorganisation.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets, whilst acknowledging the economic benefits of race week to the town, said it was important to highlight the offer to residents of free parking after 12.00 in Sherbourne Place and Town Centre East car parks. This gives them the chance to enjoy the town and support local businesses during the quiet times when race-goers are at the race course.

9 Cabinet Member decisions since last meeting

Members reported on the following decisions, taken since the last meeting:

20 February 2025: Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing and Culture, Councillor Martin Horwood

[Delivery of Cheltenham Christmas Ice Rink 2025-26](#)

24 February 2025: Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services, Councillor Flo Clucas

[To enter into a contract for the delivery of the Rough Sleeper Outreach and Support Service](#)

25 February 2025: Leader, Councillor Rowena Hay

[Flag flying at the Municipal Offices](#)

07 March 2025: Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services, Councillor Flo Clucas

[To enter a contract with Idox plc for the supply of software and services](#)

10 Any other business

There was none.

11 Date of next meeting

17 March, 12.30pm (extraordinary meeting)

08 April, 6.00pm