

Cheltenham Borough Council Cabinet Minutes

Meeting date: 20 May 2025

Meeting time: 6.00 pm - 6.45 pm

In attendance:

Councillors:

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

Also in attendance:

Gareth Edmundson (Chief Executive), Richard Gibson (Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships) and Victoria Bishop (Governance, Risk and Assurance Manager)

1 Apologies

There were no apologies.

The Leader welcomed Councillor Baker to the Cabinet, as newly-appointed Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling, Parks, Gardens and Public Greenspace.

2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 08 April 2025 were approved with the following amendment:

Agenda item 8: Briefings from Cabinet Members

Paragraph 4, Briefing from Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling and Public Realm

- he has spent four hours earlier today planting trees at ~~Boroughs~~ Burrows Field, together with the CBC greenspace team...

The Leader signed the minutes as a true record of the meeting.

4 Public and Member Questions and Petitions

There were no public or Member questions, and no petitions.

5 Physical activity and sport strategy for Cheltenham - Action Plan

The Leader invited the new Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Wellbeing and Public Open Space to introduce the report, which had been approved by his predecessor.

To present the report, the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Wellbeing and Public Open Space read out the introduction of the report as published, which explained the background and recommendations.

He said the report received positive feedback at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Monday night, with a lot of questions and comments. The focus on football and the question of supporting more sports raised; the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Wellbeing and Public Open Space commented that this follows on from the recent Playing Pitch Strategy, and the benefits of drawing in outward investment from the Football Association and other levels, creating facilities that can be used for many sports and also taking football teams and matches off existing sites which were originally intended for other sports. Also discussed was what communications can be put out to encourage people in Cheltenham to get active, in addition to the current Youth Activity Pass.

He said the report was a good starting point for the action plan to move forward, encourage investment and external funding, and improve and develop our own facilities. It is important to support both the people who play and love team sports, and those who enjoy other activities such as cycling, running and walking, and to do all we can to make provision and facilities better for the people of Cheltenham.

Members all welcomed the excellent report and recommendations, thanking the Cabinet Member, his predecessor, and officers for their hard work, and made the following comments:

- anything we can do to improve and encourage sport and sporting facilities is to be encouraged, as involvement in sport has so many benefits for both physical and mental health;
- the focus on 3G pitches is welcome and a move in the right direction, although it is a sad indictment that there is currently only one artificial pitch available locally - the Cheltenham Tigers pitch, technically outside the borough. It is widely used by many clubs from all over Cheltenham when their grass pitches are not available, and has even been used by visiting national teams as a camping base during world cups in Europe;

- it would be good to highlight walking more in the next version of the strategy. The council has opened footpaths around at least two parks in recent years – Naunton Park and Burrows Field – and these are welcomed by residents and well used by walkers, power walkers and joggers. The council should continue to take walking seriously and to work with officers and the county council to improve the footpaths which criss-cross Cheltenham, including the reopening of Gustav Holst Way in Cheltenham parks, which has been closed for many years;
- walking is an important physical activity, which can be enjoyed by and encouraged for people who are not otherwise involved in sports. Our parks and greenspaces are unique, and many include outdoor gym facilities;
- the Feel Good Pass and Youth Activity Pass are an excellent way to involve people without the time or necessary funding to otherwise get involved, and a way of leveraging further investment to enhance what the town already offers;
- this report brings together a lot of earlier work, setting out what we need to do as a town going forward, with a clear action plan to encourage more funding opportunities and delivery of identified options to improve physical activity and sports, at the same time generating enhanced relationships with parish councils, schools, and other partners;
- further engagement with young people and the Youth Activity Pass will help break down one identified barrier of cost. It is concerning that being physically active can be a particular challenge for young females, and it would be interesting to know why this is and identify more community sports which encourage them to engage;
- this inspiring report highlights the benefits of sport on physical and mental health, not least by generating friendships and opportunities. The town is blessed with some great facilities, many of which are provided by the private sector, and it is important that we continue to work as we do with shared agreements with the private sector and schools, to make the most of these;
- we are also lucky to have some excellent clubs in the town, including Leckhampton Rovers, Charlton Rovers, Old Pats and Lakeside, which work hard and raise funds, involving many hundreds of young people, and the Cheltenham Youth Football League which involves thousands;
- on the subject of playing pitches, it is good news that Pittville School has planning permission for a 3G pitch and sports hall, and important that any new development such as Elms Park delivers this sort of facility, as well as walkways through new estates;
- in addition, Friends groups, such as Friends of Sandford Park, work hard, and have recently raised money for gym equipment, opening a whole new avenue of opportunities for all age groups; there is so much going on that people don't know about and the more we can do to promote this to a wider audience, the better.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Wellbeing and Public Open Space thanked Members for their kind comments and contributions, and made the following points in response:

- the shortage of 3G pitches was noted in the playing pitch strategy, as these are a much-needed facility, and working with private organisations to secure

community use agreements is to be encouraged. It is good to note that permission has been granted for Pittville School's facility;

- more focus on walking is noted – it is a valued part of people's lives, and easy to take for granted the lovely parks, gardens and greenspaces we have in Cheltenham. CBC has recently been awarded UK Shared Prosperity Fund grant for more paths, and the more external funding we can generate for projects the better. Friends groups and communities can work with the council to help make things happen and secure funding for projects that the council cannot do on its own.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. the physical activity and sports action plan, attached as Appendix 2, is endorsed;**
- 2. authority is delegated to the Director for Community and Economic Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Wellbeing and Public Open Space, to make any final amendments to the action plan as it is presented in its final designed format;**
- 3. the action plan will be used to establish a sports and physical activity steering group that will oversee the progress of the action plan identifying where partners can work collaboratively to support delivery.**

6 Briefings from Cabinet Members

The Leader invited Members to share any briefings. Some had only been in position in their new portfolios for eight days, but briefings were as follows:

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control reported that he has recently signed off the Cheltenham Non-residential Monitoring Report for 2024-25, covering all non-residential permissions in that period, which was interesting reading. He also advised that:

- work has started on the draft Housing Delivery Test Action Plan, which shows the current situation with regard to the council's five-year land supply. The report will help to monitor progress more closely than in the past, and hopefully with Elms Park, Golden Valley and other strategic developments coming forward, CBC will get much closer to achieving its supply;
- the Director of Community and Economic Development has signed off a decision authorising a financial contribution from SAMM (Strategic Access Management and Monitoring) to Stroud District Council to facilitate an onsite ranger service at Cotswolds Beechwoods for the next two years.

The Cabinet Member for Major Developments and Housing Delivery said she was happy to have met with the excellent team, who shared their ambitious ideas for Golden Valley, a huge part of her portfolio. High Street regeneration and housing delivery are also major items, and it is great to hear that the Monkscroft

development, which had hit a snag due to economic factors, is now back on the agenda, with 100% affordable housing, mix of tenures to actively reflect the shortcomings on the housing waiting list, very high climate standards, and easy walking paths.

She also reported on the promotion over the last few weeks of the Jam Coding project, with the Golden Valley team putting money into coding passes for children in local primary schools to have fun and develop skills for careers not only in the Golden Valley but also in the wider tech eco-system. Her predecessor worked hard on the social value that Golden Valley gives back to the community, and this is the tip of the iceberg.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Wellbeing and Public Open Space was also getting to grips with his new portfolio, with meetings already taken place and many more planned. He is enjoying meeting leaders and organisations which contribute so much to our festival town, its culture and wellbeing, and all the very positive things that make Cheltenham the wonderful place it is, where people want to live and to invest.

One of these, he said, is the Cheltenham Lido which is celebrating 90 years on Sunday. It is a fantastic facility, supported by the council over the years, and a great asset to the town.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, having recently been elected to Gloucestershire County Council, said he was looking forward to bringing the county and the borough together on issues such as footpaths, and playing a role in liaison between the two councils to ensure that what they do is as effective as possible for the people of Cheltenham.

The Leader thanked the Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency for his much-valued contribution to Cabinet, and wished him well on the County Council.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services said she had been privileged to represent the Local Government Association at a number of meetings in Europe over the last few weeks, where she was able to share what CBC is doing. In particular, she spoke about how the council is supporting girls and women, after reports that they are retreating from many aspects of life because they don't feel safe. She thanked, Richard Gibson, Kelly Patterson and Tracy Brown for all their work, and said what a great honour it was to be able to represent Cheltenham, talk about what we do, and show the difference it makes.

The Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities shared several items:

- thanks and congratulations to licensing officers and all partners who work with us on being awarded a 10th consecutive purple flag, assessed on the town's offering for the evening and night-time economy – this is a great achievement;
- she was happy to have volunteered at the weekend's Pride Festival, and to engage with the community, vendors and the police about hate crime and safety in our communities;
- she was also pleased to have met and talked some visitors from Cheltenham's twin towns, Annecy and Gottingen, here for the Jazz Festival, and given a

presentation and update on the work of No Child Left Behind, with ongoing dialogue;

- she has been working with officers to digest the consultation responses to the recently-updated sexual entertainment venue licensing policy and taxi policy, and thanked everyone who took time to respond to those important consultations.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets was happy to return to this portfolio and thanked his predecessor for all her work. He said that finances are hit by global economic forces from time to time, and recent events are likely to have an impact on CBC. He added that there is always a lot going on with the council's properties, welcomed the upcoming report on the Petersfield Partnership, and he was looking forward to being involved going forward.

The newly-appointed Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling, Parks, Gardens and Public Greenspace said he had learnt a lot in his first week, and was impressed by the first-class officers he has met, whose experience and longevity says a lot about the organisation. He share the following news items:

- the Long Gardens will soon be planted up with perennials, which will transform their appearance;
- he has recently met with Adam Reynolds, Parks and Public Realm Manager, to discuss issues of security around parks, open spaces and recreation grounds;
- new and more bins are being installed on the Promenade and High Street, which will hopefully be well used.

The Leader said that she has received feedback from the government, following submission of CBC's proposals on local government reorganisation in Gloucestershire. This doesn't add anything new, mainly reiterating the original document. She commented that the county council elections have taken place since the original submission, highlighting the importance of working across all seven authorities. She is looking forward to working with the new county administration.

7 Cabinet Member decisions since the last meeting

The Leader briefly described four Cabinet Member decisions taken since the last meeting of Cabinet:

08 April 2025: Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing and Culture

[Approval of the award of grant funding for the Cheltenham Health and Wellbeing grants 2024](#)

10 April 2025: Leader, Councillor Rowena Hay

[To allocate the UK Shared Prosperity Fund \(UKSPF\) for 2025-26](#)

17 April 2025: Leader, Councillor Rowena Hay

[Cotswold National Landscape Management Plan 2025-30](#)

17 April 2025: Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing and Culture

Cheltenham Feel Good Pass

8 Any other item(s) that the Leader determines to be urgent and requires a decision

There was none.

9 Date of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 10 June.