

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet

Minutes

Meeting date: 8 April 2025

Meeting time: 6.00 pm - 6.40 pm

In attendance:

Councillors:

Victoria Atherstone, Flo Clucas, Iain Dobie, Rowena Hay, Martin Horwood, Peter Jeffries and Izaac Tailford

Also in attendance:

Gareth Edmundson (Chief Executive) and Richard Gibson (Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships)

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Collins and Lewis.

2 Declarations of interest

There were none.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meetings held on:

- 18 February 2025
- 11 March 2025
- 18 March 2025

were approved and signed as a true record.

4 Public and Member Questions and Petitions

There were no public or Member questions or petitions had been received.

5 Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund Grant Bid

The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency introduced the report, welcoming the award of £3.688million which would help bring the council significantly closer to its target of all social housing achieving EPC Level C or above by 2030. He said the ongoing process has multiple benefits, including reduction in heat and energy demand, energy costs for residents, and CO2 and other greenhouse gas emissions. The improved properties will also be more beneficial to residents health, and move the council closer to its Net Zero goal. He encouraged Cabinet Members to approve the recommendation, which will bequeath a significant and positive legacy beyond the lifetime of CBC.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services said we often forget about the impact a grant such as this will have on tenants, their homes, their children and their ability to live better lives. Helping to achieve Net Zero is good, but caring for our tenants is at the core of everything we do as a housing authority.

Members made the following points:

- the council has a long history of helping and supporting tenants, from introducing the Decent Homes Standard to investing to improve the tenant experience. As a critical, forward-thinking council, we take advantage of government announcements such as this; thanks to the Cabinet Members for bringing this forward;
- the council has been successful in bidding for this government funding, formerly known as the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and, knowing the benefits of good, energy-efficient homes, it is brilliant that we are on track to have all homes Level C and above.

RESOLVED THAT:

- **the £3.688 million grant offered by Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) under Warm Homes:Social Housing Fund Wave 3 is accepted.**

6 To note the decisions made by the Community Infrastructure Levy Joint Committee

The Leader introduced her report, reminding Members that the CIL Joint Committee, comprising Cheltenham Borough, Tewkesbury Borough and Gloucester City Councils, was established with the agreement to pool strategic CIL contributions and allocate funds to projects which affected all three areas. The three councils have now got together to discuss allocation of 70-80% of the fund (less admin costs and the very important CIL neighbourhood allocations), and will contribute significant amounts to many projects, including the Junction 10 and Junction 9 Ashchurch improvement schemes, the Mass Rapid Transit Scheme, enhancement of the Honeybourne cycle path, and further works to the Gloucester to Bishops Cleeve

cycle spine. Those schemes not funded will be considered next time, and 15% of the fund is to be allocated to the districts to pick up more localised strategic works. Although the decisions have already been made by the CIL Joint Committee, the Leader was keen to share these with Members and the public.

A Member was very pleased to see the extension of the cycle path on the Honeybourne Line, for which Max Wilkinson MP campaigned hard when he was a borough councillor.

No vote was required on this item, but Members:

- **noted the decisions of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Joint Committee.**

7 Interim Collections Development Policy 2025-2027

Introducing his report, the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing and Culture thanked Richard Gibson of CBC, Lisa Edgar, Director of Arts and Heritage at the Cheltenham Trust, and Philippa Turner, Senior Curator at The Wilson, for all their work in cataloguing the entire official collection at the Art Gallery and Museum. He said this fascinating collection of documents demonstrates the enormous wealth of artefacts, history and art that we hold in trust for the people of Cheltenham, from items donated by famous Cheltenham families to priceless collections of textiles, ceramics and a world class Arts and Crafts collection.

He invited Members to approve the Interim Collections Development Policy, and two supporting policy statements: the Care and Conservation Policy, which allows for rationalisation of the collection, and the Collections Documentation Policy, which removes the requirement to catalogue every single item where appropriate. Members were also asked to endorse the decision to no longer accept large depositions from outside CBC's boundary, although finds of significant interest will still be accepted, and to deaccession Tram 21, the last operational tram in Cheltenham, and develop a viable plan to bring it out of storage and into public view.

In response to a Member's question about how frequently the various collections held by the Art Gallery and Museum are viewable, the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing and Culture said an assortment of items are brought out and displayed throughout the year. In addition, the BIG Museum project this year invites everyone in Cheltenham to engage, giving a view on what most interests them and what they would like to see on display. People can take part on line or in person.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. the updated Interim Collections Development Policy (2025-2027) attached as Appendix 2, which will run for a two-year period to end of March 2027, is approved;**

2. **the two supporting policy statements - the Interim Collections Care and Conservation Policy and the Interim Collection Documentation Policy attached as Appendices 3 and 4 – are approved;**
3. **the specific section of the Collection Development Policy in relation to archaeology, whereby the Wilson will no longer accept archaeological depositions from outside Cheltenham borough boundaries – see Section 5 – is endorsed;**
4. **Tram 21 is deaccessioned*, subject to a viable plan being agreed which secures the tram's future in Cheltenham, makes it accessible to the public and allows its story to be told – see Section 6**

*[*deaccession in the context of arts collections is the process whereby a work of art or other object is permanently removed from a museum's collection to be disposed of.]*

8 Briefing from Cabinet Members

The Leader invited Members to share any briefings.

The Cabinet Member for Waste Services, Recycling and Public Realm shared two items:

- after concern from the public, the council and the Civic Society, Gloucestershire County Council as highways authority agreed to an on-site meeting about the resurfacing of the Promenade, as a result of which the proposed works have been halted, allowing stakeholders time to find and discuss alternatives. This is a good opportunity for the county to collaborate with CBC, BID, the Civic Society and the wider public for a more appropriate solution which respects the heritage and public realm at the same time allowing vibrant markets and events to continue;
- he has spent four hours earlier today planting trees at Boroughs Field, together with the CBC greenspace team, the Mayor, the local ward councillor and volunteers, including children from Leckhampton High School, participating as part of their Eco Day. It was good to see them getting involved and learning about greenspace, trees, and improving wildlife habitat. He thanked Mark Beaney of Leckhampton Rovers for organising and all the volunteers, who like many others around the borough work so hard to maintain and improve our greenspace.

The Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities also had two items to share:

- from a community perspective, she was delighted to have attended the recent relaunch of Cheltenham Churches Together at Bethesda, which brings together many different community groups and church organisations to collaborate and share information;
- from a safety perspective, she and the Chair of Licensing, Councillor Willingham, have written a letter to Jess Phillips MP, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls, requesting that

she takes another look at the loophole in the licensing of sexual entertainment venues, which impacts on Cheltenham during race events, and inviting her to Cheltenham to discuss the matter in more detail.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services said she had been invited to the Strasbourg Congress of the Council of Europe to speak about the safety of women and what can be done to improve matters. She spoke about the huge amount of work that Cheltenham does, such as working with schools and colleges, and offering training for bar and club staff, and challenged those present to come together to learn from our example about what can be done to make a difference.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing and Culture was happy to report that he had signed off the final list of health and wellbeing grants, largely funded by the local NHS and based on good medical evidence about the issues facing Cheltenham. Some of the very worthwhile projects to be supported include:

- Let's Cook with Josie at Ridge Academy in Whaddon;
- the Archie Matthews Trust, dealing with young men's mental health;
- the Art for All project, which uses art to tackle isolation and mental health;
- the Everyman Theatre Centre Stage Arts for social impact in West Cheltenham;
- Young Gloucestershire, which helps young people at risk of exploitation;
- Men in Sheds, which tackles isolation and uses practical skills;
- Home-Start North and West Gloucestershire, for young mums facing mental health challenges.

He thanked Richard Gibson for all his work, the local Director of Public health, and other NHS colleagues, saying that this is a good example of local knowledge and ideas from the community helping to create some amazing projects and tackle difficult issues.

The Leader reported a busy month, and highlighted an annual event she recently attended at Gloucester Cathedral, to celebrate the county's legal system and declare the new High Sheriff of Gloucestershire. She attended in her capacity as Leader of CBC and also as a magistrate for the last 37 years. The outgoing High Sheriff presented an award to magistrates for 25 years of mock trials which have engaged young people and brought together schools from across the county; CBC's council chamber has been used for these events. The new High Sheriff is Julie Kent, who is well known in Cheltenham, and will support charities across Gloucestershire.

She ended by thanking Councillor Horwood, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing and Culture (and formerly Cabinet Member for Customer and Regulatory Services) for his three years' service on the Cabinet. He will step down on 12 May to take on the role of Deputy Mayor.

9 Cabinet Member decisions since last meeting

24 March 2025: [To review the Local Developer Guide in context of Cheltenham's statutory responsibilities as local planning authority and submit a response by the deadline](#)

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control, the Leader said the Local Developer Guide is a living, breathing document which needs to be reviewed, and was pleased to note that CBC had submitted its response.

08 April 2025: [Cheltenham Lido – variation to parking income threshold](#)

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing and Culture reported on his decision to adjust the council's financial arrangements with the Lido to reflect substantial investment in its car park. This shouldn't result in any loss of income for the council, as the car park's turnover is expected to rise. He is happy to support the Lido, which raises a lot of funds for charity, and is an absolute gem of Cheltenham..

He added that it had been an absolute privilege to serve on CBC's Cabinet for three years, and that he was now taking two years out to serve in a non-political role. He said CBC officers are outstanding, thanked the Leader and other Cabinet Members for their excellent work and support, and concluded that although the future of the council is uncertain, if CBC retains the talents and values that drives it now as an exceptional and progressive Liberal Democrat authority, there is reason to be optimistic.