

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet

Minutes

Meeting date: 15 July 2025

Meeting time: 6.00 pm - 7.25 pm

In attendance:

Councillors:

Victoria Atherstone, Paul Baker, Rowena Hay, Peter Jeffries, Alisha Lewis, Izaac Tailford and Richard Pineger

Also in attendance:

Gareth Edmundson (Chief Executive), Paul Jones (Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)), Gemma Bell (Director of Finance and Assets and Deputy S151 Officer) and Tracey Birkinshaw (Director of Community & Economic Development)

1 Apologies

Councillors Collins and Clucas sent apologies.

2 Declarations of interest

There were none.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2025 were approved as a true record and signed accordingly.

4 Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy Review

The Leader introduced the report, a legal requirement under the Health and Safety at Work Act, and evidence of how seriously the council takes the safety of staff, contractors and everyone affected by its work. The review and refresh is needed now following the return of housing services to the council, with overall responsibility for health and safety moving from the Chief Executive to the Deputy Chief Executive.

The revised document has three clear parts: the first two - the clear statement of intent and defined responsibilities across the organisation - are ready for approval, and the third – practical arrangement for how health and safety will be managed day to day – is still being finalised and will be completed later in the summer. This is about embedding a strong safety culture across the council, making sure everyone knows their role, and is proactive in managing the risks.

The policy has been shaped through consultation – staff, trades unions, and health and safety experts, and reflects a shared commitment to keep people safe and well at work. .

There were no questions and no debate.

RESOLVED THAT:

- **the updated Health, Safety and Well-being Policy – Statement of Intent (Part 1) and Responsibilities (Part 2) – is approved, and that Arrangements (Part 3) is currently under review, to be completed in Summer 2025, is noted.**

5 Review of Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy

The Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities introduced her report, which proposes essential changes to CBC's taxi and private hire licensing policy following consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, as set out in the report. She read out the many proposed changes, which will bring the policy in line with best practice, adding that further consultation is needed for the vehicle emissions policy, to ensure that this can deliver on the council's carbon neutral aspirations.

She offered huge thanks to the officers, in particular to Michelle Bignell, the Licensing and Public Protection Manager, for these very thorough policy updates, and to the licensing trade who serve our communities daily.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency welcomed the further consultation on vehicle emissions.

The Cabinet Member for Waste and Recycling, Parks and Gardens and Open Green Space, also welcomed the excellent set of proposals which bring the policy up to date, but queried the suggestion that drivers can take the knowledge test six times before having to wait six months to take it again. The Licensing and Public Protection Manager confirmed that they can only do it three times before having to wait six months to re-sit, and that this is for private hire drivers only, not hackney carriage drivers on the taxi ranks – they have to do a topographical question test to ensure they understand the area properly.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. following consultation, the draft policy attached at Appendix 2 from 24 July 2025, is adopted (after call-in period);**
- 2. the feedback regarding the vehicle emissions policy and that further review is required, as set out in 3.5 of the report, is noted.**

6 Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy Allocations

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control, the Leader read his introduction, in which he thanked the CIL panel and officers for their hard work. Funding is available for any group, organisation or club, towards the cost of implementing a community-based project in a non-parished area of the borough. He set out the details as in the report, highlighting the additional funding received after the initial allocations had been proposed, and the inclusion in the recommendation of two further projects for funding.

He thanked all the groups and organisation who have submitted a fantastic and diverse range of bids from all across the town, and invited Cabinet to confirm which projects should benefit.

Members made the following comments:

- credit to all the organisations who have got together, researched, and submitted very thorough applications, and to officers for their hard work to ensure all the bids are viable and deliverable, and that the money will be spent in the current year;
- the geographical spread is good, and it is great to be able to support so many excellent schemes; the map is particularly helpful in showing where investment will go;
- thanks to the community groups in St Peter's wards, where the projects will make great improvement to the infrastructure;
- the recommendations for the additional money to be allocated to the Paint Festival and the Playhouse are welcome and supported;
- there are two wards with no bids, and the council must encourage bids from those areas in future to make sure they are not left behind. There are active community groups in these areas who should be made aware, to ensure that the same groups don't receive the money every time.

The Leader considered this a valid point that should be taken on board next time – this is only the second round of CIL neighbourhood allocations, and we can learn

lessons and make improvements every time. She also suggested that ward councillors have a role to play and can use their councillor knowledge to encourage bids from their areas and help anyone who wants to make one.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. the endorsed recommendations, as set out in appendix 3 as the list of neighbourhood projects for investment, are agreed;**
- 2. in addition to those projects recommended by the Neighbourhood CIL Panel allocates, the following funding from the unallocated Neighbourhood CIL to:**
- 3. Scheme 19 – Murals by Paint Festival on Honeybourne Line £7,500**
- 4. Scheme 22 – Playhouse Theatre - contribution to feasibility work for capital works £9,500**
- 5. is agreed, with the remaining £11,645 unspent CIL monies to form part of the allocation for a future bidding round;**
- 6. project agreements with the agreed projects will be entered into;**
- 7. the intention to launch future funding rounds, as and when the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure fund has built up to a sufficient level, is supported. The timing of this will be informed by regular monitoring of the fund;**
- 8. the process used this year will be reviewed, and any best practice will be built into future bidding rounds.**

7 Food Safety Service Plan

The Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities introduced her report, which outlines the Food Safety Service Plan for the year ahead and summarises work and outcomes from the previous year. It is a statutory duty to ensure public health standards are met across all food businesses, and the plan sets out how this will be done, as well as reporting on the interventions over the past year. She thanked officers for all their hard work.

Members made the following comments:

- Cheltenham's restaurant offer is outstanding and a huge factor in the town's tourism offer, as well as for local residents. All the businesses are to be congratulated, as is the team of just three officers who carry out all the inspections. The fact that there are so few complaints shows what a good job they are doing – congratulations to them and to all restaurants and food outlets in Cheltenham;
- it is important to protect residents and visitors, particularly the vulnerable, to make sure they feel as safe as possible in their choices, and from an economy point of view, the inspections give confidence and show we care about safety and quality in the town.

RESOLVED THAT:

1. the appended Food Safety Service Plan 2025-26 is approved.

8 Compliance Strategy and Policies

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Relations, the Leader introduced the report.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. the Compliance Strategy (Appendix 2) is adopted;**
- 2. the following Compliance Policies are adopted:**
 - i. Gas and Heating Safety (Appendix 3)**
 - ii. Electrical Safety (Appendix 4)**
 - iii. Fire Safety (Appendix 5)**
 - iv. Asbestos (Appendix 6)**
 - v. Water Safety (Appendix 7)**
 - vi. Lift Safety (Appendix 8)**

9 Cheltenham Business Improvement District (BID) - 2025 Renewal Ballot

The Leader began her report by saying how important Business Improvement District (BID) is for the Cheltenham economy, helping us to maintain, look after and provide entertainment, opportunities and events for businesses, residents and visitors. The BID team has let us know that they are planning to go ahead with a renewal ballot to secure a further five years, from April 2026 to March 2031

Under the official regulations, the council has a few key responsibilities in the process, as set out in the report, and to keep all on track, will set up monitoring group of officers, councillors, and BID representatives who will meet at least twice a year to review progress.

The report is about ensuring that the renewal process is fair, transparent and in line with our wider goals for economic growth and community development.

She ended by giving sincere thanks to Fran Inman, Chief Executive of BID, all the BID board members, and everyone who gives up their time to engage with BID.

In response, Members wished BID success with the ballot and made the following comments:

- BID provides massive support for businesses and the town centre, working alongside other organisations on many positive initiatives to improve the experience of businesses and residents; this is particularly welcome in view of the many challenges facing small businesses at the moment;

- further thanks to Fran Inman, particularly for her work on NCLB initiatives, and with Gloucestershire Police on tackling anti-social behaviour and intimidation and threatening towards women and girls in the town centre;
- it is great that BID is looking to further support independent businesses by increasing their rateable value, looking to expand to the east and west of the town, and increasing investment;

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. it is noted that, on Monday 16 June 2025, Cheltenham BID Limited formally served notice of their intention to seek a renewal ballot for a further five-year term to both the Secretary of State and the council;**
- 2. it is noted that the Deputy Chief Executive, as returning officer, will engage the services of a suitable consultancy that provides election services to carry out the ballot on behalf of the council in accordance with the BID regulations;**
- 3. the draft Baseline and Operating Agreements between Cheltenham BID Limited and the Authority at Appendix 3 and 4 is noted;**
- 4. authority is delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive to review the details of the draft business plan when shared by Cheltenham BID Limited and ensure it does not conflict with any formal policy adopted by the council, providing feedback to the BID board;**
- 5. authority is delegated to the Director of Finance and Assets, in consultation with the Leader, to vote in favour of another BID term on behalf of the council in the ballot;**
- 6. authority is delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director: One Legal to agree and sign the Baseline Agreement and the Operating Agreement with Cheltenham BID Limited, should the ballot be in favour of renewal for another five-year term.**

10 Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

The Leader introduced the report, which focuses on an updated anti-social behaviour policy for housing services, as part of a wider service improvement plan to make things clearer and more supportive tenants. She said the team has worked hard to make sure the policy speaks directly to residents, explaining what counts as anti-social behaviour, how different agencies work together to tackle it, and what tenants can expect from council's anti-social behaviour team. The key goal is to build trust and improve tenant satisfaction through realistic expectations and outcomes, and the policy reflects strong partnership working, shaped by feedback from internal teams, Gloucestershire Police, Victim Support, and a tenant focus group in ASB awareness week.

She said the feedback is overwhelmingly positive, and the policy is about being fair, clear and responsible, making sure anti-social behaviour is dealt with properly, in an evidence-based and focussed way, to make sure everyone feels safe in homes.

Members supported the report and the clarity provided by the updated policy, and made the following comments:

- the policy document is very clear in its definition of anti-social behaviour, which includes loud noise, shouting, drug use or dealing, threats or verbal abuse, hate crime, vandalism and fly tipping;
- anti-social behaviour can have a cumulative effect over weeks and months, and have a negative impact on people's mental health when they feel under threat in their own homes or communities;
- the anti-social behaviour team perform a very important and impressive function within the housing team, working with residents in some very difficult circumstances;
- the lower reading-age pamphlet is a very good initiative, championed by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services, and could be spread to other areas, such as licensing policy.

RESOLVED THAT:

- **adoption of the Housing Service Anti-Social Behaviour Policy is approved.**

11 Revocation of Air Quality Management Area

The Cabinet Member for Safety and Community had great pleasure in confirming that further to DEFRA guidance, the council is now in a position to successfully revoke the air quality management area around the Royal Mail sorting office at the lower end of High Street, with NO2 levels substantially decreased since 2020, following Covid lockdowns, changes in commuting habits, and the increase in hybrid and electric. The environmental protection team has agreed the proposed course of action with DEFRA and the public health team at Gloucestershire County Council, but will continue to monitor air quality across the town particularly particulate matter which arises from a wide range of sources including road vehicles, industry, agriculture and domestic combustion. This will be reduced as much as possible, but in revoking the air quality management area, the associated air quality action plan becomes obsolete. Further to DEFRA guidance, therefore, the council will develop a town-wide plan instead, and work with stakeholders to achieve its ambitions, which will have a positive effect across the town.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency welcomed this excellent news and looked forward to working on the new strategy, saying reducing pollution was sometimes controversial but was important for healthy communities, particularly at traffic pinch points around the town.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets also welcomed the revocation, and agreed that an air quality strategy for the whole town is needed. With new development in West Cheltenham, it will set foundations for better air quality moving forward. He thanked officers for their hard work.

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling, Parks, Gardens, and Public Greenspace said he had been staggered at the amount of particulate matter in his recently-installed extractor fans, showing it to be a huge problem for anyone living near a

main road or who regularly walks in the town. He said one of the issues here is that national government policy is not strong enough and should be stronger.

He added that Charlton Kings Parish Council has introduced a trial programme to reduce traffic idling at junctions, with clear signage to remind motorists of the need to look after themselves and others. He hoped that this could be rolled out across the town at some point.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Wellbeing, Culture and Public Open Space was pleased by this positive progress, arising from work done by CBC, GCC and partner organisations, as well as work and changes people are making to live healthier lives, and promote a better future from a climate point of view. He agreed that a town-wide strategy is a great opportunity to continue improving the situation, and it will provide a lot of data to provide reassurance and to build on.

The Leader welcomed all these comments, which show the importance of the issue.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. the revocation of the existing 2020 AQMA, based on the information provided at Annex 3, is authorised;**
- 2. subject to recommendation 1, authority is delegated to the Head of Public Protection, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Safety and Communities, to take the necessary steps to revoke the AQMA;**
- 3. production of an Air Quality Strategy is authorised.**

12 Corporate Plan Update, end-of-year performance report and Corporate Plan Refresh

The Leader began her introduction by thanking officers for their input and suggested changes. She said the council has refreshed its Corporate Plan to reflect its evolving responsibilities and reassess its priorities, particularly following the reintegration of housing services, and the updated plans sets the strategic direction for the next three years, ensuring alignment with local needs, national developments, and the council's expanded role as a housing provider and landlord. The two-year progress review of the 2023-27 plan highlights achievements and areas for improvement. In addition, national policy shifts and local developments have necessitated a refreshed focus.

She said our first strategic priorities have not changed and remain: securing our future; quality homes, safe and strong communities; reducing carbon, achieving Net Zero, creating biodiversity; reducing inequalities, supporting better outcomes; and taking care of your money.

The performance report for 2024-25 highlights strong areas such as affordable housing delivery, cyber infrastructure and innovation centre progress, ICT reliability and digital service improvements, and decarbonisation grants and energy efficient housing upgrades. It also reveals challenges such as homelessness prevention,

recruitment difficulties, and lower-than-expected income in some areas, but said that overall CBC is a council that delivers, and always looks, questions and challenges itself on what it is doing.

Members are asked to note the report today, before it goes to Full Council on Monday.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency appreciated that one of the five key priorities is reducing carbon, achieving Net Zero and creating biodiversity, but said that he expects the plan will move towards adaptation to climate changes given the last six months of weather, and will be driven by the climate itself.

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling, Parks, Gardens and Public Greenspace said that CBC is a progressive, well-run and managed council, and gave huge congratulations to all the staff who do such a good job in protecting front-line services.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. the corporate plan review and end of year performance report is noted;**
- 2. the refreshed Corporate Plan 2025 – 2028 is approved.**

13 General Fund and HRA Outturn Report 2024-25

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets introduced the report, which is testament to the remarkable achievement of the finance team in overcoming the overspends and turmoil of recent years to restore relative calm. The report will go to Full Council for approval, and the recommendation should reflect this.

The Cabinet Member for Major Developments and Housing Regeneration complemented the Cabinet Member for overseeing this great achievement in tough times.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. Council receives the financial outturn performance position for the General Fund and notes that in delivering services in 2024/25, after the application of carry forward requests and following the use earmarked reserves, there was an underspend of £913 against the 2024/25 revised budget approved by Council on 21 February 2025;**
- 2. £420,144 of carry forward, approved by the Section 151 Officer under delegated powers at Appendix 5, is noted;**
- 3. the annual treasury management report at Appendix 7 and the actual 2024/25 prudential and treasury indicators are noted;**
- 4. the capital programme outturn position as detailed in Section 7 of this report and Appendix 8 is noted, and the carry forward of unspent budgets into 2025/26 is approved;**

- 5. the year-end position in respect of Section 106 agreements and partnership funding agreements at Appendix 9 is noted;**
- 6. the outturn position in respect of collection rates for council tax and non-domestic rates for 2024/25 in Appendix 10 is noted;**
- 7. the financial outturn performance position for the Housing Revenue Account for 2024/25 in Appendix 11 is received, and the carry forward of capital budgets from 2024/25 into 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 12 is approved.**

14 Briefing from Cabinet Members

The Cabinet Member for Major Developments and Housing Regeneration has happy to report two very positive items:

- the recent Planning Committee approval of the outline for part of the Golden Valley site, with Members extremely supportive of this incredible investment in Cheltenham. It will bring much-needed homes, careers, schools and more to the area, and work on the detailed application is now progressing apace;
- letters inviting neighbours of 320 Swindon Road to a 'meet the builder' event have been sent, and it is hoped that construction will commence in Autumn 2025. This development will provide 17 affordable homes and apartments, for social rent and shared ownership, and will take full advantage of the £2.8m funding.

The Leader commented that this site has stood empty for many years, and one of the key reasons for bringing CBH back in house was to deliver more affordable housing for residents – and that is what we are doing.

The Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities reported on the following:

- she is pleased to be taking forward a new, collaborative safer streets initiative, together with BID, the police, and other partners, who will be on high alert for checking anti-social behaviour, loitering, intimidation, and protecting shops and businesses in the town centre;
- a final shout-out for the Party in the Park, a free family event in Pittville Park on 06 August, with 50 free activities, including huge inflatables, theatre performances, arts and crafts, and sports. There will be a quiet hour at 10am, before the main event 11am-7pm.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Wellbeing and Public Open Space said he has attended many meetings and is discussing some exciting developments to be shared soon, but in the meantime, shared the following:

- he has met with Cllr Joe Harris, County Council Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Communications, and officers to reset CBC's relationship with the council, and work in a positive new direction for the town centre and public realm, together with the Civic Society, BID, residents and businesses. It is clear that residents and businesses expect and deserve an improved public realm, and this is a great opportunity to work together and get the town to the level it should be;
- 32 Lions at Large have been installed across Cheltenham and Gloucester, an interesting art trail in support of Cheltenham and Gloucester hospitals charity and The Big Space Cancer Appeal. The trail is a fun, free family activity for residents and

visitors, and will also support local businesses by attracting people to spend time in town. An app and a map are available.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency reported several recent and inspiring events:

- the Changemakers Sustainability Showcase at The Wilson, involving children from five local schools. It was attended by the Mayor and a fantastic event;
- he attended Leckhampton High School to hear the results of their active travel survey, which have now been passed on to Councillor Horwood, as county, borough and parish councillor for the area. The activity among these young people is inspiring;
- a community energy day, organised by the Southwest Net 0 Hub, and attended by representatives from the Department for Energy Security and Net 0. He was impressed by the scale of some of the schemes, including a windmill on the Severn estuary, which generates huge amounts of money for the local community each year, and a solar farm on the Somerset Levels, which has been running for 10 years and has generated £1m for Bristol community organisations. Community energy groups in our community are embryonic, but he hopes to increase these and make them a reality for Cheltenham;
- the launch of the tree strategy consultation, which was excellent and well-attended;
- he has been making connections, through the Climate Leadership Gloucestershire meeting, and spent time with Councillor Horwood, the county Cabinet Member for Nature, Climate and Waste Reduction. He also spoke with Councillor Helen Davies from Babergh District Council at the excellent LGA training session for new Cabinet Members, where it was fascinating to hear about the challenges faced by councils round the country and realise that Cheltenham is doing very well.

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling, Parks, Gardens, and Public Greenspace shared two positive news items:

- seven of Cheltenham's parks have recently been awarded green flag status, a great accolade which sets the bar for the quality and standard of parks across the country. CBC always performs well, reflecting the strong community involvement, and also the biodiversity, environmental management around climate change adaption, maintenance and health and safety awareness which makes our parks welcoming, safe and accessible – well done to everyone involved. There are a lot more parks in Cheltenham, and to be hoped that they might be considered in future;
- the recent launch of the tree strategy highlighted the benefits of substantial trees in many parts of the town, but also that much of the town is devoid of tree cover. Part of the strategy is to introduce tree cover to those areas, to benefit residents' mental health, increase wildlife habitat, and provide welcome shade.

He also advised the Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets that he will shortly be putting in a bid for funding to dredge the many lakes and ponds in parks which are suffering from years of silt and debris build-up. This has an impact on diversity, nature, water capacity and more, and needs some investment.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets also welcomed the recent planning committee decision on Golden Valley as a monumental moment, following many years of planning and now moving forward with the vision of providing a huge boost to the local economy as well as revenue to the council for delivery of services.

The Leader had the following items to share:

- regarding the marketing of the airport, it is good to note that a preferred bidder has been found, with due diligence currently underway before the sale can be confirmed. This has created relief for businesses at the airport, to know who the bidder is and what that might entail;
- at the recent LGA conference, the Southwest Councils Network held its AGM, where she was pleased to accept the Membership Development Charter on behalf of the council. Thanks to Councillor Chelin for leading on this, and Democratic Services for supporting. A communications piece will be issued, highlighting the benefits and the importance of a good working relationship between officers and Members. She said new Members can be a little bit overwhelmed by all they have to take in, and we have a good package and offer for them;
- she corrected an earlier comment about 320 Swindon Road and the decision to bring housing services back in-house, saying that although the decision was made in 2023, the transfer was done very quickly in only seven months, so in fact bringing forward this development barely a year in is even more impressive;
- she encouraged Members and anyone watching to sign up for the local government reorganisation, saying it is important that public questions feed into what comes next. This will ultimately be a government decision, so this exercise is more engagement than consultation, but gathering people's thoughts is important;
- following on from the announcement of a local government review, the governance review consultation closes in a few days, and people are encouraged to add their thoughts if they have not already done so;
- the resident survey is now active, both via phone calls and on line. She encouraged everyone to take part, and looked forward to the results in due course.

15 Member Decisions since the last meeting

Members reported on the following decisions taken since the last meeting of Cabinet on 10 June:

i. 13 June 2025: Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities, Councillor Victoria Atherstone

[To approve the revised Street Scene Policy and Pavement Licensing Policy for public consultation](#)

ii. 13 June 2025: Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities, Councillor Victoria Atherstone

[To approve the Revised Statement of Licensing Policy \(Licensing Act 2004\) for Consultation](#)

iii. 16 June 2025: Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities, Councillor Victoria Atherstone

[To approve the proposed wording for the Vehicle Emissions Policy](#)

iv. 26 June 2025: Leader of the Council, Councillor Rowena Hay

[To sell the council's shares in Gloucestershire Airport Ltd and associated freehold land interests](#)

(Decision of the Leader of Cheltenham Borough Council acting as shareholder of GAL)

v. 14 July 2025: Leader of the Council, Councillor Rowena Hay

[Support to the application by Gloucestershire County Council for a correction order pursuant to Section 119 Planning Act 2008 to M5 Junction 10 Development Consent Order](#)

16 Local Government Act 1972 - Exempt Business

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 paragraphs 3 and 5, Part (1) Schedule (12A) Local Government Act 1972, namely:

Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

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

17 A Property Matter

Members discussed the item and approved the recommendations.

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