

Council Minutes

Meeting date: 4 June 2026

In attendance:

Councillors:

Martin Horwood (Chair), Mike Collins (Vice-Chair), Glenn Andrews, Paul Baker, Adrian Bamford, Garth Barnes, Graham Beale, Angie Boyes, Jackie Chelin, Barbara Clark, Julia Chandler, Ashleigh Davies, Cathy Dearden, Callum Eldridge, Jan Foster, Steve Harvey, Rowena Hay, Cecily Henderson, Sandra Holliday, Jamie Jamieson, Peter Jeffries, Richard Lawler, Alisha Lewis, Tony Oliver, Dr Helen Pemberton, Richard Pineger, Karen Priest, Julie Sankey, Stan Smith, Dr Steve Steinhardt, Izaac Tailford, Julian Tooke, Simon Wheeler and Suzanne Williams

Also in attendance:

Claire Hughes (Director of Governance, Housing and Communities), Gareth Edmundson (Chief Executive), Adele Taylor (Interim Director of Finance and Operations (S151 Officer)) and Martin Chastney (Head of Development - Major Developments & Regeneration)

1 Apologies

Councillors Atherstone, Clucas, Day, Dobie, Joy, and Snell

2 Declarations of interest

There were none.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the Annual and Selection Council and the Extraordinary meeting of Council held on 18 May were approved and signed as a correct record.

4 Communications by the Mayor

The Mayor informed Council that he had attended the ceremony to mark the awarding of National Nature Reserve status, as part of the King's Series, to the

Cheltenham Escarpment, known locally as Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common.

He emphasised that the NNR status will help protect and celebrate the hill and the escarpment for future generations, while strengthening Cheltenham's reputation as a town where nature, wellbeing and heritage are deeply valued.

5 Communications by the Leader of the Council

The Leader provided an update on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), focusing specifically on the Structural Changes Order (SCO) process recently initiated by Government. A background briefing note on the SCO process had been circulated to all Members which provided useful context to the matters outlined.

She made the following points :

- Government has requested that all Gloucestershire councils submit representations on the SCO by 16 June, allowing less than one month to respond. Councils have been required to comment on all three LGR proposals, rather than a preferred option only.
- Concern was raised regarding:
 - The short timescale, which was considered insufficient.
 - The sequencing of the process, with the SCO proceeding prior to confirmation of the LGR outcome.

She felt that this approach is unacceptable given the scale of work required.

In terms of Member Engagement, the Leader said that, due to these time constraints, no scheduled Council meetings aligned with the consultation period to allow formal debate. As a result, she set out the Council's provisional position as follows to ensure transparency with the full submission to be presented to Council at a future meeting:

Continuing Authority vs New Council

- Strong preference for a new unitary council rather than continuing Gloucestershire County Council as the authority.
- Rationale:
 - Original agreement anticipated all seven councils ceasing.
 - A new council would enable a clear cultural and structural break from existing arrangements.

Joint Committees

- Limited timeframe likely allows formation of one or two joint committees.
- Agreed principle:

- Equal representation (50/50 split): 6 County and 6 District Members.
- Governance arrangements:
 - Single unitary: One committee, chaired by the County Council Leader.
 - Two unitary model: Two committees, each chaired by a District representative.

Naming of Authorities

- Broad agreement on naming conventions:
 - Single unitary: Gloucestershire Council
 - Two unitaries: East Gloucestershire and West Gloucestershire
- Importance highlighted of selecting appropriate names at the outset to avoid future disruption.

Parish and Town Council Election Alignment

- General support for aligning parish and town council elections with new unitary arrangements for administrative simplicity.
- parish and town councils should have a direct say, as it is not appropriate for principal councils to determine this unilaterally.

Ward Boundaries

- For both single and East/West models:
 - Interim use of existing County divisions, pending a future boundary review.
- The Greater Gloucester proposal was noted to include:
 - A higher councillor-to-electors ratio for Gloucester compared to other areas.
- CBC position:
 - Strong support for parity of representation across Gloucestershire.
 - concern that unequal representation would be unacceptable in principle.

Civic Arrangements

- Importance stressed of preserving Cheltenham's borough status, including maintaining Civic traditions and the role of the Mayor
- Alignment noted with the Council's ongoing Community Governance Review.

Implementation Arrangements

- A single unified officer team will be established regardless of the chosen model.
- This will be chaired by the Chief Executive of Gloucestershire County Council
- Certain statutory roles will vary depending on the final model:

The Leader acknowledged the complexity and volume of information involved and welcomed Member feedback on the briefing.

Members were thanked for their understanding given the constraints imposed by Government. It was hoped that outlining the Council's position publicly was both useful and necessary for the public record.

6 To receive petitions

None received.

7 Public Questions

None received.

8 Member Questions

None received.

9 Any other item the Mayor determines as urgent and which requires a decision

None.

10 Local Government Act 1972 -Exempt Information

RESOLVED THAT

The Council is recommended to approve the following resolution:-

“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

11 A Property Matter (2601)

The Cabinet Member Major Developments and Housing Delivery introduced the report.

Members had the opportunity to ask questions and then moved to debate.

The Leader requested a recorded vote and with seven Members standing in their seats, this was approved.

RESOLVED (unanimously) THAT

The recommendations as laid out in the report be approved.

VOTING:

FOR: Councillors Andrews, Baker, Bamford, Barnes, Beale, Boyes, Chandler, Chelin, Clark, Collins, Davies, Dearden, Eldridge, Foster, Harvey, Hay, Henderson, Holliday, Horwood, Jamieson, Jeffries, Lawler, Lewis, Oliver, Pemberton, Pineger, Priest, Sankey, Smith, Steinhardt, Tailford, Tooke, Wheeler, Williams

AGAINST: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

12 A Property Matter (2602)

The Cabinet Member Major Developments and Housing Delivery introduced the report.

Members had the opportunity to ask questions and then moved to debate.

RESOLVED (unanimously) THAT

The recommendations as laid out in the report be approved.