

Cabinet

Tuesday, 16th July, 2013
6.00 - 7.00 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Steve Jordan (Leader of the Council), John Rawson (Cabinet Member Finance), Rowena Hay (Cabinet Member Sport and Culture), Peter Jeffries (Cabinet Member Housing and Safety), Andrew McKinlay (Cabinet Member Built Environment), Jon Walklett (Cabinet Member Corporate Services) and Roger Whyborn (Cabinet Member Sustainability)

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

None

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

There were none.

5. SOCIAL LETTINGS SERVICE

The Cabinet Member Housing and Safety introduced the report which outlined the development of a Social Lettings Service for landlords and tenants in the private rented sector. He explained that the main impetus behind this was in response to the government's welfare reform. He made reference to paragraph 1.3 of the report which outlined the range of services the Housing Options Service would offer and in so doing should provide reassurance to private landlords. The Leader added that this represented an enhancement to the housing options service and was very welcome.

RESOLVED that

- 1. the implementation and continued development of a Social Lettings Scheme called 'Spa Lettings' by the Housing Options Service be approved.**
- 2. the Social Lettings Scheme be transferred to Cheltenham Borough Homes as part of the transfer of the Housing Options Service as approved by Cabinet on 18 June 2013.**

6. EVENTS CONSULTATION GROUP AND SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP

The Cabinet Member Housing and Safety introduced the report and explained that Cabinet had considered a report from the Event Submissions Scrutiny Task Group at its meeting on 5 February 2013. At the time it noted the recommendations but agreed to come back to Cabinet to outline how they could be implemented since at that time it was very much work in progress. The Safety Advisory Group was in the process of being established and concern had been expressed about the volume of events which could potentially come through the process. The Cabinet Member stated that the process has subsequently proved to be manageable and members commended the efficient process now in force and the professional approach of officers conducting the work.

RESOLVED

that it be noted that :

- 1. an Events Consultative Group (ECG) has been established and has been operating in accordance with the Terms of Reference set out in Appendix 2;**
- 2. a Safety Advisory Group (SAG) has been established;**
- 3. an information page has been created on the council's website;**

that :

- 4. the draft Safety Advisory Group Terms of Reference set out in Appendix 5 be approved;**
- 5. the draft Events Consultative Group & Safety Advisory Group Communication Protocol set out in Appendix 4 be approved.**

7. GREEN DEAL DELIVERY

The Cabinet Member Sustainability introduced the report and explained that the Green Deal allowed individuals and businesses to make energy efficiency improvements to their buildings at no upfront cost. Central to the Green Deal was a finance mechanism that would allow access to the finance needed for the improvements with repayment, in instalments, attached to the electricity bill. The Energy Companies Obligation underpinned the delivery of the Green Deal and was designed primarily to deal with hard to treat properties and to assist those in fuel poverty by issuing means tested grants as applicable.

The Cabinet Member Sustainability explained that the report recommended continuing partnership arrangements with Severn Wye Energy Agency to assist with the Council's Affordable Warmth Strategy and Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) reporting requirements and to increase the take up of sustainable energy retrofit measures by the provision of a local support hub. He informed Members that a common approach was proposed among all six Gloucestershire districts. The costs to Cheltenham of the partnership arrangement would be £10k per annum for the financial years 2013-14 and 2014-15. A new Service Level Agreement would be entered into in 2015.

RESOLVED that

the authority enter into a service level agreement (Appendix 2) until 30 March 2015 with Severn Wye Energy Agency for the provision of energy efficiency related services.

8. IMPERIAL GARDENS - REINSTATEMENT OF HISTORIC RAILINGS

The Cabinet Member Sustainability introduced the report on the restoration of the historic railings to Imperial Gardens which represented a significant and exciting project in the development of Cheltenham town centre. As Cabinet Member his role was to promote the town's gardens in a way which gave maximum benefit to the largest number of people. He highlighted the public consultation he had undertaken to ensure that there was support in principle and that the project complemented the ongoing development of the area in a way which was aesthetically pleasing in a 21st century setting in gardens which were functional for events such as the Science and Literature Festivals. He explained that the proposed railing design was generally true to the original, apart from a height reduction of 0.35m and this was agreed by Planning Committee in May 2013. There were no plans to fit gates but rather to leave open entrances for best aesthetic design. The Cabinet Member referred to the map which had been tabled and which had been submitted to Planning Committee and which was a more accurate appraisal of entrance sizes. The Cabinet Member said that whilst the £500 000 scheme had great merit, the Council could not support it financially. The Friends of Imperial Square, Heritage and Conservation (FISHAC) were therefore seeking to raise funds independently. The plan was to divide the project into three phases, with no possibility to start a later phase while an earlier phase remained incomplete. He thanked FISHAC for their forbearance in what had been a long process and said that the council looked forward to working with them in partnership. Finally, he highlighted that in the context of paragraph 2.9 of the report FISHAC would be responsible for funding ongoing maintenance of the railings. He reiterated that Cabinet was approving the scheme referenced 13/00301/AMEND & 13/00302 LBC and that there was very clear public support to the proposal.

The Leader of the Council highlighted that the funding aspect of the proposal would be submitted to Council on Monday 22 July for approval and explained that the council would ensure the funding stream was in place before committing to the works given the potential liability involved.

RESOLVED that

- 1. The reinstatement of the historic railings at Imperial Gardens be approved.**
- 2. the Head of Property and Asset Management be authorised to carry out the procurement to appoint the contractor to carry out the works to Imperial Gardens and a project manager to manage the construction project.**
- 3. The Authority enter into an agreement with The Friends of Imperial Square Heritage and Conservation for the restoration of the railings, to include provision for funding to be transferred to the Authority prior to commencement of each stage of the scheme.**

Council be recommended to

4. Allocate the budget for the project and the budget for the external funding within the Authority's capital programme.

9. CHELTENHAM TOWN HALL CAPITAL INVESTMENT SCHEME

The Cabinet Member Sport and Culture introduced the report and explained that over the past 5 years the Town Hall had delivered £212 000 savings, income generation and efficiency savings. It was now considered that further significant savings could only be made with a programme of capital investment as the Town Hall was at maximum capacity. The report set out details of the feasibility study and the strategic vision for the Town Hall.

The Cabinet Member explained that in the financial outturn report to be submitted to Council a carry forward bid of £10 000 was sought to be used to have the estimate capital figures scrutinised by an independent quantity survey. Furthermore, in order to provide in principle support towards capital investment at the Town Hall, it was proposed that Cabinet recommended to Council the allocation of an initial £200 k to develop the designs to a recognised design stage with consultation with English Heritage, Heritage Lottery Fund, local planners and wider community consultation. The Cabinet Member advised that capital projects seeking Heritage Lottery Funding needed to have reached this stage in order to submit a first round application.

The Cabinet Member Finance welcomed this visionary but practical scheme. Drawing in external capital would offer the potential of delivering additional income which would help meet the financial challenges the Council was facing and it would create a Town Hall fit for the 21st century.

RESOLVED that

- 1. based on the outcome of the feasibility study the capital investment project on a phased approach for Cheltenham Town Hall be approved**
- 2. Cabinet recommend to Council the allocation of an initial £200k to invest into the Cheltenham Town Hall capital investment scheme in order to progress the scheme to RIBA Stage B and seek to submit a first round funding application to Heritage Lottery Fund**

10. LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY AND PRINCE OF WALES STADIUM FEASIBILITY OPTIONS

The Cabinet Member Sport and Culture introduced the report and explained that as part of the commissioning review, a Leisure Facilities Strategy had been written and feasibility studies had been undertaken to consider the current operation of the site and a range of future options including changes to the use of existing spaces and the possible addition of new facilities on the site that complimented the current offer. Leisure provision in Cheltenham was good but considerations of the report included installing a modern 3G pitch on or alongside the Prince of Wales training pitch and the addition of a competition standard BMX track. Stakeholder engagement had been positive and thorough. Agreement was sought from Cabinet to commence detailed discussions with

tenants and key users of the Stadium, to negotiate future usage arrangements and to look at the strategic vision of creating a sporting hub in Pittville Park.

Members welcomed the report and highlighted the importance of maximising the use of its existing resources and creating a better facility used by more residents.

RESOLVED that

- 1. the commencement of detailed discussions with tenants and key users of the Prince of Wales Stadium to negotiate future usage arrangements be agreed**
- 2. the strategic principle that facility development and future investment for sport and leisure within the town be focussed on Leisure@ and the Prince of Wales Stadium be supported, as recommended in the Leisure Strategy and associated feasibility studies**
- 3. the detailed business cases for future investment to deliver specific capital developments at a later date, following the successful establishment of a new charitable trust for leisure and culture be considered.**

11. FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2012/13 AND QUARTERLY BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO END OF MAY 2013

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report and welcomed the £200 000 saving which had been delivered in 2012/13 which he proposed be used to strengthen the General Reserve.

The Cabinet Member referred to the carry forward requests, which totalled £186 500, some of which included changing the purpose of the spending slightly to which was originally budgeted for. He reported that Ubico had made a significant saving and it was proposed that £170,000 of this saving was used to reinvest in new vehicles, technology and training. He also reported that not all the £100 000 allocated to the Innovation Fund which was for the purposes of promoting retail and businesses had been spent. It was suggested that the scheme would continue and be promoted more but it was proposed that some of the funding be used for other purposes such as business improvement districts which the Cheltenham Business Partnership was keen to explore.

It was proposed that £24 000 would be used to purchase new equipment suitable for cleaning the slabs and bonded gravel in and around the Promenade.

The Cabinet Member Finance explained that the Council had raised a loan for the purposes of the runway safety project for Gloucestershire Airport based on the business plan. The Airport had showed disappointing growth and had asked for the repayment of the loan to be extended. The Treasury Management Panel had discussed this and agreed that this should be approved but reviewed every year. He therefore proposed an amendment to recommendation 5 of the report to read "Approve the revision to the Treasury

Management Policy to reflect the revised borrowing facility to support the airport, subject to annual review.” This amendment was supported by Members.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) had been revised following the recent Government funding announcement. The Council would lose £700 000 in 2014/15 and a further £500 000 or more in 2015/16 therefore there was an increase in the medium term funding gap. The Council would therefore need to work harder to deliver savings without impacting frontline services.

The Cabinet Member Housing and Safety paid tribute to the hard work of officers and highlighted that there had been no significant increase in housing arrears despite the rent increase.

The Cabinet Member Sustainability welcomed the reinvestment of Ubico savings in services and stated that this would be reflected in service delivery over the next year or two.

The Leader clarified that the report would be submitted to Council for approval on Monday 22 July.

RESOLVED that the following recommendations be approved ;

- 1. Receive the financial outturn performance position for the General Fund, summarised at Appendix 2, and note that services have been delivered within the revised budget for 2012/13 resulting in a saving (after carry forward requests) of £201,801.**
- 2. Recommend that Council approve the following :**
 - 2.1 Approve £216,400 of carry forward requests (requiring member approval) at Appendix 6.**
 - 2.2 Approve the transfer of the budget saving of £201,801 to general fund balances.**
- 3. Note the updated MTFS and budget strategy at Appendix 4.**
- 4. Note the treasury management outturn at Appendix 8 and approve the actual 2012/13 prudential and treasury indicators.**
- 5. Approve the revision to the Treasury Management policy to reflect the revised borrowing facility to support the airport, subject to annual review (Appendix 9).**
- 6. Approve the amendments to financial rule 19 in respect of write-off limits as set out in appendix 15 (section 7).**
- 7. Approve the High Street Innovation Fund reallocation (section 8).**
- 8. Note the capital programme outturn position as detailed in Appendix 11 and approve the carry forward of unspent budgets into 2013/14 (section 10).**
- 9. Note the position in respect of section 106 agreements and partnership funding agreements at Appendix 12 (section 11).**
- 10. Note the outturn position in respect of collection rates for council tax and non domestic rates for 2012/13 in Appendix 13 (section 12).**

11. **Note the outturn position in respect of collection rates for sundry debts for 2012/13 in Appendix 14 (section 13).**
12. **Receive the financial outturn performance position for the Housing Revenue Account for 2012/13 in Appendices 16 to 17 (section 14).**
13. **Note the budget monitoring position to the end of May 2013 (section 15).**

12. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME (LCTS)-ITEM DEFERRED TO 17 SEPTEMBER

This item was withdrawn and would be referred to the next meeting of Cabinet on 17 September 2013.

13. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Leader informed Members that the LGA had published a new document entitled "Rewiring Public Services". This was an important, cross party LGA publication which outlined a vision for the way forward for local government finance. It was important that this document was discussed at a borough level and he would be reflecting how best to pursue this with all Councillors.

The Leader of the Council then informed the meeting that he had attended the recent opening of a business incubation unit which was a joint initiative between the University of Gloucestershire and the Chamber of Commerce. This represented an integrated business support and incubation service to assist young start-up businesses.

The Cabinet Member Leisure and Culture stated that the 30 day challenge period under the Leisure and Culture procurement process had now elapsed and since there were no challenges, officers could now proceed to the next stage.

14. MEMBER DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST CABINET MEETING

The Leader informed Cabinet that he had taken a decision, published that day, as a Ubico shareholder with regard to the Ubico fuel and maintenance contract.

15. 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 item 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

16. A TREASURY MANAGEMENT MATTER

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report and provided members with the background to the issue. He also advised that the Treasury Management Panel had met to discuss this and had supported the recommendation of the report and had highlighted the council's investment strategy of minimising risk as a priority. Finance officers updated members on new information which had come to light and members discussed whether this should be reflected in the recommendation. Cabinet decided that in order to maintain flexibility it would support the original proposal.

The Cabinet Member Finance took the opportunity to thank the finance officers for their hard work on this issue alongside the work involved in finalising the financial outturn report.

RESOLVED that

The Director of Resources, in consultation with the Leader and the Cabinet Member Finance, be authorised to conclude arrangements and sign documentation for the matter concerned.

Chairman