

COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCILCABINET2 MARCH 2020Present:

Councillor Joe Harris - Chair

Councillors -

Rachel Coxcoon	Jenny Forde
Tony Dale	Mark Harris
Andrew Doherty	Lisa Spivey
Mike Every	Clive Webster

Observers:

Stephen Andrews

CAB.94 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest under the Code of Conduct for Members.

There were no declarations of interest under the Code of Conduct for Officers.

CAB.95 MINUTES

RESOLVED that, subject to the following amendments, the Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet on 10 February 2020 be approved subject as a correct record:

(i) addition of the words ‘than last year’ in the first line of paragraph (x) of Minute CAB.87;

(ii) addition of the words ‘tackling the climate change emergency’ in the fourth line of paragraph (x) of Minute CAB.87;

(iii) deletion of the word ‘green’ and its substitution by the word ‘garden waste collections’ in the sixth line of paragraph (x) of Minute CAB.87;

(iv) the record of voting of Minute CAB.88 be amended to state ‘Record of Voting - for 9, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0’.

(v) addition of the word ‘unenacted’ so as to read ‘unenacted code’ in paragraph (iii) of Minute CAB.89;

Record of Voting - for 9, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

CAB.96 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No Public questions had been submitted.

CAB.97 MEMBER QUESTIONS

No Member questions had been received.

CAB.98 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader informed the Cabinet of the two recent confirmed cases of Coronavirus which had been declared on 1 March 2020 in Tetbury. He explained that Council Officers were working closely with Public Health England, Gloucestershire County Council and other partners to ensure the outbreak was contained as much as possible and explained he wished to thank Officers for their efforts so far and for also keeping him informed as Leader.

The Leader then detailed the upcoming changes he would be proposing in relation to Cabinet Member Portfolios. He explained that Councillor Mark Harris as Cabinet Member for Car Parks and Town and Parish Councils would be adding sustainable tourism to his portfolio in the hope this would involve town and parish councils in the future. The Leader added that his portfolio would now also include civic pride, following many requests from District residents, and would include responsibility for ensuring the District's towns and villages were kept maintained in relation to street signs and clean pavements. He concluded that he hoped Members would also contact him to inform him of issues in relation to civic pride within their own respective Wards.

CAB.99 APPLICATIONS FOR DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF

The Cabinet was requested to determine one new application for Discretionary Rate Relief submitted under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 for the financial year 2019/20 in respect of the North Cotswold Food Bank.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report and explained that whilst he wished that food banks did not exist within the District, he was pleased to support the work of the volunteers who contributed to the North Cotswold Food Bank, for what represented a small financial cost to the Council.

The Deputy Leader then explained that he considered in future, the applications for Rate Relief be delegated to himself as the relevant Cabinet Member by the Cabinet to ensure more timely processing of such applications. In response, the Head of Paid Service confirmed this would be a suitable delegation to implement.

The Cabinet expressed their support for approval of the application in relation to the North Cotswold Food Bank and also to the delegation to the Deputy Leader.

RESOLVED that:

(a) Cabinet approve the discretionary rate relief in respect of North Cotswold Food Bank for the 2019/20 Financial Year;

(b) Cabinet approve the discretionary rate relief for North Cotswold Food Bank for the 2020/21 Financial Year.

(c) delegated authority be granted by the Cabinet to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance to approve future applications for Discretionary Rate Relief at Cabinet Member Decision-Making Meetings.

Record of Voting - for 9, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

CAB.100 SUMMARY FINANCE/SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT - 2019/20 QUARTER 3

The Cabinet received a report summarising overall performance for the Council, with particular focus on progress towards achieving the Council's top tasks, and efficiency measures and an update in regard to the Council's financial position including revenue outturn and budget variances; capital expenditure, capital receipts and use of reserves.

The Deputy Leader presented the report and explained various extracts. The highlighted areas included the fact that the Council had generated more income from the Council's garden waste service than had originally been predicted; garden waste licence fees would be increased for the next financial year and despite this increase, there was a potential risk the service could be overrun with demand; further clarification was needed in relation to planning application fees and the lack of uptake, though possible national effects of post-Brexit could be a contributing factor; prioritising the Council's currently underachieving Building Control services would be a future key responsibility of the Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Skills and Young People as part of the Commercialisation Strategy; a current £100,000 underspend in relation to Ubico was welcomed, but there was a risk to future costs of the service following the launch of the new waste service in March 2020 and a large number of replacement waste containers in preparation of the new service had been purchased, economies of scale had delivered a lower price per container.

In response to a question by the Leader regarding time taken to process disabled facilities grant applications, the Chief Finance Officer confirmed applications were required to be referred to occupational health for assessment and then there was a lead in time to the installation of measures, it is not unusual for applications to take six to nine months to completion.

In relation to the demolition of the Old Memorial Hospital, the Cabinet Member for Car Parks and Town and Parish Councils confirmed the site would be open by the end of March 2020. A Member also requested the Council look into painting the current galvanised steel lighting posts to improve the visual features of the site.

The Managing Director, Publica confirmed that with regard to the installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs), the Council had not received any tender responses and therefore Officers had now taken a different approach to procuring the EVCPs via a national procurement framework.

The Deputy Leader then drew attention to the 10% increase in uptake in membership at Cirencester Leisure Centre and why such increase had been so successful. In response, the Chief Finance Officer explained that the Council held a contract with SLM and that she was not aware of any request from SLM for a variation to the contract sums as a result of the reduction in membership fees. The Deputy Leader then also drew attention to the Council's newly-appointed Head of Climate Action and the fact that the Cabinet would be presenting a new Corporate Strategy to the Council at its Meeting in May 2020 and concluded that the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be reviewing the Performance Report at its Meeting on 3 March 2020.

The Leader then invited Councillor Andrews as the Chair of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to make any comments on the report. In doing so, he explained that for the 2020/21 Council Year meetings of the Committee would take place prior to Cabinet Meetings and therefore would be able to feed into the Cabinet's debate more successfully than before.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Record of Voting - for 0, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.**CAB.101 SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBERS**

Cabinet noted the decisions taken by the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance.

With regard to the Decision Meeting which took place on 4 February 2020, the Deputy Leader explained that a press release had been issued by the Leader of the Council's Conservative Group which had made allegations in relation to the Council's Community Activity Support Grant. He added that it was disappointing such comments had been released into the public domain and stated that he considered there primarily to have been a misunderstanding by some Members of the Conservative Group. The Deputy Leader informed the Cabinet that he had considered 70 applications since May 2020 of which 26 had not been supported. Of this 26, he explained that 10 had been located in Wards represented by a Conservative Member; of which 2 had since been funded elsewhere and the remaining 16 were submitted by Ward Members of Liberal Democrat, Green or Independent Members. He continued that the claim within the press release that decisions had previously been made by the Ward Members was untrue as the decision previously was made by the then Leader of the Council. The Deputy Leader concluded that awards could not be granted to applications retrospectively; each decision was made on the merits of the application presented; all reports for each Decision Meeting were published to all Members in advance and the usual call-in procedures applied; any Member was welcome to attend each Decision Meeting and applications from religious organisations may be supported, providing they were not considered to evangelise that religious belief.

The Leader of the Council added that the Cabinet would look to review the existing Defibrillator scheme in the future, involving all Members in that review.

A Cabinet Member suggested that given recent comments made, if the summary report of each decision presented to the Cabinet could contain an additional column advising of the reason(s) for such decision(s), as was currently included in the Decision Notification for each Decision Meeting.

CAB.102 ISSUE(S) ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND/OR AUDIT

There were no issues arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the Audit Committee.

CAB.103 OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business that was urgent.

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 p.m. and closed at 6.55 p.m.

Chair

(END)