

COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

7 SEPTEMBER 2020

Present:

Councillor Joe Harris - Chair

Councillors -

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

Observers:

Councillors Stephen Andrews, Gina Blomefield, Ray Brassington, Patrick Coleman, Roly Hughes, Nikki Ind, Julia Judd, Gary Selwyn.

CAB.18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest by Members.

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

CAB.19 MINUTES

RESOLVED that:

- a) subject to the inclusion of the words ‘up to £730,000’ in recommendation (b) of the resolution of Minute CAB.13, the Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet on 6 July 2020 be approved as a correct record:**

Record of Voting - for 8, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

- b) subject to the deletion of the word ‘incredible’ and its substitution by the word ‘good’ in the fifth line of the fourth paragraph of Minute CAB.15, the Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet of 15 July 2020 be approved as a correct record:**

Record of Voting - for 6, against 0, abstentions 2, absent 0.

CAB.20 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Advance notice of five public questions had been received. Three of the questioners were present at the Meeting and the questions were dealt with in accordance with the Council’s Constitutional Rules as follows:

- (i) Mr. Luke Sherlock to Councillors Lisa Spivey and Mike Every

‘It was made clear by the council through the Local Plan that any development of the Kemble Community Gardens would be for housing that was purely based on the

local community's need. It was stated in the Local Plan that the housing would be built for the purpose of retaining members of the community. The council made it clear that the need would be determined through consultation with the Parish Council (SGC and Annex B) and a housing needs survey. As the cabinet is now in possession of both pieces of information and can see from the evidence, including the report for this agenda item, there is a need for bungalows (affordable rent and buy) and 1-2-bedroom starter homes (affordable buy), would the council confirm that they are in favour of delivering a mixture of both affordable tenures (buying and renting) and of the aforementioned housing types?

Response from Councillor Spivey:

I am happy to take on responsibility and the Council will be continuing with the development as per the Statement of Common Ground and will consider all of the priorities. Any development the Council undertakes will clearly be named as the Council's work and we want to make sure that the development becomes part of the landscape and we understand how valued the community gardens space is to the village. We also want to make sure that any work undertaken is harmonious and retains the green aspect. If we were not to develop the site ourselves, I would have to take specific guidance from Officers, but this is part of the Statement of Common Ground, so we can be assured by that.

(ii) Mr. Luke Sherlock to Councillors Lisa Spivey and Mike Evemy

'There has been a recent application for three tree preservation orders on Kemble Community Gardens, which would not affect a development so long as the positioning stays as agreed by the Council in the Statement of Common Ground. As you can see from agenda item 10's report there were commitments made to protect the trees on the site if a development occurred. With this in mind, would the cabinet give its support for these TPOs? This would relieve any anxiety about the destruction of them and give the community peace of mind that the development won't have a negative visual impact on the Kemble Community Gardens and its unique identity.'

Response from Councillor Spivey:

There is a report on the Meeting's Agenda this evening. Part of this report also contains a dissemination from the Housing Needs Survey and we will need to look at the detail going forward. We are not going to put three and four bedroom houses on the site and can assure you that we want to work with you and the community to deliver something for the community.

(iii) Mr. David Fowles to Councillor Joe Harris

'Cllr Rachel Coxcoon is your Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Forward Planning. As a Cabinet Member she plays a key role in formulating your council's budget and council tax. Cllr Coxcoon is currently the member for Moreton East ward. On her Register of Interests - which is in the public domain and listed on the CDC website - her home address is listed as 38 Blenheim Way, Moreton-in-Marsh. I have reason to believe that Cllr Coxcoon no longer lives at that address. If that is the case then clearly Cllr Coxcoon's Register of Interests has not been updated as required under Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011. Noting that Cllr Coxcoon has signed a further addendum on 24th March 2020 indicating that there are "no amendments to existing interests", would the Leader please confirm whether or not Cllr Coxcoon did in fact occupy and/or own that property on that date?

Given Cllr Coxcoon's influential Cabinet position in setting council tax and other charges that Cotswold residents have to pay - can I further ask the Leader to confirm that Cllr Coxcoon's current home address remains within Cotswold District?

Response from Councillor Harris:

Councillor Coxcoon lived in Moreton-in-Marsh in 2019 at the time of the last election but had to leave the District due to personal reasons and that is her right to do. She brings a wealth of professional experience and she could live on the moon and I would still have her in my Cabinet, as she loves this area.

(iv) Mr. David Fowles to Councillor Mike Evely

'For many years I along with many people lobbied very hard for the "Missing Link" to be built on the A417. There have been far too many deaths and road casualties over the years and the congestion is a blight and hindrance to our local Cotswold and Gloucestershire economy.

For many years this council has been pro-active in lobbying for that work and there are extant resolutions that effect.

Under our Conservative-led County Council and Government, we now have the commitment and funding to allow this to be built. This will be a huge boost for business which is something your administration purports to be committed to. I am aware, however, that the most difficult and vocal objections to the proposed scheme are from the National Trust - your Employer.

Clearly, that is a massive conflict of interest for you personally - given your very influential position of Deputy Leader.

Which role will you be resigning from - District Councillor/Deputy Leader or from the National Trust? And when?'

Response from Councillor Evely:

I will not be resigning from my job or role as a Councillor. As a previous, long-standing Member, I'm sure you understand the requirements of Declarations of Interest. If the matter comes back to the Council for debate by the Council and I remain employed by the National Trust, I would declare that interest and not take part in the debate. I don't have the relevant Cabinet responsibility, which is part of Cllr. Coxcoon's responsibility and I will continue to do my job and role as a Councillor. I also consider the question to be rather petty.

(v) Mr Mike Davis to Councillor Tony Dale

'Following the CDC decision on 15th July to increase car parking charges by 30% from 1st Sept, you contacted me the following day to say that you wished to share various business initiatives you had been working on for the last 14 months with business stakeholders in the town.

As spokesman for both the chamber and the Business Forum, I readily agreed to set up a meeting with all concerned.

Despite several attempts by me to get some dates and also attempts by one of my colleagues to liaise with Paul James, we are no further forward.

7 weeks has now elapsed and businesses are struggling.

Can you please confirm why we haven't been able to arrange a meeting?'

Response from Councillor Dale:

I have been keen to meet with Cirencester Businesses but current government restrictions have not allowed much in the form of public meetings and my original thought of using the Council Chamber was not permitted. As soon as we can have a meeting of more than 30 people, it would make sense to hold a public meeting.

I am very keen to meet with you personally and take seriously the option of talking to businesses individually. There has been over £36 million in business grants distributed and our Officers have worked very hard to engage and work with all sectors and a number of other parties to get more data to understand businesses. Some businesses in Cirencester, having spoken to them today, are reporting an increase in trade of 50% and while it is difficult for some, some are reporting good business in a controlled and safe manner.

(vi) Mr Mike Davis to Councillor Tony Dale

'We have offered a suitable meeting room with a capped number of 30 in the Kings Head Hotel. I'm not sure what is preventing us from having a meeting where you can detail initiatives to key business owners in the town even if it is a limited audience. It seems to be more appropriate than an electronic environment online - would that not be possible?'

Response from Councillor Dale:

I'm personally still keen to meet with as many businesses as I can but I am bound by what Officers can arrange in line with the government guidelines. I want all our business back on a good footing.'

Responses have been sent to the two further questioners who were unable to attend the Meeting in person.

CAB.21 MEMBER QUESTIONS

No Member questions had been received.

CAB.22 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements from the Leader.

CAB.23 REVISED BUDGET 2020/21 AND BUDGET 2021/22

The Cabinet received a revised budget for 2020/21 reflecting the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on the Council's finances and was requested to consider the draft budget for 2021/22 as a basis for consultation with the community.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet for Finance explained and highlighted various aspects of the report and associated annexes detailing the modifications that had been made.

The Cabinet wished to extend its thanks to the Deputy Leader and Finance Officers for their work in relation to the Budgets and highlighted that it was pleasing to see that the loss of management fee income to the Council from SLM could be partially funded through the local government income compensation scheme.

In response to a Member's question, the Deputy Leader also confirmed that no key commitments that had been part of the 2020/21 Budget agreed by the Council in February 2020 had been removed.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- a) recommends the revised budget 2020/21 to Council for approval;**
- b) approves the draft budget for 2021/22 for consultation.**

Record of Voting - for 8, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

CAB.24 AN INVESTMENT STRATEGY FOR THE RECOVERY OF COTSWOLD DISTRICT

The Cabinet received a report which set out an investment strategy framework; within which the Council could invest in the infrastructure of Cotswold District and deliver on the Council priorities. The Strategy aims to deliver a return to address the savings targets in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Cabinet Member for the Economy and Skills and Deputy Leader jointly introduced the report and highlighted that the intention was that the Council would seek to invest in infrastructure and get a return against its priorities. They added that they hoped that the Cabinet would recognise that the whole Council should seek to deliver services in an equitable way.

The Leader thanked the Cabinet Member for his efforts in relation to the Strategy and highlighted the work of Sevenoaks Council who were not reliant on government grants as a leading example and requested the Cabinet Member speak with the Leader of that Council.

RESOLVED that:

- a) Cabinet recommends the strategy to Council for adoption;**
- b) delegated authority is given to the Interim Chief Executive to establish appropriate governance structures to support the strategy.**

Record of Voting - for 8, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

CAB.25 COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL CLIMATE EMERGENCY STRATEGY 2020-2030

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Forward Planning introduced the report and explained that, following discussions she had undertaken, it had met with initial agreement and that following presentation to Council in September 2020, the Strategy should be signed by the four political parties of the Council recognising a joint commitment.

The Cabinet Member also drew attention to a town and parish council 'Action Day' that had been arranged for 10 October 2020 and the hope was that all parishes within the District may look to declare a climate emergency going forward whilst also investigating options for dual working and assistance in relation to the climate emergency.

It was also noted by the Cabinet the role the Council's planning department would have in regard to planning policies which sought to tackle the emergency and it was expected training would be arranged for these Officers going forward.

RESOLVED that Cabinet, having considered the draft Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-2030, recommend the Strategy and Programme Plan to Council.

Record of Voting - for 8, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

CAB.26 LAND AT STATION ROAD, KEMBLE

The Cabinet was requested to consider an update on housing options for residential development on part of land at Station Road, Kemble and take a decision on how the Council should progress with the provision of housing on this site.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness introduced the report and highlighted the clear need that had been demonstrated for affordable homes within the village and the wider District. The Deputy Leader added that the Cabinet would be working with Officers to deliver affordable homes across the District, which remained a manifesto commitment of the administration.

The Leader wished to extend his thanks to the Community Gardens Committee and Parish Council for their work with the Council in relation to the project and indicated that he hoped the local community would be pleased with the efforts of the Council.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agrees to:

- a) progress with a planning application for housing on the site;**
- b) investigate further the option for delivery of housing on the site directly in line with the draft affordable housing delivery strategy and the Council's general powers to develop;**
- c) subject to agreement to (a) above, agree the delegation of the final detail and submission of a planning application for housing at the site to the Interim Chief Executive in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness and Deputy Leader;**
- d) require the development to be net zero carbon in its build and lifetime to facilitate low carbon living by the occupants.**

Record of Voting - for 8, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

CAB.27 SUMMARY/FINANCE SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2019/20 YEAR END

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 drew attention to various aspects explaining both over and underspends and the various complications Covid-19 had had on the Council's Finances during the last quarter of the 2019-20 financial year.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

CAB.28 FINANCIAL, COUNCIL PRIORITY AND SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT
2019-2020 YEAR END

The Cabinet received a report providing an update on progress on the Council's priorities and service performance and information on the Council's financial position.

The Deputy Leader highlighted the new format of the reporting which set out key objectives and added that much of the detail of the objectives would be considered as part of the Council's consideration of the Corporate Plan. He also informed the Cabinet that key comparators with the Council's partner councils had remained within the report as it was considered a helpful comparison when measuring performance.

The Cabinet Member for Waste and Recycling commented that the launch of the new Waste Service in March 2020 had greatly increased the number of phone calls to the Customer Services Teams and that on an average working day a third of the calls received by the Teams were in relation to the Council's waste service.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

CAB.29 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES FLEET REPLACEMENT 2020/21

The Cabinet received the Ubico environmental services fleet replacement plan for 2020/21.

The Cabinet Member for the Environment, Waste and Recycling presented the report and explained that as the fleet's vehicles aged, maintenance costs rose and that there became a point when it was more cost-effective to replace the vehicles with newer ones. He explained that the fleet could not be replaced with battery-powered vehicles as the range of these vehicles was nowhere near enough to cover the areas required, though a trial of hybrid vehicles had started.

The Deputy Leader commented that whilst the costs associated with the replacement were high, this clearly demonstrated the scale of the operation Ubico undertook on behalf of the Council and the purchase of 22 new vehicles would ensure the continued efficiency of the service.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- a) approves the high level replacement plan for the next eight years;**
- b) approves the procurement of the replacement vehicles during 2020/21 as set out in this report.**

Record of Voting - for 7, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 1.

CAB.30 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT COVID-19 HARDSHIP FUND 2020/21

Cabinet were requested to approve the use of any surplus within the Council Tax Covid-19 Hardship fund 2020/21.

The Deputy Leader explained that a further report would be presented to the Cabinet in December 2020 as it was expected that further unemployment would be experienced during the autumn 2020. He therefore proposed that recommendations (a) and (b) of the report should be agreed with (c) being included in a subsequent report. He also confirmed that all residents who were in receipt of Council Tax support should have already received support from the Fund.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **the options set out in paragraph 7.1 (a) and (b) of the circulated report be approved; and**
- b) **the Group Manager for Resident Services be authorised to consider and determine individual grant awards as detailed in paragraph 7.1 (b);**
- c) **a further report be presented to Cabinet in December 2020 regarding option (c) as detailed in paragraph 7.1.**

Record of Voting - for 8, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

CAB.31 PAPERLESS OR PAPER LESS - COUNCIL/CABINET/COMMITTEE - AGENDAS/REPORTS

The Cabinet was requested to discuss and consider whether all Councillors should receive Council/Cabinet/Committee papers electronically.

The Leader explained that the Cabinet would be recommending Option 2 - an opt-in scheme for Members to request paper versions of agendas and reports. This was in relation to the fact the Council would be moving to improved IT facilities, but recognised that some Members still preferred to have more than one option for viewing meeting documents.

The Cabinet supported the option for an opt-in scheme and requested that Members could choose to opt-in on a committee by committee basis.

RESOLVED that option 2 (move to less paper and annual opt in scheme for Members) be supported.

Record of Voting - for 8, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

CAB.32 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

The Cabinet was requested to consider a proposal to allocate £25,000 towards the development of a proposal promoting a two unitary authority solution for Gloucestershire, in the context of a Government White Paper to be published in the near future.

The Leader explained that a government white paper was expected and that meetings were currently taking place between the Leaders of the various Gloucestershire authorities. He added that the intention was for the Council to be involved in discussions early in the hope of progressing the idea of two Gloucestershire authorities and that inclusive growth would deliver social housing and other ambitions of the Council. He concluded that there was a requirement of the Council to approach the discussions with an open mind and these were the reasons that the Council should allocate £25,000 to assist with the production of a business case.

The Leader responded to the Cabinet that no timeframe on this work had yet been published, but the Council intended to start work now to ensure the Council's opinions were included within any discussions.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agree the allocation of £25,000 from the Council Priorities Fund for the purpose of addressing local government reorganisation, in order to develop a proposal promoting a two unitary authority solution for Gloucestershire.

Record of Voting - for 8, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

CAB.33 THE PURCHASE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A SOLUTION TO WEBCAST COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Cabinet were requested to consider the introduction of webcasting Council meetings and the relevant solutions available to achieve this; to enter into a contract with Public-i following a recent procurement for the provision of a webcasting solution to the Council; and to consider the length of contract specifically associated with the hosting element of the solution.

The Leader informed the Cabinet that this item had been moved from the Exempt Session of the Meeting following advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer. He added that a benefit of Covid-19 had been the Council's move to the live-streaming of virtual Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings and the intention had been for this to continue once meetings could resume again in person at the Council Offices. The Leader continued that webcasting meetings would enable greater access for the District's residents and would ensure the Council compared against the majority of other councils who webcast their meetings and in addition, would also enable the possible option of using other Council buildings for meetings in a hybrid solution. The Leader concluded by recommending Option 1 as detailed in the report to the Cabinet for approval.

In response to a Member's question from the Cabinet, the Leader responded that the decision for 20 dual units could be reviewed if Covid-19 presented further complications and the purchase of further units could be funded from earmarked reserves.

The Cabinet expressed their support for the move to webcasting and the chosen option for dual units and the intention that the equipment would be installed by the end of November 2020.

RESOLVED that the Council agrees to let a contract with Public-i as per Option One (Dual), for a period of 3 years.

Record of Voting - for 8, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

CAB.34 SCHEDULE OF DECISION(S) TAKEN BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBERS

The Deputy Leader drew attention to the decision taken by him on 17 July 2020, and the fact that whilst the grant amounts recorded were correct, as they were not awarded on a Ward basis, reference to Wards should be removed. An updated report reflecting this had been circulated to the Cabinet in advance of the Meeting.

Cabinet also noted the schedule of decisions taken by the other individual Cabinet Members since the last meeting of the Cabinet.

CAB.35 ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND/OR AUDIT

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

CAB.36 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and Press be excluded from the Meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph (3) of Part I of Schedule 12A to the said Act (Information relating to financial or business affairs) and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information concerned.

Record of Voting - for 8, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

CAB.37 PROPERTY - CIRENCESTER

The Cabinet was requested to consider a request from a tenant to surrender their lease and to consider the future of a site once the Council is in possession.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agrees:

- a) **to grant a surrender of the lease from Trustees of the property on 30 September 2020 for the reasons detailed in the report;**
- b) **to instruct Officers to progress further detail on the feasibility of refurbishment of the site for use as either homelessness temporary accommodation or private rented on the open market and for a business case to be brought back to Cabinet for this provision;**
- c) **that funding for the feasibility work be taken from the funding agreed for the support of feasibility work agreed at Cabinet at its meeting in November 2019;**
- d) **that the final details of the surrender terms to be delegated to the Interim/ Chief Executive in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Section 151 Officer.**

Record of Voting - for 8, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm, adjourned between 8.12 pm and 8.16 pm, and closed at 8.28 pm

Chair

(END)