



Minutes of a meeting held remotely of Council held on Wednesday 18 November 2020.

Councillors present:

Nigel Robbins - Chair

Dilys Neill - Vice-Chair

Stephen Andrews
Mark Annett
Tony Berry
Gina Blomefield
Ray Brassington
Patrick Coleman
Tony Dale
Andrew Doherty
Mike Evely
Jenny Forde
Joe Harris

Mark Harris
Nikki Ind
Stephen Hirst
Robin Hughes
Roly Hughes
Sue Jepson
Julia Judd
Richard Keeling
Juliet Layton
Andrew Maclean
Nick Maunder

Richard Morgan
Richard Norris
Gary Selwyn
Lisa Spivey
Ray Theodoulou
Steve Trotter
Clive Webster

Officers present:

Interim Chief Executive
Chief Finance Officer
Interim Monitoring Officer

Service Leader (Licensing and Business Support)
Democratic Services

CL.50 Apologies were received from Councillors Julian Beale, Rachel Coxcoon and Claire Bloomer.

CL.51 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest from Members or Officers.

CL.52 **Minutes – 23 September and 21 October 2020**

RESOLVED that:

- (a) **Subject to the record of voting in respect of Minute CL.42 Treasury Management Review 2019-20 being amended to read: Record of Voting - for 32, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 2; and the amendment of Councillor 'Tony Dake' to 'Dale' in the list of Councillors present, the minutes of 23 September 2020, be approved as a correct record.**

Record of Voting – for 31, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 3.

- a) **the Minutes of the Special Meeting of Council held on 21 October 2020 be approved as a correct record**

Record of Voting - for 29, against 0, abstentions 2, absent 3.

CL.53 Announcements from the Chair, Leader or Interim Chief Executive

Announcements from the Leader

- (a) The Leader paid tribute to Andrea Shutt, former Cirencester PCSO, who recently passed away. She had previously been diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease and while suffering from this, raised money for charities. Her PSCO responsibilities included the areas of Cirencester, North Churn Valley and Ermin. He explained that her greatest legacy was her children, which were a tribute to her, and they embodied the values that Andrea had instilled in them. Like their mother, they would continue the work for charities and make lives better for people.
- (b) The Publica Board had commissioned a review of the company governance arrangements earlier this year. Since the four partnership councils had established Publica in 2017, many changes had taken place. The report had been circulated to Members, and contained recommendations, to ensure that the Company was strengthened for the next stage of development. The Chair of the Publica Board, David Brooks, was standing down; the Leader thanked him for his work on the Board. A recruitment campaign for a new Chair of the Board was a priority.
- (c) The Leader explained that work had been undertaken on a new Council logo. Effective communication with business and residents was changing with increased emphasis on the use of the Website and Social Media, to help services to be delivered to the highest standard. A modern logo was to be used alongside the current crest. He thanked colleagues in the Print and Design Service for all their work on producing the new logo.
- (d) The Leader explained that the Council had appointed a Climate Emergency Manager and an Economic Development Lead who had been making good progress in these areas. It was now time to appoint a similar senior officer, to meet the Council's priorities on affordable housing and social rented homes.
- (e) The Leaders of Cheltenham Borough Council, Councillor Steve Jordan and West Oxfordshire District Council, Councillor James Mills had recently stepped down from their roles. He thanked them for their work and everything they had done for their respective Councils. Councillor Rowena Hay would replace Councillor Jordan at Cheltenham Borough Council and Councillor Michelle Mead would replace Councillor James Mills at West Oxfordshire District Council. Both Councillors would be invited to speak at a future Council meeting.

- (f) The Leader thanked the Interim Chief Executive, Christine Gore for her work over the last six months, Christine would return to her post within Publica in the New Year. The new Chief Executive would be in post for the next meeting in January 2021.

CL.54 Public Questions

(a) Question from Mr David Fowles to Councillor Joe Harris, Leader

The first question put to Council was deemed to be a political statement and Mr. Fowles was invited to replace it with a question.

'Was there a possibility between 3 December 2020 and Christmas, that the Council might consider a short term change on car parking charges to encourage parking in the District and to get people back into the towns and shops. Wychavon are offering free car parking until January, may be free after 3pm until January, Stroud have free parking on Saturday, could offer some days free when low occupancy days, such as Mondays/Tuesdays.

Response from the Leader of the Council

The Leader commented that he felt Mr Fowles might have introduced these himself when he was Cabinet Member for the Council, although he would take it in the spirit it was meant. The Council is taking part in the Small Business Saturday, and offering different car parking options around that event. In two of the car parks, 24/7 charging had been scrapped; the Council was waiting for Gloucestershire County Council to allow the Whiteway Car Park to be opened which would free up the rest of the town centre car parks with more short term stays. Over the next 10 years, the administration was committed to weaning the Council off relying on car parking charges to prop up the Council budget.

(b) Question from Mr David Fowles to Councillor Mike Evemy

Following the decision in July to increase car parking charges in Cirencester and across the district by 30% by the Lib Dem administration with effect from 1st Sept this year against the wishes of businesses and residents; I made a Freedom of information request that monthly year on year income, occupancy and transaction figures should be published as from 1st September 2020 comparing them with the same period last year.

This was not only in the interests of transparency but also to see what the trends were and whether for example the number of transactions and car park income increased in line with your forecast or whether there was a decrease.

As I understand it at the recent November Cirencester Town Council meeting, it was announced that the income had increased.

Could you confirm whether this is true and whether the current figures show an increase and what the comparison is with the same period last year?

Response from Councillor Mike Evemy

You may not have seen the question from Councillor Coleman and the answer, which shows the figures for car parking stays and income. A reply had been sent to all Members and would be included in these minutes. The price rise, (which was not 30%), in car parking charges shows that September had no negative impact on the number of stays in the car parks. The comparison was made with September and October figures, to what was seen in August. It was the correct decision to increase the charges and the benefits are beginning to be seen, the numbers had exceeded those for October 2019.

CL.55 Member Questions

(a) Question from Councillor Nikki Ind to Councillor Mike Evemy, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance

Whilst I appreciate the benefits of technology and the cost savings related to cashless parking, following resident's concerns raised with me, could you please confirm that from next April there will be no way for elderly residents or those without an up to date mobile phone or credit/debit card to pay for car parking in the Cotswolds? How does this allow the District Council to ensure all services remain inclusive?'

Response from Councillor Evemy

Our plans to remove the option to pay for parking using cash were included in the Council's budget consultation in January 2020 and in the budget papers presented to Council on 26 February. In the Corporate Plan passed by the Council on 23 September 2020, the action 'Introduce cashless parking in all car parks' was shown with a commencement date of 'July 2020' and a completion date of 'April 2021'.

There are two main reasons why we intend to phase out the use of cash in our car parks: (i) the cost and environmental impact of cash collections; and (ii) the costs and inconvenience to the public and officers of acts of theft and vandalism.

The Council's 2020/21 budget contains an estimated saving of £35,000 from the removal of cash from car parks. Cash collection requires regular journeys around the District to empty the machines with the associated vehicle use. Over the four-year period from 2015/16, we have seen nine incidents of theft or vandalism of machines in our car parks. Whilst we can make insurance claims for the theft or damage to the machines, subject to a £1,000 excess, we incur the cost of the stolen cash and any consequential loss in parking revenue while the situation is rectified ourselves. Costs of the latter can be in five figures when the damage is significant as it was at the Beeches in 2016.

With the launch of our new free parking app on 1 October, we took the opportunity to publicise our plans to remove the option to pay for parking using cash by 31 March 2021. I was interviewed on the subject on BBC Radio Gloucestershire and am aware that this decision has caused concern to some residents and visitors to the District. A significant number of these concerns stem from a report in the Wilts

and Glos Standard on 3 October, which at the top of the story suggested that the only way to pay in future would be by phone. Clearly, that is not the case. Our plans have always included the retention of the ability to pay by credit or debit card using contactless or chip and PIN technology.

However, I am aware there are residents who would prefer to continue to use coins to pay for their parking. This may be because they do not own a smartphone or a mobile phone or, if they do, they do not wish to use them for this purpose. It may also be because they do not wish to use a card. In response to your point about inclusion, I believe it is reasonable to expect a car driver to have either a credit or debit card. Most payments for fuel, vehicle licence duty, insurance, repair and servicing bills will be made by card. Access to a basic bank account including a debit card must be made available to all adults.

As part of our administration's plans to rebuild the Council and the services, we provide we're committed to improving the parking service and making it easy for people to use. We have seen a considerable increase in the share of car park stays paid for using cards following the first lockdown - between 10% and 16% up on the same months in 2019, with year on year increases in the share of payments by phone/app in September and October of 6% and 8% respectively. These increases coincided with the publicity around the switchover to PaybyPhone and scrapping of the 10p administration charge on 1 October.

However, despite these changes, there are still many people who are parking in our car parks and paying by cash. We want to encourage them to pay using a card or the app and will be working with PaybyPhone on a campaign to encourage this.

In recognition of this and the concerns raised by Cllr Ind and others, I have asked officers to bring a report to Cabinet on 4 January 2021 to provide options for a phased approach to the removal of cash payments with an extension to the completion date of this project to January 2022 in advance of the start of are-tendered cash collection service in February 2022.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Ind

Had communication taken place with residents in relation to any change to this scheme?

Response from Councillor Evemy

He thanked Councillor Ind for her question. Sometimes information relayed to residents through newspapers is out of our control. A line in the newspaper saying that residents will not be able to pay by card is wrong, they absolutely will, the switch will be staggered and the Council will learn from the car parks, which have switched over to cashless car parking charges first. People will have good notice when this will happen.

(b) Question from Nikki Ind to Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council

'With the ongoing COVID situation, would the Cabinet consider a publicity campaign regarding Postal Votes, as it looks likely that next year's elections will take place and many of our residents may prefer to change to this option?'

Response from Councillor Joe Harris

We understand that many people may wish to use a postal vote for May's elections and we are very happy that they should do so. The Returning Officer and the elections team are already planning a campaign to promote postal voting with the aim of ensuring that anyone who wants to has arrangements for a postal vote in place well before the elections.

(c) Question from Councillor Tony Berry to Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council

'Last month you gave me details of CDC employees and those working for Publica but dedicated to CDC. Please could you now tell me what the total increase in the CDC Payroll has been since May 2019 including all new hirings and advertised vacancies?'

Response from Councillor Harris

The payroll fluctuates from month to month during the year for many reasons, the most significant change being staff turnover. The estimated annual payroll cost based on actual salaries paid in May 2019 was just under £904,000, including the employer's on-costs. The equivalent estimate in October 2020, taking account of the Council 18 November 2020 2.75% annual pay increase that was effective from April 2020, was just under £834,000. The appointment of our new Chief Executive will add a further sum of just under £133,000.

Our administration has ambitious plans to rebuild the Council and help rebuild our District in the post COVID-19 world; these plans are outlined in the Council's corporate strategy. In order to realise these ambitions we have to have the staff in place to help do this and ensure we are paying them at a level that is commensurate with officers at other Councils.

Councillor Berry did not have a supplementary question, although would take the response away and make sure the information was what he was looking for.

(d) Question from Councillor Tony Berry to Councillor Rachel Coxcoo, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Forward Planning

1. 'In July 3rd 2019 Council unanimously approved the idea of investigating the benefit of putting solar panels on our Trinity Road premises
2. When questioned in July 15th 2020 you reported that a review had taken place in April which showed that:

- a) This would make a 10% reduction in our carbon footprint on the property.
 - b) The investment would pay for itself in 10 years (a 10% return)
3. That a review was being undertaken on the use of the property and all 'options' were being considered.

Are we ever going to see this happen?'

Response from Councillor Coxcoon

Tackling the climate emergency is the foundation stone of this administration's plans to rebuild the Council and rebuild our District in the post COVID-19 world.

As everyone is aware, the usage of the Trinity Road offices since the first Covid-19 lockdown in March has been a tiny fraction of the normal usage the office had prior to the pandemic. As a consequence the amount of electricity consumed by the office has also fallen dramatically, and this naturally adversely affects the economics of installing solar panels on the roof of Trinity Road.

The Council has reacted quickly and effectively to the challenge presented by Covid-19, and most Council employees continue to work from home, and will do so for the near future, in line with Publica's 'agile working' strategy.

All this means that we must establish much greater certainty over the way the Trinity Road offices are to be used in the future, before committing to capital investment in solar PV. Making such an investment now, in the absence of that clarity on the Council 18 November 2020 future use of Trinity Road, risks the investment failing to deliver value to the Council, either in terms of carbon emissions reduction, or in financial terms.

We remain committed to making cost-effective investment in renewable energy technology wherever it is appropriate, and the Council is therefore commissioning a review of the opportunity for investment in solar PV across the whole of its building portfolio, to include Trinity Road, in collaboration with other Publica councils.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Berry

If there is uncertainty about Trinity Road going forward, should we be spending on the reception area and how much is that costing?

Response from Councillor Joe Harris in Councillor Coxcoon's absence

Anyone who had visited CDC reception would notice it was pretty grim. We do need to make a decision if we want to stay at Trinity Road, as we do not know if we will be going to be back to capacity in the future. Deciding what we do with Trinity Road is a longer-term option. We want people to come into reception and feel we are a professional organisation. We would not want to put solar panels up and in a year or two move out. We are committed to the climate emergency and there are some radical things in what we are doing to tackle the climate emergency.

(e) Question from Councillor Gina Blomefield to Councillor Rachel Coxcoo, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Forward Planning

'You recently ran a Climate Change Forum for Parish and Town Councillors, please could you tell me how many people attended this and how many Councils were represented?'

Response from Councillor Coxcoo

Twenty-nine Councillors registered for the event, and 27 attended, representing 19 Town and Parish Councils between them.

All of the larger settlements were represented (Bourton on the Water, Chipping Campden, Northleach, South Cerney, Moreton-in-Marsh, Stow-on-the-Wold, Cirencester, Tetbury, Fairford, Lechlade), plus several smaller parishes. Support was expressed for the idea of Parish and Town councils continuing to progress the climate emergency work together, and attendees generated a large number of good ideas for local action.

We are now considering how we move forward with further support to help parish and town councils in the district to act on the climate emergency, including assessing the appetite for further action days in the new year.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Bloomfield

Councillor Bloomfield thanked Councillor Coxcoo for her response. She very much would welcome knowing more of the response to the forum across the whole Cotswolds, as we would want to help the parishes in any way we can, and would want to know of those councils who did not get involved and feedback of those councils who did attend.

Response from Councillor Joe Harris in Councillor Coxcoo's absence

Communication with all Town and Parish Council is important, as they are crucial in helping us with the Council's corporate aims. As an aside, he was surprised to find out that the Council only had contact details of parish clerks and some of these were out of date. He had asked that a live spreadsheet of Town and Parish Councillors be kept. The Climate Emergency Manager had run this event, it could have been better attended, and maybe the timing of this on a Saturday was unhelpful. Town Clerks act as gatekeepers, in relation to passing on information to local Councillors. The feedback was positive and the Council was lucky to have Councillor Coxcoo who understands the importance of this. In terms of the next steps, the Climate Emergency Manager would be working on this.

(f) Question from Councillor Stephen Hirst to Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council

'Prior to the Lib-Dem assumption of control of the administration at CDC, the previous administration operated with a number of major management posts as shared posts with other adjoining District Councils normally West Oxfordshire District Council or the Forest of Dean District Council. These shared posts proved

to be very cost efficient and operationally effective, contributing to major savings in the running of the respective councils. Could the Leader please explain the reasoning behind this cost-effective method of controlling costs being replaced by single individual responsibilities and the added costs of running the Council in this manner'

Response from Councillor Harris.

"Retained staff are working to maximum capacity and will not be able to deliver new and emerging priorities and it is the view of the team that some capacity issues present a real and immediate risk to the council and its ability to operate safely." - LGA Corporate Peer Challenge for Cotswold District Council

I think this passage neatly sums up why my administration has had to act in order to 'bulk up' our retained staff. This will allow us to rebuild the Council after 16 years of underinvestment by the previous Conservative administration.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Hirst

Could the Leader advise how the Health and Wellbeing Officers plan to support the work that is being carried out by the Public Health department to slow the growth of Covid 19 as it concerns us all.

Response from Councillor Joe Harris

There is an outbreak engagement board, which meets weekly. Gloucestershire County Council liaises with the Council about what we need to have on the ground. More Environmental Health Officers have been employed and we are comprehensive in our support of the county council. The Health and Wellbeing team are hardworking and we are doing everything we can.

(g) Question from Councillor Stephen Hirst to Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for the Economy and Skills

'Busy Town Centres are vital to both the economy of our District and the profitability of our many traders. To support local businesses and traders what measures are being planned to support Cotswold Businesses in the run up to Christmas?'

Response from Councillor Dale

Creating an environment where we can allow businesses to thrive is a key plank of this administration's plans to rebuild the Council and in turn help rebuild the Cotswolds in the post COVID-19 world.

The District Council has been working to support local businesses across the Cotswolds and specifically with Cirencester Town Council, on its Christmas shopping guide. We have also maintained free after 3pm parking in a number of car parks in the District throughout the festive period.

The Council's work with Maybe to improve the social media presence of businesses will also help them to improve trade during the run-up to Christmas and indeed some of their webinars have focused on this theme.

The Council continues to promote a Shop Local message through its communications channels. Cotswolds Tourism continues to support businesses in the visitor economy through promotions on the Cotswolds.com website and through its other channels, consistent with enabling a Covid-secure environment.

(h) Question from Councillor Richard Morgan to Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for the Economy and Skills

'What impact will the second lockdown have on your economic forecast and return on investment forecasts and calculations with relation to your commercialisation strategy?'

Response from Councillor Dale

The District Council is not an economic forecaster and relies on other organisations with greater expertise and resources in this area to do this, especially as so many factors are beyond its control in the present pandemic.

Nonetheless, with a vaccine now on the horizon and the recovery in global stock markets last week we have seen improvements in our returns, beyond forecast, so remain in positive territory, something I know you will welcome.

Our Green Economic Growth Strategy is designed to ensure that the actions of the District Council and its partners positively contribute to the benefit of the local economy so its growth will therefore be higher than it would otherwise have been. In terms of the Recovery Investment Strategy, there are criteria set out in the report approved by Council, which must be met before an investment will progress and the second lockdown does not alter those criteria. They are robust and already agreed and form a key plank of this administration's plans to help rebuild our council and in turn help rebuild the Cotswolds in the post COVID-19 world.

The Strategy does include some borrowing for infrastructure purposes at a time when debt costs are perhaps the lowest they have ever been. The latest forecast for 50-year gilts shows the rate to stay below 1% for the next three years and beyond. So although we did not choose a second lockdown, the continued low cost of debt continues to create a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity to invest in the renewal of the infrastructure of the Cotswolds that has been neglected for so long. We will not miss that opportunity.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Morgan

He thanked Councillor Dale for his reply and mentioned that Councillor Dale was proud of this policy, the Commercialisation Strategy, as this was a flagship policy. Why aren't we explaining this policy to the residents of the Cotswolds with public consultation, as the administration had borrowed £54million to support some of the priorities?

Response from Councillor Dale

The Recovery Investment Strategy and the Green Economic Growth Strategy have been published. The Council will need a recovery fund moving forward, an investment board will be a cross party board and will bring the District into the 21st century. The Recovery Investment Strategy will deliver green businesses, jobs and growth and affordable housing. The Council has not borrowed £54 million; the Recovery Investment Strategy will be funded by a mixture of sources of money, not just simply borrowing. Using the resources to invest in residents and businesses.

(i) Question from Councillor Patrick Coleman to Councillor Mike Evemy, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

'Could the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance please advise the Council of:

- a) the numbers of stays in this Council's car parks so far in the current financial year 2020/21;
- b) the revenue received from them so far in the said financial year;
- c) the impact of the price rise implemented on 1 September 2020.'

Response from Councillor Evemy

- a) The table below shows the number of paid parking stays by month in 2020/21 with comparator figures for 2019/20:

	2019/20	2020/21
April	96,001	95
May	98,601	293
June	94,541	28,538
July	103,869	66,181
August	102,239	88,452
September	95,256	86,119
Oct	96,977	85,685
Total	687,484	355,363

Parking charges were suspended between 26 March and 31 May 2020.

- b) The table below shows the revenue (excluding VAT) received from car parking charges by month in 2020/21 with comparator figures from 2019/20:

	2019	2020
April	£169,080	£85
May	£173,790	£191
June	£172,768	£42,747
July	£182,852	£108,455
August	£185,597	£148,088
September	£170,693	£167,857
October	£167,703	£168,739
Total	£1,222,483	£636,161

- c) The figures above show that September and October were better months for the number of paid parking stays than August, with over 90% and 88% of the previous year's totals compared to 86% in August and 64% in July as we were coming out of lockdown. So, despite concerns raised by Conservative councillors and some businesses, there is no evidence to support their fear that the rise implemented on 1 September would put people off using our car parks and visiting our towns and enjoying what they have to offer. Indeed, the rise has boosted car park income and enabled the monthly revenue to exceed the 2019 figure for the first time in October. I'd like to thank those people for continuing to support our local businesses and for spending their time and money in our towns.

(j) Question from Councillor Andrew Maclean to Councillor Clive Webster, Cabinet Member for the Planning Department, Town and Parish Councils

'The section 106 agreement for the main Upper Rissington development states in Part 4:

The Owner agrees:

1. *To provide a minimum of 1500 (one thousand five hundred) square metres of floorspace to shell and core for Employment Uses prior to the Occupation of the 300th Residential Units.*

The only employment space provided to date are two converted RAF buildings that have a combined floor space of less than 1,000 m². Why were the developers not held to this agreement and what steps can and will the council now take to ensure the full quota of employment space is provided before the developer leaves the site?'

Response from Councillor Webster:

As Cllr Maclean correctly highlights, the Outline planning permission requires the provision of 1500sqm of employment floor space to be provided by the time that the 300th home is occupied. This requirement remains in force and the amount of homes now built is in excess of 300. Planning officers are therefore in the process of seeking a position statement from the developer in respect of the amount of floor space provided to date and any remaining shortfall if found to be the case. I will, of course, update Cllr Maclean as soon as I receive the confirmation and, pending that response, I will arrange to meet with him to appropriately address any further action necessary.

(k) Question from Councillor Andrew Maclean to Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council

In 2016, I, along with the majority of voters in the Cotswolds, voted to remain within the European Union. Our representative in Westminster has ignored the expressed will of his constituents and supported his party leaders in driving forward the most disruptive departure from the European Union possible. Now, with only 43 days until we leave the transitional arrangements, we can only end up with an incredibly meagre deal or no deal at all.

This is our final council meeting before this calamity is inflicted upon our residents, with all the negative impacts upon their rights, their freedom of movement, their jobs, their environment and their security. In the light of this terrible situation, what can and will this administration do to mitigate the catastrophic impacts that our government's actions are about to unleash upon the Cotswolds.

Response from Councillor Harris

Like Councillor Maclean I voted to Remain and I still passionately believe that the United Kingdom would be better off within the European Union.

It is my expressed hope that in my lifetime the UK will re-join, however, I do not believe now is the right time to begin the campaign to re-join. A period of national healing is needed and I fear that reopening the debate now will only serve to divide people further.

I believe it would be in residents' and the Council's best interest for the Government to seek an extension to the transition period so we can retain the status quo for a while and focus on tackling the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Council has a Brexit risk register that we keep updated to try and evaluate what the potential threats to the Council are arising from the uncertainty around Brexit. I will ask officers to share this with you.

As always seems to be the case with Brexit the uncertainty caused by the Government's flip-flopping makes it very hard to know what to plan for. I'm confident though that thanks to Cllr Evemy and Jenny Poole's financial prudence in seeking to rebuild the Council's finances we have the financial resilience to weather a 'no deal' Brexit.

CL.56 Review of Cotswold District Council's Statement of Licensing Policy

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Waste and Recycling introduced the report, which had been discussed at the Planning and Licensing Committee.

Enquiries to Licensing and Regulatory Services had risen this year, above normal levels and as a result, a revised policy for 2021/22 was deferred. He was proposing to extend the existing requirements currently in place for 2020/21 to 2021/22, with Officers reporting to the Planning and Licensing Committee in February 2021, carrying out a full review in 2021/22.

Councillor Layton seconded the proposal and reiterated that this was discussed at the Planning and Licensing Committee recently. The Service Leader (Licensing and Business Support) confirmed that the policy had not changed since being presented to that Committee.

RESOLVED that Council approves the current Statement of Licensing Policy attached at Annex 'A' to the report, to be in place for a further year and that a review be carried out in 2021/22.

Record of Voting – for 31, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 3.

CL.57 **Planning Protocol and Scheme of Delegation**

Councillor Layton, Chair of Planning and Licensing Committee introduced the report, which set out revisions to the scheme. She highlighted that the main revision to the scheme was the referral of applications to the Committee. She reiterated that Councillors must have material planning reasons to bring an application to Committee. A change to the briefing meeting was proposed; this would take place three weeks prior to the meeting, with Officers to discuss each application, and would replace the current briefing, which normally takes place two days prior to the meeting. This would not cause extra work or time spent on the meetings with Officers.

It was proposed that Ward Members would not be able to speak on behalf of the Town or Parish Council/Meeting. The Town or Parish would need to use the public speaking slot allocated to them, either speaking themselves or sending in a written submission to be read out at Committee. This was to ensure that if the Ward Member sits on the Planning Committee, they would take part in the discussion and the vote when necessary.

It was proposed that site inspections would be voted for on planning grounds only, not because the Ward Member thought it was a good idea.

A local campaign against an application with many objectors and no planning grounds should not be a reason to take an application to Committee

Councillor Layton urged Members to support these revisions. Councillor Joe Harris seconded the proposals.

During debate, some Members considered that the proposals should be referred back to the Planning and Licensing Committee. The interpretation of planning grounds was difficult, as some applications were overturned against Officers recommendations and applicants would want to know applications were being considered fairly. Officers would not be deciding what applications went to Committee.

More training for Town and Parish Councils/Meeting was necessary, for Parish Councillors to understand the reasons for bringing applications to the attention of the Ward Member, also understanding the NPPF. A suggestion was made that every parish councillor should have mandatory training, in order to be able to make a judgement.

The scheme should take into account Neighbourhood Plans, if an application was contrary to a Neighbourhood Plan, it should be put forward to the Committee.

Concern was expressed that Members of the Committee may occasionally appear to be voting politically, and as the Planning and Licensing Committee was quasi-judicial, this should not be happening.

Councillor Layton summed up. Annex B to the report was the proposed scheme and Annex C gave the appropriate delegated powers to officers.

Training was to be given to all Councillors following the election and regular training would take place throughout Councillors terms of office. It was reiterated that Councillors were required to have training in order to sit on the Planning and Licensing Committee. All Members would be invited to attend training.

Town and Parish Council training was due to take place following the May 2019 election. The General Election in December 2019 meant that the Council Chamber could not be used. Training was then due to take place in March 2020, due to Covid-19 this was not able to take place. Training was now scheduled for 26 November 2020 at 3.00pm.

Members were encouraged to always speak to Officers before referring an application to the Committee.

Councillor Layton refuted the comments about Members voting politically and assured Council that if it was considered that voting was taking place on a political basis, it would be stopped immediately.

She reiterated that the Committee was not the place for an application to have a public airing, the Planning Portal was the place for comments and applications presented to Committee would always be considered on material planning grounds, it was not a case of winning or losing.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the revised Protocol (Annex B) and Scheme of Delegation (Annex C), be approved;**
- (b) delegated authority be given to the Monitoring Officer to make the consequential amendments to the Constitution.**

Record of Voting – for 18, against 13, abstentions 0, absent 3.

CL.58 Schedule of meetings 2021/22 and Meeting Arrangements

The Leader of the Council introduced this report, proposing that the meeting times remain the same in 2021/22 as they were in 2020/21. A decision would be made on the meeting times in the autumn of 2021, based on information, which would be gathered throughout the year. There had been an extraordinary set of circumstances this year.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance seconded this proposal, explaining that the timing of school holidays was considered as many Members of the Council do have caring responsibility. Some meetings had been moved due to falling within the school holidays.

An amendment to this proposal was proposed by Councillor Beale and seconded by Councillor Jepson.

“Council resolves that, under whatever operating circumstances, with effect from 1st January 2021 all Meetings will commence at 10.00am for review

after a trial period at the Council's Annual meeting on Wednesday 26th May 2021."

Councillor Keeling, speaking on behalf of Councillor Beale, commented that since the Covid-19 pandemic meetings had been exclusively in virtual mode, enabling Councillors and Officers to attend meetings in reasonable safety.

Trinity Road was the heart and home of the Council, and the transparency sought would make meetings easier to attend for the public.

A Member survey should have taken place by 1 December 2020 to ascertain views, although the questionnaire which was received by Members was all about profile editing.

He also explained that staff would be compensated in time for working in the evenings, and many Parish Council meetings are in the evenings. He urged Members to support this amendment.

Councillor Jepson who seconded the motion explained that the meeting times were confusing and it was difficult to arrange childcare when the meetings were at different times of the day and evening.

The Deputy Leader commented that discussions on meeting times had taken place previously and the survey was to understand the demographics of the Council being representative of the communities. He urged Members to reject this amendment.

During debate Members expressed concerns relating to; parish council and community type meetings being in the evenings; meetings taking place at the same time would make it easier for people to arrange their diaries;

It was noted that Covid-19 had meant that the meetings were more transparent, as the public had been able to watch the meetings through a livestream to Facebook and should the Council consult with the public on how they would prefer to engage with the Council meetings.

In summing up the Leader, explained that Members should be thinking less about what is convenient for themselves and more about how to engage with the public, he wanted to lead a Council that was representative of the District. He urged Members to vote against the amendment in order to revisit the timings when they were more informed.

Councillor Keeling on summing up had nothing further to add.

On voting on the amendment set out above the vote was lost:

Record of Voting – for 13, against 18, abstentions 0, absent 3.

A vote was then taken on the substantive motion

RESOLVED that the schedule of meetings for 2021/22 be approved.

Record of Voting - for 18, against 7, abstentions 6, absent 3.

CL59. Acceptance of Delegated Powers - The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (England) (No.3) Regulations 2020

The Cabinet Member for the Environment, Waste and Recycling introduced this item, proposing that the Council undertake the responsibilities relating to Covid-19, which were outlined in the report. Gloucestershire County Council were asking the Districts to undertake these. Councillor Jenny Forde seconded this proposal.

RESOLVED that

- (a) the delegation of powers from the County Council, be accepted;**
- (b) the Interim Head of Legal Services, be authorised, to conclude an agreement to reflect the delegation in accordance with Section 101 Local Government Act 1972.**

Record of Voting – for 28, against 0 abstentions 0, absent 6.

CL.60 Notice of Motions

Motion 4 of 2020/21 – Short Term Lets

Proposed by Councillor Tony Berry, Seconded by Councillor Clive Webster.

“Council notes that properties being let to large groups of people on a short-term holiday let basis, particularly when situated in villages, can cause nuisance and have a negative impact on neighbouring properties.”

Councillor Berry thanked Councillor Webster for the work that had been carried out on bringing this motion to Council.

Councillor Berry explained that where large houses are being let by agencies, that are outside the rules in terms of the normal letting cycle. Housing for over seven people, let out short term, should be classed as a ‘house in multiple occupation’, and should have had business approval, in relation to business rates as opposed to Council Tax, it should be a business transaction. A cross party working group was proposed to gather more evidence.

Councillor Webster seconded this motion and thanked Councillor Berry for raising this. He reiterated that it was a nuisance across the district when large houses were let out, possibly for parties, and a noise nuisance log had to be built up over three weeks, which is unhelpful when people are visiting for a short amount of time. It would be useful to see how other Councils were tackling this problem and what other options were available for the Council.

Concern was expressed that it was not just one well-known agency that rents out large houses for a short period, other agencies in the District also do this. There was a balance to be struck, with flexible options brought back to Council.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that a working group is established to explore options seeking to ensure that the impact on the locality is no worse than that which would apply to a domestic dwelling;**
- (b) that the working group reports its findings back to Council by June 2021.**

Record of Voting – for 28, against 0, abstentions 1, absent 5.

Motion 5 of 2020/21 - re Car Parks

Proposed by Councillor Tony Berry, Seconded by Councillor Stephen Hirst.

“That the changes to the way we pay for parking in all CDC Car Parks (due in March 2021) are altered to maintain the options of paying by cash or ‘Swipe Card’ whilst offering the benefit of ‘an app’ to those that can use it.”

In line with Council Procedure Rules, this motion would automatically stand referred to Cabinet for review.

The Leader of the Council highlighted that this was the last meeting for the Interim Chief Executive, Christine Gore. He thanked her for her work over the last six months and wished her well in moving back into her role with Publica.

The Meeting commenced at 2.00pm and closed at 5.00pm.

Chair

(END)