

COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

27<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2016

Present:

Councillor Mark F Annett - Chairman  
Councillor Julian Beale Vice-Chairman

Councillors -

SI Andrews	M Harris
Miss AML Beccle	SG Hirst
AW Berry	RC Hughes
AR Brassington	Mrs. SL Jepson
T Cheung	RG Keeling
Sue Coakley	Juliet Layton
Alison Coggins	Jim Parsons
PCB Coleman	NJW Parsons
RW Dutton	SDE Parsons
Jenny Forde	NP Robbins
David Fowles	Lynden Stowe
C Hancock	R Theodoulou
JA Harris	LR Wilkins

Apologies:

Maggie Heaven	MGE MacKenzie-Charrington
Jenny Hincks	Tina Stevenson
RL Hughes	

CL.10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(1) Declarations by Members

There were no declarations of interest by Members.

(2) Declarations by Officers

There were no declarations of interest by Officers.

CL.11 MINUTES

**RESOLVED that:**

**(a) subject to the deletion of the word 'entitled' between the words 'Are we' and 'now' in the first line of the second paragraph of the supplementary question under Minute CL.64(1), the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2016 be approved as a correct record;**

**Record of Voting - for 25, against 0, abstentions 3, absent 5, vacancy 1.**

**(b) the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2016 be approved as a correct record.**

**Record of Voting - for 25, against 0, abstentions 3, absent 5, vacancy 1.**

**CL.12 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN, LEADER OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

(i) Councillor BS Dare and Mr. V Kirk - the Chairman referred to the recent deaths of Councillor BS Dare on 15<sup>th</sup> July and Mr. V Kirk on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

The Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group and the Head of Paid Service paid tribute to Councillor Dare's service to the community across the three tiers of local government, commenting on his loyalty, wisdom and grace, and his incredibly rich life outside local politics.

The Head of Paid Service commented that Mr. Kirk had worked in the Revenues and Benefits Section and Print Room, and as a swimming coach. The Head of Paid Service thanked the staff in the Print Room who had continued their work in a professional manner at a very difficult time.

(ii) Filming/Recording of Proceedings - the Chairman explained that the Council had received notification from a member of the public that he intended to film the Council Meeting. The Chairman stated that, accordingly, the Council would make its own audio recording of the proceedings.

(iii) Notice of Motions - the Chairman stated that it was his intention to allow the three Motions contained in the Agenda to be debated at this Meeting.

(iv) Remembrance Sunday - all Members had been invited to attend the Royal British Legion Cirencester Branch Remembrance Sunday Service Parade on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2016. Invitations in that respect would be sent out in due course.

(v) Danny Kent - 2015 World Moto3 Champion - due to his racing commitments, the presentation to Danny Kent would be held over until the Council Meeting which was scheduled to be held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

(vi) Members' Christmas Lunch - the Members' Christmas Lunch would be held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2016, following the Council Meeting which was scheduled to be held on that date. Invitations/menus would be sent out in due course.

**CL.13 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No public questions had been submitted.

**CL.14 MEMBER QUESTIONS**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, questions had been submitted, and responses provided, as follows:-

(1) From Councillor NP Robbins to Councillor Lynden Stowe, Leader of the Council

'The flood of refugees from the Syrian Civil War and African emergencies continues apace. Thus far a single Syrian family has been accommodated locally. Lack of suitable accommodation is given as the reason why this trickle has dried up. Would it not be sensible to review the narrow-minded policy which prevents private landlords and private home-owners from housing these desperately unfortunate people and incidentally speeding up their integration into their new society?'

Response from Councillor Stowe

*In accordance with our usual practice, I have asked the relevant Cabinet Member to deal with your question, and Councillor Mrs. Jepson's response is as follows:-*

*The Council has committed to resettling five families in the District, as part of the Government resettlement programme. This number is the correct proportionate number of families, given the size of the District, to enable the Government to meet its target for this programme of resettling 20,000 people.*

*The speed at which the families arrive is set by the availability of housing and the identification of families by the Home Office. Two families have already arrived and another family is due to arrive in the next few days. Their arrival was delayed due to a medical issue with one of the members of the family. Further to this, we have a further potential property that will be available soon.*

*We are actively encouraging private landlords to participate in the programme by offering suitable homes to rent for families, indeed the next arrival due will be housed in private rented accommodation - there is no narrow-minded policy in place in the Cotswolds.'*

Councillor Robbins thanked Councillor Mrs. Jepson for her answer, and stated that he welcomed the change in policy. By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Robbins asked the following:-

Could we please recognise the contribution made by Churches Together, including the Baptist Church, in supporting the resettlement of the Syrian refugees?

In response, Councillor Mrs. Jepson explained that the Council was grateful for the considerable help it received in this respect and that all the organisations that did help would be thanked in a broadcast that was due to be transmitted on Radio Gloucestershire during October 2016.

(2) From Councillor NP Robbins to Councillor Sue Coakley, Cabinet Member for Environment

'This Council aspires to be the most efficient in the country. What impression must the general public get when they realise that in each of the Quarterly Performance reports for the last twelve months, EVS2 (NI 191), they have been promised improvements in the bank recycling network in order to cut down residual household waste (as promised in the administration's manifesto for last May) and yet nothing has happened?'

Response from Councillor Coakley

*In preparing for the changes to the bring-site network, it became evident that many communities already had private textile recycling banks and we did not want to compete with local organisations and charities raising money in this way. In addition, it became clear that the Tetra Pac banks would only bring a 0.1% uplift in recycling; and it is also very difficult to find anyone to recycle these materials as they are such a mix of materials and very hard to process.*

*As a result, we have prioritised the food waste initiative, achieving 20% uplift in food and garden waste recycling, and recycling messages through campaigns such as the unusual suspects in recycling week. These campaigns have led to a significant increase in demand for recycling containers - hence the 'overspend' in the budget papers recently presented to the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee - which we expect to translate into even higher recycling figures in future. Current figures are over 60% - this was the 2020 target, so we have achieved this four years ahead of schedule.*

*We are still looking to make appropriate changes to the bring-site network, and would hope to achieve implementation before Christmas - in time for the annual increase in recyclables at that time of year.*

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Robbins asked the following:-

I would be willing to withdraw the accusation of inefficiency if the Cabinet Member could explain when and why the decision was made to discontinue the recycling of drink cartons although the retained bring bank at Kingsmeadow Tesco continues to receive them?

In response, Councillor Coakley explained that the intention was to include the recycling of Tetra Pacs at a number of bring-sites across the District. The impact on recycling rates had been assessed and, as a result, it had been decided that priority should be given to meeting requests for food waste containers in the first instance, and taking up other recycling opportunities. Councillor Coakley commented that the next priority would be to focus on business waste and, in that connection, a Press Release would be issued later in the day regarding the 'Right Waste, Right Place' county-wide campaign.

Councillor Coakley added that the biggest focus in recent months had been on the revised collection rounds which had been implemented on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2016. On the whole, the revised rounds were working well, although there had been some minor issues, which had been addressed. Councillor Coakley reminded the Council that the main driver behind the revision of collection rounds had been the capacity to collect cardboard and plastic recyclates on the agreed day, and she commented that the revisions should help to reduce any disincentives to recycle materials. Councillor

Coakley apologised that the status had not been correctly reported in the quarterly Summary Service/Finance Performance reports and, in conclusion, she reiterated that it was anticipated that the changes to the bring-site network should be completed by the end of the current calendar year.

(3) From Councillor Jenny Forde to Councillor Lynden Stowe, Leader of the Council

'It is widely acknowledged that the mobile phone coverage in many parts of the Cotswolds is poor or non-existent. It is also recognised that good coverage can help avoid isolation, improve personal security and is good for the local economy. It was along these lines that Gloucestershire County Council were asked to investigate how mobile phone companies can provide better coverage in Gloucestershire, particularly in rural areas such as the Cotswolds.

At the most recent Gloucestershire Economic Growth Committee Meeting, the question was asked about what assistance local councils might provide to mobile phone operators in progressing their work, it was suggested more support from local planning authorities might assist promote the importance and value of delivering digital connectivity to local communities and in creating great recognition of the need to make significant improvements in this area.

What commitments will this Council make in this area so it might demonstrate a more proactive approach to improving mobile phone signals across the Cotswolds?'

Response from Councillor Stowe

*Following up on previous engagement with the main providers, Officers have gone back to each of them and have asked that they provide an update for Council Members in relation to any improvements that their organisations have made in our area during the course of this year and/or have planned for the District for the future.*

*I am also concerned as to what would appear to me to be a worsening situation in terms of reception and little progress on infrastructure improvements, and would ask Councillor Forde, as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to request that her Committee reviews the updates received, and comes up with some recommendations for consideration.*

*I have asked Officers to look into what support might be available through the planning system, but do know that there are 'increased' Permitted Development Rights for telecoms developers in the current Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Orders.*

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Forde asked the following:-

I live in a rural community with poor reception and that response is not good enough.

In response, Councillor Stowe stated that he agreed with Councillor Forde, and that he considered the coverage in the north Cotswolds to be diabolical. Councillor Stowe further stated that, if the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were

such that it made sense to meet with people from the mobile network companies, he would be happy to support this and do so.

(4) From Councillor JA Harris to Councillor Lynden Stowe, Leader of the Council

'How much money did the Council spend exploring options for a Unitary Council with West Oxfordshire otherwise known as 'COXIT'?'

Response from Councillor Stowe

£4,000.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Harris asked the following:-

It was a waste of money and has damaged the Council's relationships with, amongst others, Gloucestershire County Council. What is Councillor Stowe doing to repair those relationships for the benefit of local tax payers?

In response, Councillor Stowe stated that he considered the exercise had restated Cotswold's place within Gloucestershire. It was anticipated that some positive outcomes from the County Council would be achieved in the next few months, and from the Police and Crime Commissioner in the future, which would not have been possible if the Unitary Authority proposal had not been explored, and such outcomes would represent a 'positive' payback. Councillor Stowe concluded by expressing his view that this Council, the other Gloucestershire Councils and the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group had all learnt something from the exercise.

(5) From Councillor JA Harris to Councillor Lynden Stowe, Leader of the Council

'The Brewery Court area of Cirencester has become an eyesore and this Council owns a large part of the site.

What is the Council doing to improve the appearance of this area?'

Response from Councillor Stowe

*In accordance with our usual practice, I have asked the relevant Cabinet Member to deal with your question, and Councillor NJW Parsons' response is as follows:-*

*We will look to keep the area clean and tidy, and have made arrangements for the currently empty planters to the front of 3-4 Brewery Court to be replenished shortly.*

*Insofar as the properties themselves are concerned, maintenance/repair is managed in line with the lease terms.*

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Harris asked the following:-

I congratulate Cirencester Town Council and Councillor David Fowles for their work to get the area cleaned up and to get the shop 'Jungle' re-opened. This area looks a disgrace and, as the Council promotes itself as 'caring for the Cotswolds', this is obviously a weak link. As the Council is the freeholder, will Councillor Parsons commit to doing something about the situation?

In response, Councillor Parsons explained that there were almost always periods when sites which were earmarked for potential major redevelopment became unattractive due to a hiatus in activity and he referred to the TH White and Lorry Park sites as examples of this. The delay in starting work was a problem for the developer to address and Councillor Parsons stated that the developer's responsibilities were detailed in the leases, which were monitored to ensure that the area was maintained in accordance with those leases.

(6) From Councillor AR Brassington to Councillor Lynden Stowe, Leader of the Council

'The three Local Authorities involved in the 2020 Partnership, Forest of Dean, West Oxfordshire and ourselves, now have a combined workforce in the area of Public Protection. This has resulted in a dramatic reduction in the number of employees, both professionally qualified and support staff.

On top of this, numerous staff who were successful in getting a new position in the department have chosen to leave. Shortly, there will be just one full-time Environmental Health Officer and two part-time ones. In order to enable the Council to undertake its statutory duties, consultants, on higher pay, have been engaged. How many are currently contracted across the three authorities to work in Public Protection and for how many months?'

Response from Councillor Stowe

*In accordance with our usual practice, I have asked the relevant Cabinet Member to deal with your question, and Councillor Coakley's response is as follows:-*

*There is an establishment of 39.5 full-time equivalent (fte) staff in Environmental and Regulatory Services (ERS) who are responsible for public protection. This is in line with the business case that was approved by the Cabinet in December 2014 and a resource allocation model that is based on service demand, risk, and professional judgement. There are eleven Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) in ERS, and a further nine who are accredited members of other professional organisations within the field of public protection.*

*ERS is meeting all of the agreed performance targets, as well as dealing with 'critical incidents', and recently prosecuted businesses in the Cotswolds for failing to comply with food hygiene regulations which were a risk to public health. The transformation will deliver savings across the three authorities of £890k annually, of which £307,000 per annum will relate to this Council. This is as a result of process redesign, better use of technology and customer services, and more effective resource management.*

*ERS went live on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 and the service transformation took place, as planned, during the summer. A number of staff chose to leave at all three Partner Councils, and this meant that there were no compulsory redundancies. This Council, as do many local authorities, has historically used environmental health contractors to ensure statutory responsibilities are met. The contractors are employed on a temporary basis, when vacancies occur. ERS currently employs 3.4 fte contractors (9% of the workforce) on temporary contracts across the three partner authorities. Appointments are made to meet specific needs at specific times, and the costs incurred will not*

*exceed the equivalent cost of the establishment post for which 'cover' is being provided, i.e. there is no additional financial impact or need for virement from within the overall ERS budget.*

*Councillor Brassington will note that there is a presentation to Members after this Council Meeting on the new combined service, which will provide a forum for further questions to be raised.*

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Brassington asked the following:-

My original question was in two parts and Councillor Coakley has not responded to the part referring to how many months the consultants are likely to be employed. Are they being used to carry out routine work?

In response, Councillor Coakley explained that ERS operated under a completely different model to the previous Public Protection Service. Councillor Coakley reminded the Meeting that the Council did not directly employ staff as that function was undertaken by the 2020 Partnership Board, and she commented that where staff were based was irrelevant in the age of video conferencing facilities, which meant the staff did not have to be sitting in any particular location in order to provide a service to that area. Councillor Coakley referred to the two recent successful prosecutions which, she contended, illustrated that the work was being undertaken successfully and that the Council was keeping up with its statutory functions. Councillor Coakley suggested that the focus should now be on outcomes rather than processes, and she concluded by reminding Members of the presentation which was due to follow this Meeting.

(7) From Councillor M Harris to Councillor NJW Parsons, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Forward Planning

'Would the Lead Member for Forward Planning tell me what the chances are of the number of homes allocated for the proposed South Chesterton Development being reduced from 2,350? A percentage will be fine.'

Response from Councillor NJW Parsons

*All Members will be aware that this site has been the sole strategic site for Cotswold District since the 2<sup>nd</sup> Issues and Options consultation. The site has been the subject of further consultations and detailed debate since that time, as the Local Plan has progressed, and the Council has maintained its position throughout.*

*I do not believe that it would be possible to provide a probability percentage without changing the proposed strategy, so I cannot specifically answer the question.*

*Looking at other potential changes as time moves on, my own personal 'best guess' would be:*

1. *Developer withdraws - unknown;*
2. *major change in National Planning Policy - unknown;*
3. *Planning Inspector reduces the allocation - unlikely;*
4. *construction problems- unlikely.*

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Harris asked the following:-



A lot of people are investing a lot of time and money in seeking to reduce the number of homes allocated. What are the chances of changing the proposed strategy?

In response, Councillor Parsons explained that there was a procedure and process for the Local Plan, and that any changes to the strategy would result in a significant delay as the Council would have to go back through the process. It was therefore unlikely that the strategy would be changed by the Council, and Councillor Parsons did not know if the Inspector would seek to change it at the forthcoming examination.

(8) From Councillor David Fowles to Councillor MGE MacKenzie-Charrington, Cabinet Member for Planning Services and Cirencester Car Parking Project

'My Ward lies between the two key settlements of Cirencester and Fairford. So far, three of my Parish Councils have expressed growing concern that the housing developments in these towns and other key settlements in the Cotswolds, are placing huge pressure on the infrastructure of these towns and this in turn impacts on the villages surrounding these larger settlements who rely on these towns for schools, doctors surgeries, shops etc.

Could the Cabinet Member provide me with details of the Section 106 Agreements entered into with developers over the last five years in Cirencester, Fairford and Tetbury; and confirm which, if any, infrastructure projects have already started?

Also, given he is the new Cabinet Member for Development Control, could he confirm whether he is happy with the level and type of Agreements that have been entered into by the Council?'

Note:

As Councillor MacKenzie-Charrington was not present at the Meeting, a written response would be provided to Councillor Fowles, and copied to all other Members of the Council.

CL.15 PETITIONS

No petitions had been received.

CL.16 2020 PARTNERSHIP - ESTABLISHMENT OF COMPANIES

The Leader of the Council introduced this item.

The Council was requested to consider the updated business case and issues relating to the establishment of a number of local authority-owned companies to deliver services on behalf of the 2020 Partnership.

The Leader of the Council amplified various aspects of the circulated report, including in relation to the challenges faced by the Council; the key drivers behind the project; and the Council's track record in the delivery of waste services through a 'Teckal' company, which had resulted in significant savings being achieved as well as improvements in the level of service provided. The Leader contended that the establishment of the Partnership, as proposed, would ensure more flexibility between

Partner Councils, which would remain as separate entities, with different priorities and differing levels of service. The Leader stated that the proposed structure would offer greater opportunities to the Council in the future, including in relation to commercialism, and he explained that any such opportunities would be considered at the appropriate time. The Leader reminded the Council of the funding received from the Government in respect of the Partnership and the anticipated payback period and level of savings, and he concluded by Proposing the recommendations. Such Proposition was duly Seconded.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group expressed the view that the proposal represented 'politics of convenience', which was aimed at making savings without any future vision or clear understanding of what it was the Council was aspiring to. He expressed concerns in relation to the principle and accountability of, and commitment to, the Partnership and he amplified aspects of each of those concerns in turn. The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group contended that a Council should provide for its communities, and he stated that, while the Council was providing services, it was making cuts which had had an adverse impact on front-line services, as evidenced earlier in the Meeting by a Member of his Group. He further contended that, as the Council was cash-rich, there was no need to force this proposal through, and he reminded the Council that another local authority had decided not to join the Partnership due to concerns over the erosion of responsibilities.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group contended that having a single Conservative Member as the Council's representative on the Partnership was undemocratic, stating that two representatives from each Partner Council would ensure that the Partnership was more democratically accountable. He questioned the likely cost of exiting the Partnership should a future administration decide that should be the way forward and he expressed disappointment at the impact on staff, citing the requirement for some staff to re-apply for their posts as an example. In conclusion, the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group stated that he accepted there were some merits in the proposal but he reiterated that he had concerns over the direction of travel for the Council, commitment, accountability and the impact on staff.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that the Council did not have the financial resources to do everything it might wish to do. He reminded the Meeting that, while the Council's budget was currently supported by the receipt of New Homes Bonus, it could not be relied on in the future and he stated that the Council needed to be innovative in finding ways to protect its front-line services. The Leader referred to the previous decisions to bring back in-house the waste and ICT contracts, which had resulted in significant savings without any adverse impacts in respect of service delivery, and he expressed the opinion that the Council should build on the success of Ubico Ltd. He referred to the potential underspend in a sum of £1m on the current budget but suggested that income from planning applications was likely to reduce in the future and that, therefore, the Council needed to be prudent with its money. In conclusion, the Leader explained that, as relatively few decisions were being reserved to the Partnership Board, there was no need to seek an increase in shareholder representation.

The Managing Director of the Partnership was invited to address the Council in respect of issues relating to staff and he stated that the staff were critical to the delivery of services. The Managing Director referred to the extensive engagement with staff that had already taken place in respect of the proposed new arrangements, and he reminded the Meeting that the Council was seeking to improve the package to staff in order to recruit new staff, retain existing staff, and become an 'employer of choice'. He referred to the savings that had been achieved through a reduction in the

number of full-time staff and stated that there had been few compulsory redundancies during the eight years he had been with the Council, and that there had been none as a result of the recent review of Environmental Regulatory Services, with savings accruing because some members of staff had chosen to leave the Council and through natural wastage. The Managing Director referred to the regular staff surveys conducted by the Council and reported that, in the most recent such survey, satisfaction rates amongst staff in the Environmental Regulatory Service had increased by almost 20% on the previous year.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group stated that he supported Ubico Ltd., and that he considered that Company to be an asset to the Council. He reminded the Council that Cheltenham Borough Council had decided not to join the Partnership and he contended that there was an available alternative thereto. He expressed his support for the making of savings but cautioned against making such savings too quickly and he concluded by suggesting that the current proposal was a step too far at this moment in time.

In response to various questions from a Member, it was reported that the project costs would be considered by the Joint Committee at its Meeting which was scheduled to be held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016; following the District Council elections in May 2016, Cheltenham Borough Council had opted for direct control of its services rather than indirect control through the proposed Companies; the proposed Support Companies would include services such as ICT and GO Shared Service, while the Co-Ordinating Company would include advisory services such as Democratic Services; the proposal to establish three such Companies was due to the availability of external markets for such services, with the support service market being highly competitive, virtually no external market for co-ordinating services, and a potential market for regulatory services; new partners could join the Partnership, subject to the agreement of the existing shareholders; and markets such as house building, self-build and solar energy could be considered for future commercial operations following a trading company structure.

Another Member contended that the Council had been presumptuous and had pre-empted the way forward by requiring some staff to re-apply for their posts and, further, that staff were being treated as a commodity despite being critical to service delivery. The Member sought assurance that the Council would be able to step back from the Partnership if, in future, it was felt that there was a better way of delivering services. In response, the Managing Director amplified various aspects relating to the review of Environmental Regulatory Services (which were part of the Joint Committee changes and not the company), and he stated that it was unlikely that other service areas would go through the same process until at least 2018. He explained that the Council would contract the various Companies to provide services over specific periods, and that individual Councils would have to bear the costs if they wished to leave the Partnership.

A Member gave three examples of where the Council's Enforcement Service had recently provided an effective service, and commented that the Council managed the shared flood/drainage team, which was not a part of Ubico Ltd.

A Member expressed concern that the Council was moving away from being a community-based Council to being commercially-based one and suggested that this could be the beginning of the end of local government in Gloucestershire. The Member questioned why this proposal was necessary when one of the Leader's stated aims was the protection of front-line services. In response, the Leader of the Council explained that, as far as possible, front-line services were delivered at the

level that residents expected, but that such expectations changed over time. The Leader reminded the Meeting that the services would be provided indirectly by the Council. In response to further questions from the Member, the Leader explained that those members of staff who had assumed more responsibilities and a wider remit than previously could receive, for example, a 5% increase in salary; pension benefits for existing staff would not be reduced; and that there was no requirement for this report to be considered by the Council's Joint Consultative Committee as it related to the business case which was not a function of that Committee, although it received regular progress reports relating to the Partnership. The Managing Director added that any proposals to change reward packages would be subject to the usual consultation processes, including consultation with the Joint Consultative Committee.

A Member expressed thanks for the time the Council was spending in its consideration of this item, and stated that it represented a good example of co-operation in local government. The Member expressed the view that Ubico Ltd. had proved itself, and he reminded the Council of the financial contribution made by the Government in respect of this current proposal. The Member contended that future employees should remain within the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and suggested that consideration be given to at least offering future employees the option of joining either the local government or a stakeholder scheme. In response, the Managing Director expressed the view that the LGPS was not a cornerstone in the Council's desire to move forward, and he commented that the Council needed to address the issue of rising pension costs. The Leader of the Council stated that, as a Member of Gloucestershire County Council's Pension Board, he recognised that the current LGPS was not affordable due to the levels of contributions made against benefits drawn. The Leader contended that the failure by successive Governments to address the issue was due to aggravation from Trade Unions, and he considered capping to be the only way to make the scheme affordable, and that people's benefits should be in accordance with the levels of contributions made.

In that context, another Member pointed out that the LGPS had been modified and was still not viable in the long-term, and that it was becoming less affordable. The Member commented that few companies now offered their staff final salary pension schemes. The Member stated that his initial opposition to joint working had been proved wrong and he now believed it was the only way forward for the provision of services. The Member suggested that his colleagues should concentrate on outcomes and cost, rather than on who provided services, and he commented that some services had cost up to 30% more when the Council had provided them directly. Savings could be re-invested in services and he concluded by suggesting that the vision was the provision of good services at a reasonable price. In response to a question by the Member, the Managing Director reported that the detailed figures quoted in the business case had been validated by CIPFA.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented that the report had not been fully scrutinised by that Committee.

A Proposition that the Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Partnerships be included in the proposed delegation (recommendation (b) referred) was duly Seconded.

In that connection, a Member expressed concern at the suggestion that approval of Service Level Agreements should be delegated to Officers and two Members of the Cabinet. The Member expressed the view that such decisions should be taken by the Council, and that the reference in recommendation (d) to 'Company' should be amended to read 'Companies'.

In response to the first issue, it was reported that the Service Level Agreements would be based on current service levels and, as such, did not require a decision by the Council. Any suggestion to change levels of service at some point in the future would, however, be reserved to the Council for decision. It was further reported that there was no requirement for any delegated authority to be exercised, and that all four Partner Councils would be considering the same recommendations in order to expedite business in an efficient manner.

Notwithstanding that latter comment, an additional recommendation, that the Leader of the Council and/or the Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Partnerships report to the Council and/or the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as considered appropriate, was duly Proposed and Seconded.

**RESOLVED that, having received the 2020 Partnership Updated Business Case, and having noted the potential financial implications, the Council:-**

- (a) agrees to form local authority-owned Companies with 2020 Partner Councils, subject to the 2020 Joint Committee agreeing to the final proposals at its Meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016;**
- (b) authorises the Council's Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Partnerships, the Section 151 Officer, the Council's Solicitor and the Partnership Managing Director to agree the Articles of Association, the Companies' constitutional documents, Service Level Agreements and all other legal documents to enable the Companies' formation, and any subsequent decisions necessary to establish the company model;**
- (c) approves the required funding in a sum of £1.821m;**
- (d) appoints the Leader of the Council as the Shareholder Representative for the Companies;**
- (e) the Leader of the Council and/or the Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Partnerships report to the Council and/or the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as considered appropriate**

**Record of Voting - for 20, against 3, abstentions 5, absent 5, vacancy 1.**

#### **CL.17 MULTI-YEAR SETTLEMENTS AND EFFICENCY PLANS**

The Leader of the Council introduced this item.

The Council was requested to consider seeking the adoption of a Multi-Year Settlement for the financial years 2017/18 to 2019/20. The Leader explained that there was a need to recognise that the current system of notification of funding settlements was not satisfactory. He reminded the Meeting that the Council had lobbied for the introduction of Multi-Year Settlements which, it was considered, could reduce the risks to the Council and aid financial planning.

**RESOLVED that:**

- (a) the submission of a request for a Multi-Year Settlement to the Department for Communities and Local Government be approved;**

**(b) the Chief Finance Officer be authorised to prepare and submit a Four Year Efficiency Plan to the Department for Communities and Local Government using the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy as the basis for that submission.**

**Record of Voting - for 25, against 0, abstentions 1, absent 6, vacancy 1.**

CL.18 DRAFT HOUSING PLAN 2016-2020

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities introduced this item.

The Council considered a report detailing the draft Housing Plan 2016-2020 and the Cabinet Member amplified various aspects thereon. A Proposition, that the recommendations be approved, was duly Seconded.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group applauded the work carried out in respect of the preparation of the draft Plan; but stated that, nevertheless, his Group could not support the Plan because they did not consider it tackled the key issues of unacceptably high house prices and private rents, and a lack of social rented properties in the District. The Liberal Democrat Group Leader referred to the average house prices and private rents, and reiterated the view that the draft Plan did not address those issues. He contended that the Council should build social rented accommodation and he commented that the Government's obsession with home ownership was not helpful. He expressed the view that the draft Housing Plan was a 'tick-box' exercise as it did not address the needs of the 1,500 people in the Cotswolds who were waiting for social housing, the issue of high private sector rents or the need for affordable housing. He concluded by stating that a radical document was needed detailing how the situation could be changed and how the Council could deliver social housing.

Another Member commented that anyone could register to be on the Housing Waiting List, including people who did not currently live in the District but might wish to do so. The Member suggested that the Council should look at the options for addressing 'real' demand for social housing in the District.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group contended that many people in the Cotswolds were struggling with the cost of living, and that many who were in the private rented sector would welcome more social housing, and he suggested that the Council should drill down to the realities of the situation.

In response, the Leader of the Council explained that the Council could not influence the high cost of housing in the Cotswolds. He reminded the Council that the emerging Local Plan would deliver 3,000 social housing units over a period of twenty years, including 1,000 in Cirencester, many of which would be sold at discounted prices.

The Cabinet Member drew attention to the key achievements detailed in the draft Housing Plan, and reminded the Council that it suggested a number of options for increasing the housing stock. The Cabinet Member stated that Cotswold District was a desirable place to live, which had an impact on land and house prices, and she reiterated the Leader's comment that the Council was not able to control that aspect. The Cabinet Member then reminded the Council of the number of housing units delivered in the various market towns and villages. She stated that this was an on-going process, and she reminded the Council that developers were currently required to provide up to 50% affordable housing.

Another Member commented that the number of immigrants seeking to live in the UK put more pressure on the demand for housing. The Member stated that he would welcome more social housing in the Cotswolds, and he suggested that the 2020 Partnership might provide an opportunity in that respect. The Member concluded by expressing the view that the Council was doing as much as it could in relation to housing issues.

A Member welcomed the expressions of care and concern from both 'sides' of the Council Chamber. The Member referred to the Council's effective use of Section 106 Agreements to provide housing, but suggested that such a vehicle might be challenged in the future, and he reminded the Council that contributions to affordable housing could not now be required in respect of developments comprising ten or less dwellings. The Member stated that more people were being forced to rent in the private sector, and he suggested that the Council could work with developers and/or borrow money to build its own houses. The Member contended that it was difficult for people to be included on the Housing Waiting List. He stated that, in September 2016, 1,469 households were registered in the District and that, annually, 317 households were not able to afford open market housing. The Member concluded by expressing the hope that the Council would be more successful in addressing these issues over the next four years.

A Member echoed the comments of the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group that the Council should build its own affordable and social rented housing. The Member contended that tenants on benefits were subsidising private landlords, and that 'local' people paid a premium to live in the District. The Member questioned what provision the Council had made for social rented housing. In response, the Cabinet Member explained that a percentage of social housing was negotiated before planning applications for housing developments were negotiated.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group stated that the current issues were similar to those of five years ago and he questioned what had actually changed. He also commented that the Council should seek to ensure that as many social rented units as possible should be provided in the proposed strategic development at Chesterton. In response, the Cabinet Member stated that such issues would be addressed at the appropriate time, and that more developments were providing up to 50% affordable housing than had done so five years ago. The Cabinet Member reminded the Meeting that the Council enabled affordable housing. The high demand for such housing was appreciated but the Cabinet Member pointed out that the Council was not able to control the submission of planning applications. She considered that the Council was doing a good job in addressing the problems it faced in relation to housing.

Another Member considered that the draft Housing Plan constituted a robust housing policy. The Member commented that the demand for housing in the Cotswolds had not been satisfied over the past ten years, but he considered that the situation had changed and that a high number of affordable housing units would come forward over the next few years as new developments were completed. The Member reminded the Council that the 800 new houses already approved in Tetbury would deliver 200 affordable housing units, and he concluded by expressing the view that the situation would be improved over the life of this Housing Plan.

In response to a question from a Member, the Cabinet Member reported that the Council was working closely with Housing Associations to address the lack of smaller units for those seeking to downsize. The Cabinet Member considered that the

working relationship between the Council and the Housing Associations had improved, and she expressed the hope that it would become easier for people to downsize in the future. The Strategic Housing Manager commented that housing association tenants who under-occupied their homes did receive priority banding on the housing register; and those giving up family-sized accommodation for one-bed homes received higher priority than those seeking two-bed accommodation because of the high need for that size of accommodation.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group contended that the Council was not doing enough to secure age-appropriate housing for the District, and suggested that it should seek to help people wishing to downsize. He concluded by expressing his view that the administration did not have the drive or will to address that issue.

**RESOLVED that:**

**(a) the draft Housing Plan 2016-2020 be approved as presented, to include the target delivery of a minimum of 150 affordable homes per annum;**

**(b) the appropriate Strategic Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, be authorised to approve any subsequent changes to the Housing Plan as may be necessary to reflect amendments to Government policy and/or legislation.**

**Record of Voting - for 19, against 8, abstentions 1, absent 5, vacancy 1.**

**CL.19 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2015/16 INCLUDING PERFORMANCE AGAINST PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS**

The Leader of the Council introduced this item.

The Council was requested to consider and approve the Annual Treasury Management Review 2015/16, and the associated updated Prudential Indicators. The Leader of the Council amplified aspects of the circulated report, including in relation to the average balance on internally-managed funds, and he commented that the recent cut in the bank rate would be addressed in the forthcoming Medium Term Financial Strategy.

In response to a question from a Member, it was reported that 'Charities Churches and Local Authorities' was a fund which invested in commercial properties.

**RESOLVED that the annual Treasury Management Review 2015/16, and the associated updated Prudential Indicators, be approved.**

**Record of Voting - for 28, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 5, vacancy 1.**

**CL.20 APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY ALDERMAN**

The Leader of the Council introduced this item.

The Council was requested to consider the posthumous appointment of former Councillor BS Dare as Honorary Alderman. It was reported that, at the time of his death in July 2016, former Councillor Dare had accrued well in excess of the fifteen points required for automatic conferment of the title.



The Leader reiterated his comments made earlier in the Meeting in respect of former Councillor Dare's exemplary record of public service. The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group commented that former Councillor Dare was held in high regard by residents in Stow-on-the-Wold.

**RESOLVED that:**

**(a) former Councillor BS Dare be proposed for the title of Honorary Alderman;**

**(b) a Special Meeting of the Council be held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2016, at the conclusion of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council scheduled to be held on that date, to bestow the title on former Councillor Dare.**

**Record of Voting - for 28, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 5, vacancy 1.**

**CL.21 GLITNIR UPDATE/CLOSURE**

The Leader of the Council introduced this item.

It was noted that the Council's investment in the former Icelandic Bank, Glitnir, had been repatriated.

**CL.22 ANY OTHER ISSUES ARISING FROM THE CABINET**

There were no other issues arising from the Cabinet.

**CL.23 ISSUES/REPORTS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND/OR AUDIT**

There were no issues/reports arising from Overview and Scrutiny and/or Audit, apart from the Glitnir Update/Closure Statement.

**CL.24 NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12, the following Motions had been received:-

- (i) Motion No. 1/2016 - Hate Crime - Proposed by Councillor Jenny Forde and Seconded by Councillor NP Robbins

'This Council is concerned by the reported rise in hate crime across the country following the EU Referendum.

The Council therefore re-affirms its commitment to an inclusive, tolerant and diverse county. We welcome the many commitments made to our vibrant, multicultural community by people regardless of their background. We will continue to work to tackle hate crime and discrimination in all its forms.

This Council also calls on the Government to guarantee to all EU nationals living in Gloucestershire that they have the right to remain in the UK indefinitely, regardless of the outcome of the EU Referendum and any subsequent Brexit negotiations.'

The Chairman of the Council stated that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12, he intended to allow the Motion to be debated at the Council Meeting, and he

invited Councillors Forde and Robbins to formally Propose, Second and speak to their Motion.

In Proposing the Motion, Councillor Forde suggested that it be amended by deletion of the word 'Gloucestershire' in the second line of the third paragraph, and its substitution by the words 'the Cotswolds'. Councillor Forde considered that hate crime could be prevalent in rural areas given the lack of exposure of such areas to diversity, stated that this was a 'positive' Motion, and concluded by urging the Council to embrace it.

In Seconding the Motion, Councillor Robbins commented on the uncertainty and anxiety felt by some EU nationals, some of whom worked in the hospitality and agricultural industries, as well as the health service and science research bodies where, Councillor Robbins considered, their skills remained vital.

The matter was then opened for debate by the Council, and there was general support for the principle of the Motion.

The Leader of the Council stated that the first two paragraphs were acceptable, but he suggested that the third paragraph should be amended, for the reasons outlined at a recent Meeting of Gloucestershire County Council, as follows:-

'The Council also calls on the Government to act quickly to clarify the right to remain for EU citizens living in the Cotswolds.'

Councillors Forde and Robbins confirmed that they accepted the amendment, as suggested.

A Member thanked the Leader for what he considered to be a robust response from the Leader of the Council to the issue of hate crime in the Cotswolds.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group contended that this was an important statement for the Council. He referred to the number of racist incidents which had been reported since the Referendum, and expressed the view that they represented a stain on the national identity. The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group stated that the country needed for skilled workers from the EU, and he concluded by expressing the view that there was a need to retain the single market and to continue to allow free movement.

**RESOLVED that the Motion, as amended, be supported.**

**Record of Voting - for 28, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 5, vacancy 1.**

- (ii) Motion No. 2/2016 - Cirencester Hospital - Proposed by Councillor JA Harris and Seconded by Councillor NP Robbins

'Council notes Gloucestershire Care Services' (GCS) recent decision to close Cirencester Hospital's overnight minor injuries unit.

Council further notes the strong strength of public feeling against the decision, including 2,500 signatures on a petition opposing the move.

Council calls on Gloucestershire Care Services to reverse their decision and work to retain the overnight service.

Council instructs the Leader of the Council to write to the Chief Executive of GCS outlining the Council's position.'

The Chairman of the Council stated that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12, he intended to allow the Motion to be debated at the Council Meeting, and he invited Councillors Harris and Robbins to formally Propose, Second and speak to their Motion.

In Proposing the Motion, Councillor Harris stated that the minor injuries units (MIUs) at Cirencester and Stroud would be closed at night. His Website petition had received 2,500 signatures, and a petition organised by the Labour Party in Stroud had received 5,000 signatures. The issue had also been debated by Gloucestershire County Council. Councillor Harris amplified aspects of the three main issues - the level of demand, impact on local residents, and the challenges faced in the light of future growth in Cirencester. He contended that the most adverse impact would be felt by poor and/or disabled people. He reminded the Council that the options available to anyone taken ill were to dial 999 or 111, or present at the MIU. However, the MIU in Cirencester would now be closed from 11.00 p.m. each night so, for example, someone living in Ampney Crucis would have a choice of either travelling to Swindon or Cheltenham which, Councillor Harris considered, would be an issue for non-drivers and that to travel by taxi would be costly. Councillor Harris contended that the figures produced by GCS were inaccurate, referred to the need to invest in the NHS, particularly in view of the future expansion of Cirencester and surrounding settlements, and concluded by expressing the view that the erosion of the NHS was putting lives at risk.

In Seconding the Motion, Councillor Robbins stated that the Council had received assurances in 2015 from GCS that the reduction in the presence of doctors at the MIU at night, and their replacement by appropriately-qualified nurses, would realise savings which would help to increase the range of services that could be offered at Cirencester Hospital. Councillor Robbins contended that closing the MIU at night felt like a betrayal and was of the opinion that, from the outset, the intention was to end the service. He suggested that it would not matter so much if there was confidence that the South-West Ambulance Service response times had improved and there were better public transport services in the rural districts. However, Councillor Robbins stated that, as neither was the case, the Cotswolds had to rely on volunteers operating out of redundant telephone boxes to deal with life-threatening conditions, and he concluded by stating that the situation was hardly an advertisement for the good life.

The matter was then opened for debate by the Council, and there was general support for the Motion.

While expressing support in principle for the Motion, a Member questioned if it was targeting the correct organisation. The Member stated that the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (GCCG) would take the final decision, rather than GCS, and he suggested that the Council should lobby for the correct response for emergency care across the County.

The Leader of the Council expressed support for the Motion, subject to the third paragraph being amended to refer to 'the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group' rather than 'Gloucestershire Care Services'.

Councillor Robbins was invited to address the Council again and, in accepting the amendment as suggested, he reminded the Council that estate agents included

ambulance response times and bus services in their advertising literature, and that the Council had previously supported the installation of defibrillators in some villages. He concluded by contending that the public had not been told that services were deteriorating.

Councillor Harris was invited to address the Council again, and he confirmed that he accepted the amendment, as suggested. He stated that a dialogue was needed with the GCCG, and that an on-demand NHS was needed but the issue of funding had to be addressed.

**RESOLVED that the Motion, as amended, be supported.**

**Record of Voting - for 27, against 0, abstentions 1, absent 5, vacancy 1.**

(iii) Motion No. 3/2016 - Spine Road - Proposed by Councillor T Cheung and Seconded by Councillor Juliet Layton

'Council notes the poor state of the Spine Road (B4696) that runs through the Cotswold Water Park.

Council is concerned that overgrown weeds, dirt and detritus on the carriageway, and the high speed limit, let the Water Park down.

Council resolves to set up a Task Group to work with local Parish Councils, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Highways Departments, and the Cotswold Water Park Trust to identify what the issues are, and report back to Council with recommendations about how the appearance and safety of the road can be improved.

Council further supports a speed limit cut along the length of the Spine Road to 40 mph, and requests that the Chief Executive writes to Gloucestershire Highways outlining this Council's position.'

The Chairman of the Council stated that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12, he intended to allow the Motion to be debated at the Council Meeting, and he invited Councillors Cheung and Layton to formally Propose, Second and speak to their Motion.

In Proposing the Motion, Councillor Cheung reminded the Council that the Water Park was the gateway to the Cotswolds when approached from the M4 motorway, making a huge economic contribution in terms of employment and tourism. The Spine Road was the main road through the Water Park, and Councillor Cheung pointed out that as such, it was used by pedestrians and cyclists, as well as by vehicles. Councillor Cheung contended that the Gloucestershire section of the road was in a poor state of maintenance, while the Wiltshire section was clean and tidy, and he concluded by urging the Council to take action to remedy the situation.

In Seconding the Motion, Councillor Layton stated that she had been trying to get the Spine Road cleaned since she had been first elected to the Council in May 2011. Councillor Layton reminded the Council that the Spine Road had originally been intended for use by aggregate lorries, and to access the Water Park lakes, which had been created through quarrying activities. Councillor Layton stated that it was classed as a 'minor' road, but was used as a 'major' route, and she quoted from e-mails relating to a reduction in the speed limit along the Spine Road, with the exception of the section to Broadway Lane, as the Police had not supported such a

reduction beyond Station Road. Councillor Layton commented that Gloucestershire County Council had not had sufficient funding to implement a larger scheme but could undertake further consultation in the future. Councillor Layton concluded by suggesting that it would be more costly to seek a future reduction in the speed limit along that section of the Spine Road between Station Road and Broadway Lane, and that its inclusion now could result in the erection of new road signs, and could achieve improvements to and cleaning of the verges and gutters.

The matter was then opened for debate by the Council, and there was general support for the Motion.

While expressing support in principle for the Motion, a Member suggested that the third paragraph be amended, as follows:-

‘Council notes that the Gloucestershire County Council-led Minerals Plan is now out for consultation and requests that both Wiltshire Council and Gloucestershire County Council work closely together to mitigate the impact of heavy aggregate traffic on local people and local roads.’

The Member contended that a consistent lower speed limit should be applied along the Spine Road, but commented that Gloucestershire County Highways were reliant on support for a reduction from the Police. The Member concluded by reminding the Meeting that this Council was responsible for cleaning the road and that Gloucestershire County was responsible for clearing and maintaining the verges.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group considered the Spine Road to be the weak link in the Water Park, and that there were significant concerns in relation to highway safety particularly in the vicinity of The Four Pillars Hotel. He considered the proposed amendment to be reasonable, but suggested there should be some liaison with Ubico Ltd. so that the road could be swept and the detritus removed.

The Cabinet Member for Environment expressed support in principle for the Motion. However, the Cabinet Member suggested that a strategic review of highway provision for aggregate extraction was required across the Water Park, including Kempsford and Marston Meysey, and that a strategic route was required for use by aggregate transport as well as by local residents.

Councillor Layton was invited to address the Council again. Councillor Layton expressed support for the suggestion by the Cabinet Member, but considered that it should be a separate issue in order to avoid any delay in improving this area of the Spine Road for discussions over a review of all the other roads within the Water Park. In that connection, the Cabinet Member suggested that the Motion should be amended to refer to the issue of the speed limit, and that a strategic view be taken in respect of cleansing. Another Member suggested a further amendment, to refer to ‘the Western Spine Road’. A third amendment was also suggested, that the reference to ‘the Chief Executive’ in the fourth paragraph be amended to refer to ‘the Head of Paid Service’ and that the proposed letter also be sent to the Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Police and Crime Commissioners.

Councillors Cheung and Layton confirmed that they accepted the amendments relating to the third paragraph, the Head of Paid Service and the Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Police and Crime Commissioners.

**RESOLVED that the Motion, as amended, be supported.**

**Record of Voting - for 28, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 5, vacancy 1.**

Note:

It was subsequently established that the affected road was, in fact, the Eastern Spine Road.

CL.25 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

**RESOLVED that the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to all contracts, conveyances and any other documents necessary for carrying into effect all resolutions passed by the Council.**

**Record of Voting - for 28, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 5, vacancy 1.**

CL.26 OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business that was urgent.

The Meeting commenced at 10.05 a.m., and closed at 1.35 p.m.

Chairman

(END)