

Cabinet
04/October2021



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held of Cabinet held on Monday, 4 October 2021.

Councillors present:

Tony Dale
Andrew Doherty

Mike Every
Jenny Forde

Juliet Layton
Lisa Spivey

Officers present:

Angela Claridge, Interim Monitoring Officer
Caleb Harris, Democratic Services Officer
Claire Locke, Group Manager, Commissioning
Ben Patel-Sadler, Senior Democratic Services
Officer
Jenny Poole, Deputy Chief Executive
Robert Weaver, Chief Executive

Observers:

Councillor Stephen Andrews

31 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Joe Harris and Rachel Coxcoon.

32 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

There were no declarations of interest from Officers.

33 Minutes

RESOLVED that, subject to the following amendments, the minutes of the meeting of the 6 September 2021 be approved as a correct record:

- Councillors Nikki Ind and Patrick Coleman had attended the previous meeting as observers.

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

34 Chair's Announcements (if any)

The Chair informed Cabinet that there had been a change to the leadership of the Opposition.

Councillor Tony Berry was the new leader of the Opposition.

The Deputy Leader of the Council welcomed Councillor Tony Berry to his new position.

35 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

36 Member Questions

There were no Member questions.

37 Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals 2022-23

The Deputy Leader of the Council introduced the report which Cabinet noted addressed the position on Government funding and the subsequent need to increase Council revenue.

Cabinet noted the anticipated changes to business rates.

Scenario one anticipated that Government funding would equate to £6.4 million in 2022-23 which represented a reduction to the amount provided for the previous financial year.

Cabinet noted that it had been difficult to plan this budget due to the uncertainties around what the specific levels of Government funding would be.

It was further noted by Cabinet that the Council had achieved the previously unidentified savings targets and had also ensured that investment was made to fund the Council's waste service.

Cabinet noted that a consultation on the budget would take place with residents. The consultation would be delivered using lessons learned from previous consultations. The aim was to engage with as many residents and businesses as possible. This would be achieved via the usage of several communication mediums. The consultation would run for six weeks, closing on 17 November.

Cabinet noted that the views of residents and businesses would help to shape the proposed budget. The Cabinet would shape the final version of the proposed budget in February 2022 before it was then formally considered by the Council.

It was further noted by Cabinet that one of the key aspects of this work would be seeking the views of residents around a potential change to the way in which car parking charges were delivered in the district.

Challenges facing the Council included a potential shortfall in car parking income. The Council was now having to meet the full costs of any revenue losses in this area after Government support had ceased.

Cabinet

04/October2021

Cabinet noted that this budget sought to deliver further savings in the region of £800k. Delivery of this budget would achieve a surplus of £180k (as per scenario 1).

Cabinet noted that further funding pressures were around the costs of retaining drivers, flooding, ICT and work in active Gloucestershire.

Cabinet noted that the Council would be seeking to recruit a Director of Governance which would replace the current part-time Monitoring Officer role. This appointment would compliment the current senior staff team.

Cabinet noted that funding would be made available to support climate action in local communities.

Cabinet noted that there would be a renewed focus on investing in order to generate revenue.

Cabinet noted the risks around investing in order to generate revenue, particularly as it was sometimes common for such exercises to take some time to realise revenue generation.

Cabinet further noted the risks associated with the planning of the budget including the unknown future impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and others outlined in the report.

Cabinet noted that businesses had been receptive to the Council's strategy of providing employment opportunities to young people via technologically advanced businesses (including newly formed businesses). This was aligned with the green economic growth strategy.

Cabinet further noted the importance of acknowledging the impact of current and potential inflation rates on the budget.

Cabinet acknowledged the changes to the current jobs market in relation to salary changes to certain professions/ positions and how this may impact on the Council going forwards.

The Cabinet noted that the Council could potentially undertake a cost recovery exercise in terms of fees and charges (this was dependent on the future rate of inflation).

In relation to investments made by the Council during a period of attempting to reduce costs, Cabinet noted it was essential to increase revenues so that investments in new programmes/ schemes could take place. This was also dependent on levels of future grant funding.

Cabinet noted that if a three-year funding settlement figure was provided by the Government, it would be possible to determine where investment could be made.

Cabinet noted that an immediate decline in business rates collected by the Council was unlikely due to new businesses locating to the area and the nature of businesses currently located in the district.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

(a) Approved the draft 2022/23 budget for consultation.

(b) Approved the transfer of the balances on the earmarked reserves at Annex B to the Council Priorities Fund.

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

Cabinet
04/October2021

38 Issue(s) Arising From Overview and Scrutiny and/or Audit

Cabinet noted the urgent decision taken in August 2021.

39 Property Acquisition - Cirencester

At this point of the meeting the Chair requested that members of the public now left before Cabinet formally considered agenda item 9 which was in relation to a property acquisition in Cirencester. The item was classed as exempt under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972'.

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

The Meeting commenced at 6pm and closed at 07:30pm

Chair

(END)