



Minutes of a meeting held of Cabinet held on Monday, 6 December 2021.

Councillors present:

Tony Dale
Andrew Doherty
Mike Evemy

Jenny Forde
Joe Harris
Juliet Layton

Lisa Spivey

Officers present:

Jan Britton, Managing Director, Publica
Matthew Britton, Principal Planning Policy Officer
Sarah Dalby, Electoral Services Manager
Mandy Fathers, Business Manager (Operational Services)
Caleb Harris, Strategic Support Officer
Paul James, Economic Development Lead
Jasper Lamoon, Senior Infrastructure Officer
Claire Locke, Group Manager – Commissioning
Ben Patel-Sadler, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Jenny Poole, Deputy Chief Executive
Rob Weaver, Chief Executive

53 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Rachel Coxcoon.

54 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

There were no declarations of interest from Officers.

55 Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet of 1 November 2021 be approved as a correct record.

Record of Voting – for: 7, against: 0, abstention: 0, absent: 1.

56 Chair's Announcements (if any)

There were no announcements from the Chair.

57 Public Questions

There was one public question in relation to agenda item 9 'Parish and Town Council Election Costs', specifically expressing a view that Town and Parish Councils had not been provided with an adequate opportunity to discuss the proposals outlined in the report and discuss these with residents.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agreed to defer taking a decision on agenda item 9 in recognition of the points raised by the public speaker and other Town and Parish Councils. The agenda item would be formally considered at the 10 January 2022 Cabinet meeting. This would enable dialogue to take place between the Council and Town and Parish Councils.

58 Member Questions

A Member question in relation to Councillor attendance figures had been received by Councillor Patrick Coleman. A written response to the question had been provided in advance of the meeting.

Councillor Coleman asked a supplementary question around a member of the Council having not attended a meeting for a period of six months.

Cabinet noted that a decision needed to be taken quickly and correctly in terms of a decision around whether the Councillor should be disqualified from the Council based on them possibly not having attended a qualifying meeting as described under Section 85(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 for a period of six months. This decision would be taken independently by Officers and following the provision of appropriate legal advice.

59 Financial, Council Priority and Service Performance Report - 2021-22 Quarter Two

The Chief Executive introduced the report, covering his roles and responsibilities associated with the performance of the Council and what actions were currently being undertaken to mitigate areas where improvements in performance were required.

The Chief Executive summarised the key performance elements of the report.

The Deputy Chief Executive summarised the key financial aspects of the report.

Cabinet noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered this report at their previous meeting on 30 November. Points of clarification had been sought around performance monitoring and Officers would be undertaking the necessary revisions to address the comments made by Members.

In relation to planning, Cabinet noted that the validation process was now taking place in a more rapid and professional manner. Additional resources would make a positive difference to the Planning process but Cabinet recognised that this would take some time and that further work was required in this area.

In relation to the staff pay award, Cabinet noted that negotiations were continuing nationally. Additional provision to cover the potential staff pay award had been included in the budget.

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Cabinet further noted that the provision of additional budget in this area would ensure that the Council could cover the agreed cost of living pay increases for staff (as and when it was agreed nationally).

Cabinet noted that the provision of enabling customers to self-serve in relation to the revenues and benefits system would relieve some of the pressure currently being experienced by staff working in this area. When the open portal was officially launched (likely to be in early 2022), it would enable residents to self-service 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. Customers would be able to access their Council Tax accounts, benefits and business rates accounts. There would also be a move towards e-billing customers from March 2022.

Cabinet acknowledged the progression of staff from within customer services into other roles within the Council and Publica. This ensured that talented staff were retained and could further develop their professional careers within the business. The recruitment process for future staff would be analysed so that it could become more systematic rather than reactive.

Cabinet acknowledged the hard work undertaken by Officers during the Covid-19 pandemic and noted the progression made in many areas despite the challenging situation.

The Cabinet noted the additional work being undertaken by the planning department in respect of the increase in applications and the associated increase in revenue.

RESOLVED that Cabinet reviewed the overall progress on the Council priorities, service delivery and financial performance for 2021-22 Q2.

60 Review of Grant Funding & Service Level Agreements for Existing Grant Maintained Visitor Information Centres

Councillor Tony Dale introduced the report which Cabinet noted had been consultative in its approach.

Cabinet noted that the report sought to help inform how visitor information centres would physically serve communities going forwards both throughout and post the Covid-19 pandemic.

Cabinet acknowledged the importance of ensuring that a full picture of data was available so that longer-term decisions could be taken around the physical provision of visitor centres across the district. A view was expressed that an 18-month extension to the existing arrangements given the current Covid-19 pandemic was a responsible and sensible approach before a more strategic decision could be taken.

Councillor Tony Dale proposed that Cabinet accepted the recommendations as outlined in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Mike Evemy.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1) Approved to continue to provide financial grants at current levels to the four existing grant maintained Visitor Information Centres for an 18 month period. Total financial commitment of £81,000 (1/4/22 – 30/9/23).
- 2) Agreed to use the 18 month period as an opportunity to baseline and work with the current Centres to trial a change to a criteria-based commissioned grant

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system with key objectives relevant to the town/village & helping towards the Council & Cotswolds Tourism objectives.

- 3) Agreed to have a longer term aim to shift Visitor Information Centre provision to being proactive, digitally enabled and working to improve the visitor economy of the local town/village and surrounding area.

Record of Voting – for: 7, against: 0, abstention: 0, absent 1.

61 Parish and Town Council Election Costs

Councillor Mike Every introduced the report and informed Cabinet that as outlined earlier in the meeting, this item would be deferred to the 10 January 2022 Cabinet meeting so that additional consultation with Town and Parish Councils could take place.

Cabinet further noted that likely, indicative costs associated with these proposals would be shared with Town and Parish Councils.

Cabinet supported the deferral of this item to the 10 January 2022 meeting.

RESOLVED that further to the public question posed earlier during the meeting and the feedback received from Town and Parish Councils, this item be deferred to the 10 January 2022 Cabinet meeting so that a consultation with Town and Parish Councils could take place between now and that meeting.

62 Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy - Update

The Principal Planning Policy Officer introduced the report with Cabinet noting the suite of documents which comprised the report.

Cabinet noted the importance of retaining commercial property, avoiding instances of them being converted to housing.

Cabinet expressed a view that the methods of reporting SIL funding and how Section 106 monies were spent was helpful.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer noted the grammatical changes which were required in relation to the report.

Cabinet noted that rigorous processes and procedures were in place to help determine exactly how local plan funding was allocated and spent. This helped to ensure that taxpayers received value for money and that a transparent process was in place.

Cabinet noted the importance of seeking nominations from each political group for the places on the local plan board. These positions did not need to be politically balanced (they did not need to reflect the political balance of the Council). The existing names of Members would be removed from the report.

Cabinet agreed that the updating of the local plan would assist the Council to deliver net-zero carbon solutions around housing and transport and to further enable sustainability across the District. It also offered local residents the opportunity to participate in the consultation associated with the updating of the plan.

Cabinet acknowledged the work of Officers and Councillor Rachel Coxcoo in updating the forward plan and all efforts behind delivering net-zero carbon across the District to help deliver against the climate emergency.

In relation to infrastructure updates, Cabinet noted that these could be undertaken as often as the Council wished to do so (on an evidence-based basis). This could be done on an annual basis if required.

Councillor Joe Harris proposed that the Cabinet agreed to the recommendations as outlined in the report.

This was seconded by Councillor Lisa Spivey.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- a) Approves Annexes (A) and (B) for a public consultation in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement;
- b) Grants delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Forward Planning to agree any minor amendments, including refining consultation questions, and typographical changes to Annexes (A) and (B) ahead of the public consultation;
- c) Approves CIL governance framework (Annex C);
- d) Notes the publication of the data in the CIL and SI06 reports of the Infrastructure Funding Statement (Annex D);
- e) Approve the publication of the Infrastructure List (contained in part one of the Infrastructure Funding Statement - Annex D);
- f) Approves updated Terms of References for the Local Plan and Cirencester Town Centre Masterplan Programme Boards (Annexes E and F); and
- g) Approves drawdown of £108,000 from the Council Priorities Fund reserve to initiate and / or remunerate programmes of work identified in paragraph 7.4. Commitment and resolves to use its various communications with businesses in the District to sign up to it and commit to reducing their carbon emissions.

Record of Voting – for: 7, against: 0, abstention: 0, absent: 1.

63 Green Economic Growth Strategy - Six Monthly Update

Councillor Tony Dale introduced the report, highlighting progress across the Green Economic Growth Strategy.

A number of visits had been undertaken by Officers and Councillor Tony Dale to liaise with organisations and businesses so that the progress being made in relation to the provision of further employment opportunities could be understood.

RESOLVED that Cabinet noted progress in delivering the Green Economic Growth Strategy.

64 Options for Parking Enforcement

Councillor Mike Every introduced the report and informed Cabinet that a decision was required in relation to how parking enforcement across the District was delivered.

It was recommended that the Council bring this service back in-house to deliver a strong customer focus and so additional flexibility could be afforded to users going forwards.

The Officers would be working directly for the Council when undertaking their duties.

Cabinet noted the importance of achieving value for money in this area. Bringing the service back in-house this would deliver a revenue saving although the Council would need to determine whether vehicles should be bought or leased in relation to transporting Officers across the District to perform their duties. Decisions would also take place in the future around whether or not the vehicles would be electric or hybrid.

Cabinet expressed a view that a pragmatic approach was required where Officers working in this area could provide visitors and the local community with a wider service in relation to local advice and guidance rather than just fulfilling an enforcement role.

Staff transferring across from APCOA Parking would commence employment with Publica.

Councillor Mike Every proposed that Cabinet agreed the recommendations as set out in the report.

This was seconded by Councillor Joe Harris.

RESOLVED that:

- a) Cabinet agrees to bring the Enforcement service back in-house.
- b) Cabinet delegates to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, the decision on whether to lease or buy the vehicles associated with this decision and approves the allocation of £45,000 from the Electric Vehicle Charging point budget within the Capital Programme to fund the purchase if necessary;

- c) Cabinet approves an allocation of £12,000 from the Council Priorities Fund to fund the start-up costs for the in-house service.

Record of Voting – for: 7, against: 0, abstention: 0, absent: 1.

65 The Future Use of Cotswold District Council's Offices at Trinity Road, Cirencester

Councillor Mike Every introduced the report with Cabinet noting that the Covid-19 pandemic had resulted in a new pattern of hybrid working, with less office space now required going forwards.

The report had summarised approximately 11 options for the future use of Trinity Road. Carbon feasibility work had also been undertaken in relation to the options presented in the report.

Cabinet noted the associated costs of works should the Council choose to retain a permanent base at Trinity Road. Some of these options would require a significant outlay which would not be returned for many years (in relation to the carbon and energy efficiency benefits the works would deliver).

Cabinet noted that the recommendations delivered the most cost-effective and practical way of ensuring the Council retained a presence in the building going forwards whilst utilising the remaining space, delivering carbon savings and achieving rental/lease income.

Cabinet noted that staff working in Trinity Road had been consulted on the proposals.

Cabinet recognised that this work represented an opportunity to improve the facilities for staff working from the site.

The impact of the proposed works was not yet known. Work on this would be undertaken if the report's recommendations were agreed by the Cabinet. The schedule of works and associated likely impacts would be mapped out and shared with staff and Members as soon as it was completed.

Cabinet noted the difficulties in retrofitting older buildings with carbon reducing technology.

Councillor Mike Every proposed that Cabinet agreed the recommendations as set out in the report.

This was seconded by Councillor Joe Harris.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agreed that:

- a) Based on the high level option appraisal, the Council reduces its occupation of the Offices and actively markets the estimated 30 - 40% spare space generated for

commercial tenants, providing both revenue savings and a revenue return for the Council.

b) A further report setting out capital costs to make changes to building configuration, access, security etc. would be presented to the Cabinet once the final allocation of Council services to specific space within the building is agreed.

c) Funding of up to £13,000 is allocated from the Council Priorities Fund earmarked reserve to fund a feasibility study to assess options for roof repairs or replacement, incorporating options for insulation and reduction in heat loss, and that a further report is brought back to the Cabinet.

d) To support implementation of option 2a, £308,000 of capital funding is included as part of the forthcoming budget setting process to fund works to install solar PV, lighting and smaller measures in the Office buildings which should achieve a reduction in Carbon emissions of approximately 59CO₂t per year (20%).

e) A 20% contingency sum is allocated for recommendation (d) £62,000 to allow for equipment or installation costs above estimates or unforeseen works with authority delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance to draw on that funding.

Record of Voting – for: 7, against: 0, abstention: 0, absent: 1.

66 **Cotswold Club**

Councillor Mike Every introduced the report, with Members noting the club had been vacant since September 2020. Cabinet noted the significant investment required if the building was to be brought back in to use.

Cabinet noted it was not feasible for the Council to convert the building for any community/business purpose due to the nature and costs of the works required and the requirements of community and business organisations in relation to what they would need the building to deliver for them.

Cabinet noted that the appropriate option in the case of this building was disposal with other options not being financially or practically viable.

Cabinet wished to place on record their thanks to the trustees of the Cotswold Club who had endeavoured to make it a successful venture.

Councillor Mike Every proposed that Cabinet agreed the recommendations as set out in the report.

This was seconded by Councillor Lisa Spivey.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agreed that:

a) The Cotswold Club be marketed for disposal in existing condition

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as set out within the report; and

b) Capital receipts from the sale be earmarked for investment in carbon zero affordable housing developments on other sites in the District.

c) The Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance have delegated authority to agree the final terms for the disposal of the property

Record of Voting – for: 7, against: 0, abstention: 0, absent: 1.

67 Schedule of Decisions taken by the Leader of the Council and/or Individual Cabinet Members

RESOLVED that Cabinet noted the Schedule of Decisions taken by the Leader of the Council and/or Individual Cabinet Members.

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

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

The Meeting commenced at 6pm and closed at 08:07pm

Chair

(END)