



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Tuesday, 14 November 2023

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COUNCIL

A meeting of the Council will be held at Council Chamber - Trinity Road on **Wednesday, 22 November 2023 at 2.00 pm.**

Rob Weaver
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Council

(Councillors Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Tony Dale, Mike Evemy, David Fowles, Joe Harris, Mark Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Roly Hughes, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Andrew Maclean, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Nigel Robbins, Gary Selwyn, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Chris Twells, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson and Len Wilkins)

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Cabinet, and Committee Meetings to be recorded, which includes filming as well as audio-recording. Photography is also permitted.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Committee Administrator know prior to the date of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies**

To receive any apologies for absence.

The quorum for Council is nine Members.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of interest from Members and Officers, relating to items to be considered at the meeting.

3. **Minutes** (Pages 7 - 42)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of Council held on Wednesday 20 September 2023.

4. **Announcements from the Chair, Leader of Chief Executive**

To receive any announcements from the Chair, the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive.

5. **Public Questions**

To deal with questions from the public within the open forum question and answer session of fifteen minutes in total. Questions from each member of the public should be no longer than one minute each and relate to issues under the Council's remit. At any one meeting no person may submit more than two questions and no more than two such questions may be asked on behalf of one organisation.

The Chair will ask whether any members of the public present at the meeting wish to ask a question and will decide on the order of questioners.

The response may take the form of:

- a) a direct oral answer;
- b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner.

6. **Member Questions**

A Member of the Council may ask the Chair, the Leader, a Cabinet Member or the Chair of any Committee a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Cotswold District. A maximum period of fifteen minutes shall be allowed at any such meeting for Member questions.

A Member may only ask a question if:

- a) the question has been delivered in writing or by electronic mail to the Chief Executive no later than 5.00 p.m. on the working day before the day of the meeting; or
- b) the question relates to an urgent matter, they have the consent of the Chair to whom the question is to be put and the content of the question is given to the

Chief Executive by 9.30 a.m. on the day of the meeting.

An answer may take the form of:

- a) a direct oral answer;
- b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner.

The following questions were submitted in advance of the agenda publication:

Question 1 from Councillor Jon Wareing to Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation

Could the Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation please advise the Council about the outcome of the exploratory work officers were asked to do looking at off-site pay by cash facilities for people who can't or don't wish to pay by card, by phone or by app when using our car parks?

Question 2 from Councillor Gina Blomefield to Councillor Mike Every, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

We have seen the huge amount of building work being carried out on the Trinity Road premises to repair roof defects, install solar panels, office conversions and other improvements. Is this work on time and on budget?

Question 3 from Councillor David Fowles to Councillor Joe Harris

Could you confirm the cost of producing the October 2023 "Cotswold News", including design, print and distribution via Royal Mail?

Please also confirm ALL officer time spent in preparing this publication?

Question 4 from Councillor Daryl Corps to Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation

On the 5th November this Council announced that it will be conducting a full study and review of its current car parks, working with local communities and parish councils to understand the current needs in each area. It also announced that it will look at what improvements car parks may need such as EV chargers.

So far, the Town and Parish Councils in my ward are reporting that the community reach out from CDC has been limited to one generic email! How does the portfolio holder intend to engage on such an important and fundamental part of Town and Parish life?

'Working together' is not done by a circular email or would anything more be considered too expensive given this councils current budgetary pressures?

Question 5 from Councillor Gina Blomefield to Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council

Cherwell District Council provides support for people needing to rent in the Private

Rental Sector (PRS) who have insufficient savings to provide a deposit, are refugees or involved with the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Primarily they provide a deposit bond in place of a cash deposit, as well as other help for both the potential tenant and landlord, including access to grant funding for property improvements of up to £15,000 (Landlord Home Improvement Grant).

Has CDC considered implementing a similar scheme to help those who are on the waiting list for social and affordable housing find suitable, secure accommodation more quickly?

Question 6 from Councillor Len Wilkins to Councillor Mike McKeown, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Sustainability

At the Audit Committee meeting on 18th October, Internal Audit reported a key finding that climate change operations are not sufficiently embedded in the organisation. In particular, it found that 75% of survey respondents did not have any Climate Change key performance indicators to track operational work being done; 88% of officers were not actively tracking their Carbon Footprint within their service area and only 50% of respondents said they had resources to actively work towards their Climate Change commitments. There are KPIs shown in the last two Overview and Scrutiny minutes, so when will KPI's appear for Climate Change so we can monitor progress being made in this vital area?

Question 7 from Councillor David Fowles to Councillor Paul Hodgkinson, Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture

Since Freedom Leisure won the contract to manage CDC's leisure and museum services, it is noticeable that the built fabric and level of service has deteriorated. As a season ticket member, I receive regular comments from other users. Could the portfolio holder confirm what plans are in place to monitor customer satisfaction levels?

Question 8 from Councillor Chris Twells to Councillor Mike Evemy, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

Members will have noted that the 2023/24 pay award for local government staff in England has now been agreed with the trade unions. Can the Deputy Leader now provide us with a figure for increased councillor allowances, as voted for by Liberal Democrats and Cllr Ind at Annual Council on 24 May?

Question 9 from Councillor Chris Twells to Councillor Mike Evemy, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

What will be the total cost to council taxpayers for the by-election in the Lechlade, Kempsford and Fairford South Ward scheduled for Thursday 14 December?

7. Amendments to the Constitution (Pages 43 - 62)

Purpose

To consider proposals from the Constitution Working Group for amendments to the Constitution to:

1. Update the Council Budget Protocol
2. Remove references to the now rescinded Recovery Investment Strategy from the constitution.

Recommendations

That Council resolves to:

1. Authorise the Deputy Chief Executive to update the Council Budget Protocol [Part G, Appendix D] to reflect the change in political composition following the District Council elections in May 2023.
2. Authorise the Deputy Chief Executive to remove references to the now rescinded Recovery Investment Strategy from the Council's constitution.

8. **Programme of Meetings 2024/25 (Pages 63 - 76)**

Purpose

To set a programme of Council and Committee meetings for 2024/25.

Recommendations

1. Agree the programme of meetings from June 2024 to May 2025 as set out in Annexes A and B.
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer), in consultation with Group Leaders, to make changes to the programme of meetings in the event that there is any future decision of Council to change the committee structure or committee remits that impacts the programme of meetings.
3. Delegate authority to the Democratic Services Business Manager to set the meeting dates for the Performance and Appointments Committee.
4. Delegate Authority to the Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer) to set dates for member training and briefing sessions, any working groups established by the Council and any meetings of the Licensing Sub-Committee (Licensing Act 2003 Matters) and the Standards Hearings Sub-Committee (if required).
5. Agree that, subject to any alternative proposals Council considers and agrees, meeting start times will be rolled forwards from 2023/24.

9. **Publica Review Report (Pages 77 - 136)**

Purpose

To consider the Human Engine report and recommendations.

Recommendations

That Full Council resolves to:

1. Approve the recommendations set out in the Human Engine report (that the majority of services are returned to the Council as per the detail provided on page 12 of the Human Engine report).
2. Instruct the Chief Executive to oversee the creation of a detailed transition plan for subsequent agreement by Cabinet and Council.
3. Endorse the approach to the further due diligence outlined in the financial implications of the report including analysis of the detailed payroll data required, which will be essential to calculate the short and long-term costs associated with the recommendations set out in the Human Engine report.

10. **Notice of Motions**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12, the following Motions have been received.

Motion A: Council Finances

Proposed: Councillor Mike Every

Seconded: Councillor Tony Dale

This Council notes the declining health of local council finances across England and the financial failures of eight councils since 2018 as evidenced by the issue of Section 114 notices by their Chief Finance Officers, most notably Birmingham City Council, Europe's largest local authority, which declared effective bankruptcy on 5 September 2023.

This Council notes that following the issue of Section 114 notices, the Secretary of State has appointed commissioners to the affected councils whose priority is to make decisions to bring their budgets into balance rather than to maintain services.

This Council notes its financial position including the use of £1.3 million in reserves in 2022/23 to balance its budget and its projected use of a further £0.86 million to do so in 23/24 and its establishment of a Financial Resilience Reserve for this purpose.

This Council recognises that it cannot continue to use reserves to balance its revenue budget and therefore instructs the Deputy Leader and Deputy Chief Executive to prepare a budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy that puts funds back into the Financial Resilience Reserve in 2024/25 and 2025/26 by delivering operating surpluses in those years.

It further notes the delays in the Government's Fairer Funding Review which its advisers Pixel now expect to be implemented in 2026/27 and the potential reduction of £3 million in Government funding which that review could entail for Cotswold District Council.

The Council resolves to:

1. To write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities including the contents of this motion and asking him for: (i) multiple year settlements for local councils to give them a more sound base on which to plan their finances; (ii) an overall real terms funding increase for councils in 2024/25 and beyond to prevent further councils declaring effective bankruptcy and enabling them to arrest, if not reverse, the decline in their services; and (iii) a commitment that the implementation of the Fairer Funding Review will not see councils facing reductions in their Government funding.
2. Request that a copy of this letter be sent to the Member of Parliament for the Cotswolds and the Local Government Association.

11. **Next meeting**

The next scheduled meeting of Full Council will be Wednesday 24 January 2024 at 2pm.

(END)