



Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet held on Thursday, 5 December 2024

Members present:

Joe Harris - Leader

Mike Evely – Deputy
Leader

Paul Hodgkinson

Mike McKeown

Tristan Wilkinson

Officers present:

Robert Weaver, Chief Executive

David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and
Chief Finance Officer

Angela Claridge, Director of Governance
and Development (Monitoring Officer)

Claire Locke, Interim Executive Director

Andrew Brown, Democratic Services
Business Manager

Caleb Harris, Senior Democratic Services
Officer

Mandy Fathers, Business Manager for
Environmental, Welfare and Revenue
Service

Stuart Rawlinson, Business Manager
Resources, Data and Growth

Observers:

Councillor David Fowles and Nikki Ind

27 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Claire Bloomer and Juliet Layton.

28 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

29 Minutes

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting on 7 November 2024 were considered.

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There were no comments or amendments proposed to the minutes.

Minutes of the previous meeting on 7 November 2024 (Resolution)		
RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7 November 2024 be approved as a correct record.		
For	Mike Evely, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson and Mike McKeown	4
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	Tristan Wilkinson	1
Carried		

30 Leader's Announcements

The Leader made the following announcement:

- Councillor Tristan Wilkinson was welcomed as the new Cabinet Member for the Economy and Environment. It was highlighted how the reshuffle of the Cabinet would help the Council deliver the Council's five priorities.

31 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

32 Member Questions

There were no member questions.

33 Issue(s) Arising from Overview and Scrutiny and/or Audit and Governance

There no recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and no issues arising from the Audit and Governance Committee.

34 Low Income Families Tracker (LIFT)

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Joe Harris, on behalf of Councillor Claire Bloomer introduced the report.

- The Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) was an important tool in the Council's mission to support those in communities who were struggling the most as an integral part of the Council's corporate priorities.

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- The project would use data from various sources such as Council Tax Support, Universal Credit Claims, and housing benefit.
- By segmenting data into types of households and locations, the Council would be able to better target support.
- The LIFT system would help local residents affected by national benefit changes.
- Residents were also supported over time in the LIFT system to ensure support is adapted as necessary.

Councillor Paul Hodgkinson seconded the report and made the following points:

- LIFT would be a transformative tool for supporting residents in the Cost of Living Crisis.
- As one of the first councils to take up LIFT, the proactive approach to tackling these cost of living issues would provide savings on spending such as emergency accommodation measures.
- Individual Council wards could be targeted more effectively through LIFT and this would allow for better outcomes.

It was highlighted that the Warm and Well Programme would work alongside LIFT to help reduce carbon emissions and reduce energy costs for residents.

There were thanks were given to the many officers who have worked on delivery of the project.

It was highlighted that the first year licences would be provided through funding from the National Health Service.

Low Income Families Tracker (LIFT) (Resolution)		
RESOLVED: That Cabinet 1. NOTED the report; and 2. NOTED the external funding for the project and APPROVED to underwrite the cost of the LIFT Licences and any associated costs estimated at £33,000.		
For	Mike Evely, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Mike McKeown and Tristan Wilkinson	5
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

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The purpose of the report was to provide an update on progress on the Council's priorities and service performance

The Leader invited the Chief Executive Officer to introduce the report who made the following points on the delivery against the corporate priorities:

- The Council had entered into a contract with Connected Kerb to provide Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) in four of the Council's car parks in Tetbury, Cirencester, Stow-on-the-Wold, and Moreton-in-Marsh
- The Cotswold Home Solar Scheme was being promoted and had so far resulted in 17 homes installing panels, and 20 homes with orders placed.
- Crowdfund Cotswold had seen 5/6 projects exceeding targets, with the renewal of Spacehive contract having been completed.
- The Unsung Heroes awards continued to recognise people in the District.

The following areas were recognised as being above target:

- Customer Satisfaction via telephone and face-to-face
- Determination of planning applications across the different types
- Percentage of FOIs answered within 20 days
- Percentage of land charges returned within 10 days
- The number of Gym memberships and visits to the gym

The following areas were noted as being below target:

- Non-Domestic Rates Performance was down against the target, but the work to improve this was being monitored.
- The missed bins per 100,000 had seen disruption from the reorganisation and the staff sickness issues had been resolved. This measure was returning back to target and work with Ubico was being done on this.

It was highlighted that it was positive that the extensive renovation work on the leisure facilities had not impacted gym memberships.

Cabinet noted that the issues around non-domestic rates were being kept under review by the Cabinet Member for Finance. The pressures on businesses following the National Insurance rise would continue to put pressure on the service.

It was noted that the quarter two report for missed bins was covering the performance in arrears, and the quarter three report should see an improvement in performance across the key performance indicators.

There was a question around the extent of data around missed bins and how this was gathered to provide reassurance around cases of repeated misses. It was confirmed by the Business Manager for Resources, Data and Growth that this data was available and would be shown in the next reporting cycle.

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the reports contents.

36 Financial Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter Two

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation, Councillor Evemy, introduced the report.

- There was a £250,000 surplus projection but this was lower than the £500,000 surplus projected in the budget.
- The report didn't include any forecast for Planning Services spending as this was still being determined by officers.
- The pay award had been settled which was £400,000 lower than projected which would benefit the Council's finances and be set aside as part of the financial resilience reserve.
- Phase 1 of Publica Review was projected as a £446,000 a year enduring impact. The majority of this cost related to providing the Local Government Pension Scheme to employees who had transferred to the Council from Publica.
- The waste and recycling rezoning was projected to provide a saving of £375,000.
- Higher than expected interest rates had provided a £367,000 increase to the Council's treasury management income.
- Some adverse variations to income included building control, public conveniences and land charges.
- There was a focus on managing finances which included focusing on the use of consultants, savings and transformation items and fees and charges.
- The report included a revised capital programme which added in £208,000 for leisure centre decarbonisation works from the swimming pool support fund. However there had been an underspend on many of the capital programme projects.
- The policy statement on Local Government Financing had provided 3.2% increase in core spending power for councils.
- The increase to employer national insurance contributions would be compensated by the UK Government for direct employee costs but not for Publica and Ubico staff. This would need to be factored into the budget in February 2025.
- The Local Government Finance Settlement was due on 19 December 2024 alongside the UK Government White Paper on devolution.

Councillor Joe Harris as the seconder noted the following points:

- There were still many pressures on local government finance and one year settlements had caused many financial problems.
- Rural areas needed to be supported as well as urban areas especially for issues like deprivation.

There were no other comments on the report.

Financial Performance Report 2024/25 Q2 (Resolution)

RESOLVED: That Cabinet

1. NOTED the financial position set out in this report.
2. APPROVED the recommendation in paragraph 9.3: Continue to review in-year opportunities with Publica and Ubico to mitigate the forecast financial position.
3. APPROVED the recommendation in paragraph 9.5: Implement an Authority to Fill process with authorisation for any recruitment activity.
4. APPROVED the recommendation in paragraph 9.6: Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer to provide guidance to all service leads on criteria under which external agency support can be commissioned (subject to business case assessment).
5. APPROVED the recommendation in paragraph 9.7: accelerate development of refreshed Savings & Transformation plan to ensure adequate cost reductions are identified, scoped, and planned over the MTFS period.
6. APPROVED the recommendation in paragraph 9.8: review of fees and charges as part of the 2025/26 budget setting process from a cost recovery position.
7. APPROVED the recommendation in paragraph 9.9: Publica Review Phase 2 – the design-led principle Consideration of cost must ensure that the additional cost of bring services back to the Council are quantified with mitigating actions taken to reduce the potential impact on the MTFS.
8. APPROVED the revised Capital Programme to include £0.208m of expenditure in relation to Cirencester Leisure Centre decarbonisation work including the installation of solar PV and triple glazing funded through the Government’s Swimming Pool Support Fund.

For	Mike Evely, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Mike McKeown and Tristan Wilkinson	5
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0

Carried

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

The purpose of the item was to notify Cabinet of any decisions taken by the Leader of the Council and/or any individual Cabinet Members.

There had only been one decision taken and this was by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning in relation to dog fouling.

Cabinet NOTED the Schedule of Decisions.

38 Matters exempt from publication

The Leader proposed the following motion, and this was seconded by the Deputy Leader.

That the press and the public from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda, it will be necessary for Cabinet to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, with the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighing the public interest in disclosing the information.

To exclude the press and public from the meeting (Motion)		
For	Mike Every, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Mike McKeown and Tristan Wilkinson	5
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

39 Adoption of asset plan for Council owned properties in Cirencester and funding for feasibility study.

The purpose of the report was to consider the Asset Plan for Council owned buildings in Cirencester and agree funding to support the development of proposals for regeneration of sites, in line with this Asset Plan and the related Cirencester Masterplan.

Cabinet considered the report in private session.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Mike Every proposed and Councillor Joe Harris seconded.

RESOLVED That Cabinet:

- 1) AGREED to adopt the Asset Plan attached at Annex B.
- 2) AGREED that proposals should now be developed for the regeneration of the sites set out in this report.
- 3) AGREED to allocate funding of up to £70,000 from Reserves for the initial feasibility study for these sites.

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The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 7.00 pm

Chair

(END)