



Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet held on Thursday, 3 October 2024

Members present:

Joe Harris – Leader
Claire Bloomer
Paul Hodgkinson

Mike Evemy – Deputy Leader
Juliet Layton
Mike McKeown

Officers present:

Robert Weaver, Chief Executive
David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and
Chief Finance Officer
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and
Development (Monitoring Officer)
Caleb Harris, Senior Democratic Services
Officer

Mandy Fathers, Business Manager for
Environmental, Welfare and Revenue Service
Paul James, Economic Development Lead
Joseph Walker, Community Partnership
Officer
Kira Thompson, Election and Democratic
Services Support Assistant

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Lisa Spivey and Tony Dale.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from Members present.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting on 5 September 2024 were considered as part of the Cabinet pack.

There were no amendments to the minutes proposed.

The minutes were proposed by Councillor Joe Harris and seconded by Councillor Mike Evemy.

Minutes of the 5 September 2024 Cabinet meeting (Resolution)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet meeting held on 5 September 2024 be approved as a correct record.

For

Mike Evemy, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton and Mike
McKeown

5

Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	Claire Bloomer	1
Carried		

4 Leader's Announcements

There were no announcements from the Leader.

5 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

6 Member Questions

There were no member questions.

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

There were no recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and issues arising from the Audit and Governance Committee, as these Committees had not met since the last meeting of Cabinet.

8 Petition: Retain the Public Toilets in the High Street/Market Square, Stow-on-the-Wold

The purpose of the report was for Cabinet to consider a petition submitted under the Local Petition Scheme (Part F of the Constitution) which had been referred to Cabinet by Full Council.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Mike Evemy, introduced the item to Cabinet as the portfolio holder for public conveniences and made the following points:

- Full Council received the petition at its meeting on 25 September 2024 and resolved that the petition should be referred to Cabinet for consideration.
- The Deputy Leader proposed recommendation I which was to

‘Agree to the petition request to keep open the public conveniences in the High Street / Market Square, Stow-on-the-Wold and instead close the public conveniences in Maugersbury Road’

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s Public Conveniences Review Group had been asked to look at the facilities, given the financial pressures on the Council. The cost of running the facilities was around £170,000 which was set to increase.
- The proposals provided to Cabinet at its meeting in February 2024 would keep one facility open in areas where multiple facilities were provided. These towns included Stow, Cirencester and Tetbury.
- The view of the Review Group and officers was that the Market Square toilets might be taken on by Stow-on-the-Wold Town Council, and its Chair Ben Eddolls was thanked for his engagement on this matter. However, this option wasn’t deemed as financially viable for the Town Council.

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- The petition was presented to the Deputy Leader and the Deputy Chief Executive during a meeting with the Town Council where this alternative option was discussed.
- Consideration of the future of the Mangersbury Road toilet facilities had been given, and it was stated that the facilities would be opened for the Stow Fair in October and then their future would be evaluated after that.
- The public through the petition had shown their support for the toilets in the Market Square.

The Leader invited Councillor Ben Eddolls, Chair of Stow-on-the-Wold Town Council, to address the Cabinet regarding the petition:

- There was an understanding the Council needed to make savings and the community wished to work closely with the Council in the future.
- The decision to keep the toilets would support those tourists who come to visit the town centre.
- Stow-on-the-Wold Town Council wished to have a dialogue with the Council about the future of the Mangersbury Road toilets to see how they could be preserved or used in future.

Councillor Claire Bloomer seconded and noted how the petition showed residents engaging with the Council and how the Council was able to respond in a positive way towards it.

The Cabinet reaffirmed its desire to engage with communities regarding any changes to local facilities.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Mike Evely and seconded by Councillor Claire Bloomer.

Petition: Retain the Public Toilets in the High Street/Market Square, Stow-on-the-Wold (Resolution)		
RESOLVED: That Cabinet		
I. AGREED to the petition request to keep open the public conveniences in the High Street / Market Square, Stow-on-the-Wold and instead close the public conveniences in Mangersbury Road.		
For	Claire Bloomer, Mike Evely, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton and Mike McKeown	6
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

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The purpose of the report was to agree a refreshed version of the Council's Green Economic Growth Strategy for consultation and to note the adoption by Gloucestershire County Council of the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Joe Harris, introduced the report on behalf of Councillor Tony Dale and made the following points:

- The strategy was part of the Council's efforts to promote a sustainable economy and the creation of high-quality jobs through supporting businesses within the district.
- Councillor Dale and the Economic Development Lead officer were recognised for their work in developing the strategy.
- The vision for the Cotswolds was one of ensuring that it was a hub for investment as well as being an attractive place for tourists.
- The innovation village at the Royal Agricultural University and the sustainable aviation hub at Cotswold Airport were highlighted as some of the important projects for the district.
- The strategy first adopted in 2020 had helped to create 500 new jobs for residents, but it now required updating based on the changing economic landscape to continue to drive forward green economic growth.
- The proposed strategy was aligned to the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Strategy from Gloucestershire County Council which the Council had helped to shape.
- The new strategy document was more concise and was focussed on the needs of the local district in line with the UK Government's requirement to develop economic growth strategies.

Cabinet highlighted the resilience of the Cotswold economy against a difficult national economic picture.

It was highlighted that the rollout of fast broadband and improving mobile phone coverage was important for the Cotswolds.

It was noted that it was important that tradespersons and developing their skills were included as part of the strategy.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Joe Harris and seconded by Councillor Paul Hodgkinson.

Green Economic Growth Strategy Refresh (Resolution)

RESOLVED: That Cabinet

1. APPROVED the draft Green Economic Growth Strategy for a four-week period of consultation as set out in Section 4.
2. AGREED to a further report setting out the results of the consultation and any amendments to the strategy arising from it to enable Cabinet to consider the strategy for adoption.
3. NOTED the adoption of the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy by Gloucestershire County Council's Cabinet.

For	Claire Bloomer, Mike Every, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton and Mike McKeown	6
Against	None	0

Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

10 Public Health Funeral Policy

The purpose of the report was to consider and approve a new policy in respect of Public Health Funerals.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services, Councillor Juliet Layton, introduced the report and outlined the following points:

- It was essential that the Council provided support for those in difficult circumstances where there was no provision for their funeral, and there was no other relative who could do so.
- It was important that the policy is in place to provide clarity on the Council's responsibilities.
- The Council can will receive referrals from social services, nursing homes or the coroner and will organise an unattended crematorium service. It may organise a burial if that was specified through the deceased's wishes.
- The Council will look to cover the basic costs of the service and recover any costs where possible from assets.

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Evemy, seconded the recommendations and made the following points:

- This was a new policy and gives officers clear guidance representing best practice.
- The circumstances were difficult where there was no one available to help make the arrangements, and the Council provided this as the last option for the dignity of the body.
- Any circumstances like this in a healthcare setting were usually covered by the National Health Service.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Juliet Layton and seconded by Councillor Mike Evemy.

Public Health Funeral Policy (Resolution)		
RESOLVED: That Cabinet I. APPROVED the Public Health Funeral Policy		
For	Claire Bloomer, Mike Evemy, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton and Mike McKeown	6
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

11 Storage of Non-Motor Vehicles and Structures on the Public Highway Policy

The purpose of the report was to consider and approve a new policy in respect of the enforcement of Storage of Non-Motor Vehicles and Structures on the Public Highway.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services, Councillor Juliet Layton, introduced the recommendation to Cabinet and outlined the following points:

- This policy was for non-motorised vehicles like caravans.
- Any structures like this left abandoned on the side of the road were a nuisance and could attract vandalism.
- The policy would issue removal notices if the vehicles weren't removed within 28 days. After 10 days, if there was no proof of ownership brought forward, then the Council may destroy these vehicles.

The Cabinet Member noted that these were for reported abandoned non-motorised vehicles only and not those in use.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Juliet Layton and seconded by Councillor Joe Harris.

Storage of Non-Motor Vehicles and Structures on the Public Highway Policy (Resolution)		
RESOLVED: That Cabinet I. APPROVED the Policy set out in Annex A		
For	Claire Bloomer, Mike Evemy, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton and Mike McKeown	6
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

12 Long-Term Empty Property Strategy 2024 - 2029

The purpose of the report was to present an updated Long Term Empty Property Strategy to support the management of long-term empty properties within the Cotswold district.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Mike Evemy, introduced the item and outlined the following points:

- The strategy was an updated policy which followed on from the additional Council Tax levies for those properties empty for more than a year.
- The purpose of the policy was to ensure that properties were brought back into use as soon as possible.
- Section 8 of the policy identified the steps that would be taken to ensure properties would come back into use.
- The four key objectives in section 9 were presented as follows:
 - To gather relevant, accurate and current information about empty homes
 - Provide advice, assistance and guidance to landlords and property owner

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- To raise awareness of empty homes in the district and promote the strategy
- To reduce the number of empty homes and return empty homes back into use, through all available and appropriate means

A question was raised regarding collaboration with the social rented sector on the policy to bring houses back into use. The Business Manager - Environmental, Welfare and Revenue Service set out to Cabinet how the Council will engage with owners of homes in order to find out why its empty and provide advice on bringing these back into use. It was noted that many of the barriers to changing these empty properties related to cost.

Cabinet noted the figure of 864 homes in the district that were classed as being 'long term-empty'. A question was asked about how many of these were derelict and couldn't be sold on and what would be done. It was noted that the figure of 864 was from the end of the 2023/24 financial year, and the current figure for the end of Q2 was now 545. Some more analysis was needed regarding the premium. For derelict properties, it was noted that all of the Council service areas would be involved in dealing with these properties as these were not easy to deal with.

Cabinet noted that it would be useful to see the breakdown for how long properties had been empty for and the impact of the additional Council Tax levies

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

Long-Term Empty Property Strategy 2024 - 2029 (Resolution)		
RESOLVED: That Cabinet		
I. APPROVED the implementation of the Long -Term Empty Property Strategy for 2024 – 2025.		
For	Claire Bloomer, Mike Evely, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton and Mike McKeown	6
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

13 Assets of Community Value - Process Review

The purpose of the report WAS to evaluate the current procedures and practices involved in the determination of Assets of Community Value (ACV). This review aimed to assess the efficacy and transparency of the process by which assets were nominated, reviewed, and ultimately listed or rejected as ACVs. By identifying strengths and weaknesses in the current process, this review sought to provide actionable insights and recommendations to enhance decision-making, and ensure compliance with legal and policy frameworks, to better serve the interests of the community.

The Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Parking, Councillor Paul Hodgkinson, introduced the item on behalf of Councillor Lisa Spivey and made the following points:

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- The report set out a clear process for how Assets of Community Value were registered.
- Concerns had been raised from residents regarding the current process.
- Assets of Community Value were generally of social value in villages and towns. These tended to be places like pubs.
- The review highlighted several recommendations for improvement including areas such as increasing communication with Ward Members and implementing a caseload management system.

The Community Partnership Officer was invited to address Cabinet and made the following points:

- A caseload management system implementation was underway.
- Recruitment to a new post to manage these applications had been completed.

Cabinet asked a question regarding how these assets link to assets Neighbourhood Development Plans. The officer clarified that assets written into Neighbourhood Development Plans, or the Local Plan, would trigger planning restrictions. This would be different to those applied to Assets of Community Value which is largely sale restrictions. However, it could be a material consideration in planning.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Paul Hodgkinson and seconded by Councillor Joe Harris.

Assets of Community Value - Process Review (Resolution)		
RESOLVED: That Cabinet 1. AGREED the recommendations in the annexed review; 2. AGREED to the proposal to formally notify ward members on validation of Asset of Community Value nominations.		
For	Claire Bloomer, Mike Evely, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton and Mike McKeown	6
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

14 Menopause Policy

The purpose of the report was to seek members' approval to adopt the updated Menopause Policy & Procedure as shown in Appendix A.

The Cabinet Member for Cost of Living and Inclusion, Councillor Claire Bloomer, introduced the recommendation and made the following points:

- The policy applied to staff members who were the most important asset to the Council.
- It was highlighted that the menopause could affect women of all ages and was a significant factor when it comes to women leaving the workforce.

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- The policy was designed to support staff going through the menopause and provide facilities such as sanitary products and menopause champions who could give support.

The Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Parking seconded the recommendation and made the following points:

- Thanks were given to Councillor Bloomer for her work in highlighting this important issue and raising awareness.
- 900,000 leaving the workforce because of this issue was something that needed to be reduced.

It was noted that it was important that men and women were made aware of these symptoms.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Claire Bloomer and seconded by Councillor Paul Hodgkinson.

Menopause Policy (Resolution)		
For	Claire Bloomer, Mike Evely, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Juliet Layton and Mike McKeown	6
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

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

The purpose of the report was to note the decisions taken by the Leader and/or Individual Cabinet Members.

The Deputy Leader noted for the record a correction to the call-in date which should have read '11 October' and not '11 September'. The Senior Democratic Services Officer noted this for correction.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet NOTED the decisions taken.

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 7.00 pm

Chair

(END)