



Minutes of a meeting held remotely of Council held on Wednesday 24 February 2021

In accordance with relevant legislation, these minutes are a record of decisions taken. They are not intended to be a verbatim account of the meeting. A full recording of the meeting can be accessed at the facebook link at www.cotswold.gov.uk.

Councillors present:

Nigel Robbins - Chair

Dilys Neill - Vice-Chair

Stephen Andrews
Mark Annett
Julian Beale
Tony Berry
Gina Blomefield
Claire Bloomer
Ray Brassington
Patrick Coleman
Rachel Coxcoon
Tony Dale
Andrew Doherty

Mike Every
Jenny Forde
Joe Harris
Mark Harris
Stephen Hirst
Robin Hughes
Roly Hughes
Nikki Ind
Sue Jepson
Julia Judd
Richard Keeling

Juliet Layton
Andrew Maclean
Nick Maunder
Richard Morgan
Richard Norris
Gary Selwyn
Lisa Spivey
Ray Theodoulou
Steve Trotter
Clive Webster

Officers present:

Chief Executive
Chief Finance Officer
Monitoring Officer

Executive Director (Commissioning)
Democratic Services

CL.71 There were no apologies.

CL.72 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from Councillors or Officers.

CL.73 Minutes – 20 January 2021

RESOLVED that, subject to the following amendments, the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 20 January 2021 be approved as a correct record:

- (a) Addition of a 'point of order', raised by Councillor Berry, relating to a motion on Climate Change Action Awards, which had been proposed by Councillor Judd and seconded by Councillor Maclean and was not included on the Agenda of 20 January 2021. Councillor Berry was concerned that this had not been included on the Agenda.
- (b) The Monitoring Officer would work with Councillor Judd to formulate a suitable motion for debate at the next Council meeting in February 2021.
- (c) Member Questions – addition of 'Leader of the Council' on Councillor Joe Harris' response to questions.
- (d) The spelling of Councillor Blomefield's name to be corrected on page 13 of the document pack.
- (e) Addition of a 'point of order', from Councillor Andrews, on the Council Procedure Rules, paragraph 10.9 of the Constitution, whether a supplementary question, during public questions was allowed. He understood the Constitution stated that a supplementary to a public question was allowed.

Following this discussion, Councillor Every, commented that he did not think that when Members raise 'points of order' they should all be included in the minutes.

Record of Voting – for 30, against 0, abstentions 1, absent 0.

3 Members did not vote due to technical issues.

CL.74 Announcements from the Chair, Leader or Chief Executive

Announcements from the Leader

The Leader announced some changes to the Publica Board. Sally Walker had been appointed Chair of the Board and Chris Wood had been appointed Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee for the Board. The Leader expressed both would be good additions to the team.

The Leader welcomed Olivia Gross who had joined the team as Executive Assistant to CEO and Leader of the Council.

The Leader congratulated Deborah Smith, Development & Planning Enforcement Manager, who had served 25 years with the Council.

There were no-announcements from the Chair or Chief Executive

CL.75 Public Questions

A record of public questions and answers are available in the schedule attached to these minutes. Questions were asked by Mr. Rob Gibson to Councillor Lisa Spivey, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness and Mr. Fowles to Councillors Andrew Doherty and Joe Harris Leader of the Council.

CL.77. Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget 2021/22

Councillor Evemy, the Deputy Leader of Council and Cabinet Member for Finance introduced this item. He commented that it was an honour to propose the second annual budget, which continued the work the administration had begun to rebuild the Council's finance and invest in the Cotswolds.

It was a budget that recognised issues, such as the climate emergency, the housing affordability crisis and work to improve the vibrancy, strength and sustainability of the local economy and assist in the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, a revenue budget for 2021/22 was proposed, which was in surplus by £6,000.

There were big decisions taken last year, to raise revenue of £¾ m, on parking, garden waste charges and on Council Tax.

Further increases were proposed, in fees and charges and Council Tax, which would generate £ ½ m, to support services to residents.

Pressures on the budget amounted to nearly £1.2m, £400,000 for additional fleet hire for Ubico, £189,000 less in investment income due to the drop in interest rates and £170,000 less in planning income following the adoption of the Local Plan.

Covid-19 would continue to have an impact on the finances of the Council. Government grants, for 2021/22, had been set aside, £377,000 for additional expenditure and £356,000 to cover income shortfalls, to be used as needed to support the budgets.

Income which would be generated from the Recovery Investment Strategy, amounted to £363,000 in 2021/22.

£200,000 investment was proposed over 2 years in a new Civic Pride programme, to improve the public realm.

The administration were proposing increasing the Council Tax by £5 a year for Band D, to fund future plans. 52% of respondents to the consultation, agreed with this increase.

Through the Capital Strategy, a proposal to spend £18.3m in 2021/22 on general funds services, £15.2m of this figure for projects agreed under the Recovery Investment Strategy. Councillor Evely reiterated that expenditure would not be committed to any project unless a detailed business case was presented for approval to the Cabinet or for projects over £100,000 by Council.

£16.4m for a loan, which was proposed through the Capital Strategy, was to support, principally the provision of truly affordable homes in the district.

Councillor Evely explained that the budget would put the administration's values into practice and deliver the ambitions of tackling the climate emergency, deliver social rented housing, strengthen the local economy, and build financial resilience of the Council.

Councillor Selwyn seconded the proposed budget. He thanked Councillor Evely for his clear presentation. He reiterated that the consultation had taken place over various virtual platforms and strategic signs around Cirencester and that the administration genuinely wanted to hear from residents. More responses had been received this year, and the consultation was beneficial for the administration to be able to deliver service, through the published plans and work on rebuilding the Council, investing in vital services such as the waste collection service and investing in local people by providing affordable homes. He commended Councillor Evely for making difficult decisions to be able to continue to deliver services to the residents of the district.

The Chair of Council, Councillor Robbins, announced that he had been notified of proposed amendments to the budget.

Councillor Morgan, the Leader of the opposition, proposed the following amendments, Councillor Berry seconded the proposals.

1. The £50,000 allocated for battery powered cameras to help the fight against illegal fly-tipping be removed from the £200,000 civic pride budget and recorded as a stand alone item in the accounts
2. An extra £140,000 be allocated and reinvested in the Council's planning and enforcement departments, to help reduce the current backlog of applications and make the planning application process more in keeping with residents' expectations.

An amendment, relating to Kemble to Cirencester Rail link, was withdrawn.

Councillor Morgan spoke to the amendments. He explained that he would like to propose removing the £50,000 from the Civic Pride umbrella, in order to track and ensure the investment of this money for fly-tipping was used to track and stem the impact of fly-tipping.

On the second amendment relating to a proposal of £140,000 for the planning and enforcement department, he explained that the department was under a serious amount of stress, the response times and processing of applications were increasing, there was concern that this would get worse before it got better and the team needed help, reinvestment and extra funding.

Councillor Berry, in seconding the proposals, explained that fly-tipping was a key area which was regularly in the press and because of lockdown had probably got worse instead of better, which was why it was proposed in the first instance. He was delighted that it had been accepted, but it was not known exactly what the civic pride presentation was, which would be discussed at Cabinet shortly.

Planning was a key area, it was where the voters see the Council at best or worse. It was an area which needed extra resources and he understood that there was a review, but needed the extra money to be able to provide the service. Currently there was a push for applications 'not to go anywhere' and be decided by officers, because presenting applications to the committee created extra work for staff, but which he considered created a democratic deficit, and it was therefore important to sort this out.

The Chair took each amendment in turn. Each motion was debated and then voted upon. On being put to the vote the first amendment was LOST:

For: Councillors Andrews, Annett, Beale, Berry, Blomefield, Hirst, Robin Hughes, Jepson, Judd, Keeling, Morgan, Norris, Theodoulou, Trotter – Total: 14

Against: Councillors Bloomer, Brassington, Coleman, Coxcoon, Dale, Doherty, Evemy, Forde, Joe Harris, Mark Harris, Roly Hughes, Ind, Layton, Maclean, Maunder, Neill, Robbins, Selwyn, Spivey, Webster – Total: 20

On being put to the vote the second amendment was LOST:

For: Councillors Andrews, Annett, Beale, Berry, Blomefield, Hirst, Robin Hughes, Jepson, Judd, Keeling, Morgan, Norris, Theodoulou, Trotter – Total: 14

Against: Councillors Bloomer, Brassington, Coleman, Coxcoon, Dale, Doherty, Evey, Forde, Joe Harris, Mark Harris, Roly Hughes, Ind, Layton, Maclean, Maunder, Neill, Robbins, Selwyn, Spivey, Webster – Total: 20

The Chair then returned to the proposed Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget 2021/22.

Councillor Harris spoke to the proposals. He highlighted that this was a budget that rebuilt Council finances, and recognised the huge challenge which was faced to fill the budget black hole which was inherited and responded to the huge cuts to funding from the Government.

It allowed investment in the Cotswolds, for the Council to deliver genuinely affordable homes for young people and families, tackling the climate change emergency to safeguard future generations and putting sustainable, economic growth at the centre of plans to attract high quality, well paid jobs for local people. Tough decisions had had to be made on issues such as fees and charges and whether or not to raise Council Tax, and the garden waste charge, which had enabled the Council to plan for the future and weather the Covid-19 storm,

A long term plan had been implemented in the Council's investment strategy to shore up finances, which when realised, would ensure long term financial stability and eventuality the ability to wean the Council off Government handouts and reliance upon parking charges.

Investing in issues such as housing, climate change, green economic growth strategy, would enable the Council to reinvest in communities and take advantage of the green revolution. Economic Development and job creation locally, to encourage businesses to thrive and bring jobs to the district.

He thanked Councillor Evey and the Cabinet for the hard work in making this budget and in particular the Chief Finance Officer and her team for pulling together this budget. He considered the budget sought to rebuild the Council's finances, investing in the Cotswolds and he urged Members to vote for approval of the budget.

Councillor Morgan spoke to the proposals, thanking Councillor Evey and Selwyn for presenting and seconding the proposals, also thanking the Chief Finance Officer and all the officers for their hard work on this budget. He highlighted that Members were being asked to approve total borrowing over the next four years of £65.8m, which was disproportionate for a Council of this size, which only had an annual budget requirement of around £12m. Of the £65.8m borrowing, there was no idea of how £54.2m would be spent. This level of borrowing did not mean a balanced budget at the end of it. The administration inherited a budget that was debt free, with cash reserves of £13.2m, property investments of 7.5m and financial market investments of £12m. He urged Members not to vote for the proposals.

During debate concern was expressed that the corporate plans and strategies were disconnected from the budget proposals, making sure that the finances were in order, doing everything to reduce costs, although recognition of housing for local residents.

Concern was also expressed regarding the £650,000 spent on employing people to do specialist roles, although it was pointed out that consultants had not been employed to write the Climate Change strategy.

Support was expressed for the work on Climate Change which was a real reality.

Councillor Evemy summed up thanking Councillors for their comments, reiterating that there was a need to invest in services and deliver for the people of the Cotswolds.

RESOLVED that

- (a) Council approve the:
- (i) Budget Proposals for 2021/22
 - (ii) Medium Term Financial Strategy
 - (iii) Pay Policy Statement
 - (iv) Capital Strategy
 - (v) Investment Strategy
 - (vi) Treasury Management Strategy
 - (vii) Local Council Tax Support Scheme as detailed in 2.49 to 2.51 of the report for 2021/22.
- (b) Following approval of recommendations (i)-(vii), Council delegates authority to the Chief Finance Officer to approve the Local Council Tax Support Scheme annual uprating of allowances and non-dependant deductions in line with national regulations.

For: Councillors Bloomer, Brassington, Coleman, Coxcoon, Dale, Doherty, Evemy, Forde, Joe Harris, Mark Harris, Roly Hughes, Ind, Layton, Maclean, Maunder, Neill, Robbins, Selwyn, Spivey, Webster – Total: 20

Against: Councillors Andrews, Annett, Beale, Berry, Blomefield, Hirst, Robin Hughes, Jepson, Judd, Keeling, Morgan, Norris, Theodoulou, Trotter – Total: 14

CL.78 Council Tax 2021/22

Councillor Evemy proposed the recommendations for setting the Council Tax for the next municipal year, 2021/22, which included precepts for Gloucestershire County Council, Town and Parish Councils and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Councillor Dale seconded the proposals which he considered were clear and prudent.

RESOLVED that

- 1) for the purposes of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 Section 35(2), there are no special expenses for the District Council in 2021/22;
- 2) it be noted that, using her delegated authority, the Chief Finance Officer calculated the Council Tax Base for 2021/22:
 - (a) for the whole Council area as 41,848.15 [item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]; and
 - (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish Precept relates as in the attached Schedule 1.
- 3) the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2021/22 (excluding Parish Precepts) is £138.93.
- 4) the following amounts be calculated for the year 2021/22 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
 - (a) £43,111,935 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act, taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils and any additional special expenses.
 - (b) £33,777,152 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act.
 - (c) £9,334,783 being the amount by which the aggregate at 4(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 4(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
 - (d) £223.06 being the amount at 4(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish Precepts and Special Expenses);
 - (e) £3,520,820 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish Precepts and Special Expenses) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act as per the attached Schedule 2.
 - (f) £138.93 being the amount at 4(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 4(e) above by Item T(2(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish Precept or special item relates;
 - (g) the amounts shown in Schedule 2 being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 4(f) above, the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area shown in Schedule 2 divided in

each case by the amount at 2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate;

(h) the amounts shown in Schedule 3 being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 4(f) and 4(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands;

- 5) it be noted that for the year 2021/22 the Gloucestershire County Council and the Police & Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire have issued precepts to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated below:

Valuation Band	Gloucestershire County Council	Police and Crime Commissioner
	£	£
A	939.48	180.05
B	1,096.06	210.06
C	1,252.64	240.07
D	1,409.22	270.08
E	1,722.38	330.10
F	2,035.54	390.12
G	2,348.70	450.13
H	2,818.44	540.16

- 6) the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in Schedule 4 as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2021/22 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.
- 7) the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2021/22 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- 8) the following Council/Public Officers:

Chief Finance Officer,
Group Manager – Resident Services,
Interim Group Manager - Legal Services & Monitoring Officer,
Legal Executive,
Business Manager – Operational Support,

**Revenues Manager, Revenues Lead and
Court Officer**

be authorised to:

- (a) collect and recover any National Non-Domestic Rates and Council Tax; and**
- (b) prosecute or defend on the Council's behalf or to appear on its behalf in proceedings before a magistrate's court in respect of unpaid National Non-Domestic Rates and Council Tax.**

For: Councillors Bloomer, Brassington, Coleman, Coxcoon, Dale, Doherty, Evemy, Forde, Joe Harris, Mark Harris, Roly Hughes, Ind, Layton, Maclean, Maunder, Neill, Robbins, Selwyn, Spivey, Webster – Total: 20

Against: Councillors Andrews, Annett, Beale, Berry, Blomefield, Hirst, Robin Hughes, Jepson, Judd, Keeling, Morgan, Norris, Theodoulou, Trotter – Total: 14

CL.79 Motion 7 of 2020/21 – re Climate Change Action Awards

Proposed by Councillor Julia Judd, Seconded by Councillor Andrew Maclean.

'Council notes that in July 2019 a Climate Emergency 'that requires urgent and comprehensive action' was declared.

Part of that declaration was a proposal to establish a Climate Change Panel, involving Councillors, residents, young citizens, climate science and solutions experts, businesses and other relevant parties, to help shape and promote the District's zero carbon strategy and also recommend ways to maximise local benefits of these actions in other sectors such as employment, health, agriculture, transport and the economy.

To recognise and motivate good practice and innovation by business, individuals, supply chains and group practices in response to Climate Change, it is proposed that the Council introduces a scheme to make Climate Change Action Awards.

This would be the first ever District award scheme to recognise and encourage those who are leading the way in the management and reduction of carbon - both in internal operations and throughout the supply chain.

The awards would highlight leadership in addressing climate change by reducing carbon pollution and inspiring new initiatives. Suggested categories might include:

Individual Leadership Award.

To recognise individuals who demonstrate leadership in both addressing climate change and engaging with businesses, groups, peers and partners.

Youth Award

To recognise an individual or group aged under 18 or under who demonstrate leadership in addressing climate change and engaging with communities, peers and partners.

Group Leadership Award

To recognise groups working collaboratively on leading edge climate initiatives. Partnerships collectively establishing objectives to address greenhouse gas reductions goals and/or adaptation and resilience activities.

Commercial Award

To recognise businesses that have their own emission reduction goals and exemplify leadership in their internal responses to climate change, and engagement of their peers, partners and supply chain.

Supply Chain Leadership Award.

To recognise businesses that have their own emissions reduction goals and demonstrate they are at the leading edge of managing greenhouse gas emissions in their supply chains.

This council therefore resolves to establish a cross-party action group to create such an award system for the benefit of the wider community and make recommendations to Council for adoption.'

Councillor Judd spoke to the motion which built on the Council declaration regarding climate change.

Councillor Maclean seconded the motion, highlighting that this would recognise individuals and would be positive reinforcement of the issues.

RESOLVED that the motion stand referred to the Cabinet.

The Meeting commenced at 6.00pm and closed 8.55pm.

Chair
(END)