

Cabinet
05/July2021



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet held on Monday, 5 July 2021 at the Council Chamber, Trinity Road, Cirencester.

Councillors present:

Joe Harris	Mike Every
Rachel Coxcoon	Jenny Forde
Tony Dale	Juliet Layton
Andrew Doherty	Lisa Spivey

Officers present:

Rob Weaver, Chief Executive
Jenny Poole, Deputy Chief Executive
Angela Claridge, Interim Monitoring Officer
Ben Sadler, Democratic Services

13 Apologies

There were no apologies for absence received.

14 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers in attendance at the meeting.

15 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2021 be approved as a correct record subject to the following amendment to Minute 12:

‘Members commented that the schools were educational establishments and were not set up to run leisure facilities. They were concerned that the money was granted to the schools without an understanding of the risks of the viability of the centres’.

16 Chair's Announcements (if any)

The Leader congratulated the England football team on reaching the semi-finals of the European Championships.

17 Contain Outbreak Management Fund ("COMF") for the Visitor Economy and Broader Mitigation Against Covid-19

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The Committee received a report from the Business Manager, Localities which asked Members to consider agreeing a broad approach to the use of the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF), including the visitor economy fund.

The report advised that funding had been allocated to Cotswold District Council by Gloucestershire County Council from their Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF), as part of the response to Covid-19. The Council, as well as all the other Districts in Gloucestershire, had been allocated £50,000 specifically to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission linked to the visitor economy, through measures to enable residents and visitors to be and to feel safe.

The intention was that the potential projects and initiatives eligible for funding should be identified and agreed as soon as possible to enable the funding to be spent by 31 March 2022. The report noted that guidance as to the criteria for funding had been produced and these were outlined in section I of the report.

The Council had also received a direct allocation of £97,403.03 funding from government, which was ring fenced for public health purposes in relation to the mitigation against, and management of, local outbreaks of Covid-19.

The report recommended that the proposed approach be endorsed and authority be delegated to the Business Manager (Localities) to agree how best to use the funding in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing.

An alternative option was that Members could choose not to spend its allocation of COMF funding but this was not recommended because helping local communities to recover from the impact of Covid-19 was paramount.

Councillor Forde introduced the report and proposed the recommendations as laid out. This was seconded by Councillor Evemy.

Councillor Layton advised that she would be pleased to be consulted.

Having considered the report, and having heard from the Members present, Cabinet

Resolved that the proposed approach to the COMF allocations from the County Council and the Government is endorsed and authority is delegated to the Business Manager (Localities) to agree how this funding is used to best effect in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing.

Record of Voting - for 8, against 0, abstention 0, absent 0.

18 Funding for Essential Maintenance of Council Service Property Assets

The Committee received a report from the Property and Facilities Manager which requested approval to fund essential repairs at the Council's properties: Cirencester Leisure Centre and Packers Leaze Waste Vehicle Depot.

The report advised that the two sites referred to above required funding allocation for essential maintenance in order for the properties to continue to support key services. The Waste Depot required works to the drainage at the site to reduce surface water flooding to

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the waste vehicle parking area. The poor drainage in the area caused health and safety issues for Ubico staff accessing the waste collection vehicles.

With regard to the Leisure Centre, specialists had been engaged to agree a scope of work which would give more sustainable, longer-term and low maintenance solutions and address the existing corrosion following a number of problems identified with the painted steel structural support columns and roof struts. The report also noted the need to shut the facility whilst work was completed.

The report recommended that Cabinet approve the funding requested for flood works at the Packers Leaze Depot, totalling £55,000. In addition, Cabinet was asked to recommend that Council approve the funding request for the Leisure Centre Pool Hall and asked that authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive to update the Capital Programme and Strategy and the Treasury Management Strategy as appropriate. Authority would also be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Group Manager for Commissioning to agree the final funding on receipt of tenders, and award the contracts as necessary.

An alternative option was that the Council could choose not to undertake the works highlighted but this was not recommended due to the health and safety and reputational risks identified.

Councillor Every introduced the recommendations and highlighted the key sections of the report.

Following questions from Members, the Deputy Chief Executive advised that any contingency to address loss of earnings from either the Leisure Centre or Ubico would be considered separately.

The recommendations were seconded by Councillor Doherty.

Members noted that as the funding required for the Leisure Centre was over £100,000, that decision would require approval from Full Council at the next meeting.

Having considered the report, and having heard from the Members present, Cabinet

Resolved that funding of: £55,000 for flood works at the Packers Leaze Depot is approved.

Recommend that Council:

- a) approve the funding request of £110,000 for maintenance within the Cirencester Leisure Centre Pool Hall;
- b) delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive to update the Capital Programme, the Capital Strategy and the Treasury Management Strategy to include the requested funding;
- c) delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and the Group Manager for Commissioning to agree the final funding on receipt of the tenders and to award the contracts for the necessary works set out in the report, if funding is approved.

Record of Voting - for 8, against 0, abstention 0, absent 0.

19 Review of Options and Need for Additional Parking Provision Cirencester

The Chief Executive addressed the meeting and advised that this report would be deferred until the September 2021 meeting to enable more work to be completed around the evidence base.

He advised that this had been included on the agenda in error.

Resolved that the report stand deferred to the September Cabinet meeting.

20 Creation of Cotswold District Council Flood Warden Programme

The Committee received a report from the Chief Executive which asked Members to consider the creation of a Cotswold Flood Warden Programme.

The report reminded Members of the impact that flooding had on residents of the District, in particular following the winter of 2020/21 which saw properties affected in Siddington, Mickleton, Moreton in Marsh, Daglingworth, Coberley and Adlestrop. The Council had worked alongside Ubico to support residents and had held an online 'flooding forum' to gather views and offer support and advice. It was felt that the creation of a flood warden programme was another way in which the Council could provide a supportive role and Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) had been approached following their successful track record of supporting councils in the creation and management of voluntary flood warden programmes.

An overview of the programme that GRCC could provide was detailed at Appendix I and the key deliverables were listed at section 1.8 of the report. The report recommended that the Flood warden programme be funded from the Severe Weather Recovery earmarked reserve and that authority be delegated to the CEO, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Waste and Recycling to liaise and finalise the details of the programme.

An alternative option was that Members could choose not to support the creation of the volunteer Flood Warden Programme.

Councillor Doherty introduced the report and proposed the recommendations as laid out. These were seconded by the Leader.

Having considered the report, and having heard from the Members present, Cabinet

Resolved that

- (a) the flood warden programme in 2021/22 be funded from the Severe Weather Recovery earmarked reserve; and
- (b) authority is delegated to the CEO, in consultation with the Cabinet member for the Environment, Waste and Recycling to liaise with GRCC to finalise the detail of the programme and identify the initial towns and parishes to be approached with a view to them being part of the initial programme.

Record of Voting - for 8, against 0, abstention 0, absent 0.

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21 Local Climate Bond Pledge

The Committee received a report from the Deputy Chief Executive, which asked Members to consider making a pledge to issue a Local Climate Bond using the Community Municipal Investment (“CMI”) model.

The report advised that following the Council’s commitment to taking a Climate Emergency leadership role, it was working with partners on various initiatives to facilitate reduction of carbon emissions in the District. The Council’s Recovery Investment Strategy set out the Council’s strategic aims associated with planned investment of £54 million. The sources of funding for this investment were set out in the Council’s Treasury Management Strategy and included traditional borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board but also “special purpose companies created to enable local authority bond issues.” One such bond was a CMI.

It was noted that the use of a CMI would enable the Council to promote the work it was carrying out in relation to the Climate Emergency and would facilitate community buy-in to addressing the Climate Emergency throughout communities in the District. In addition, there were no direct financial implications because the issue of a Local Climate Bond, using the CMI model, would be subject to a further report to the Council.

An alternative option was that Cabinet could choose not to issue the CMI pledge.

Councillor Evely introduced the report and highlighted paragraph 1.6 of the report, which explained the provided some background to The Green Finance Institute. He concluded by stating that he hoped the pledge would strengthen the belief that Cotswold District Council were committed to tackling the Climate Emergency. Councillor Evely proposed the recommendations as laid out.

Councillor Coxcoo provided some background on the climate bond and gave examples of other authorities already taking up the opportunities. She therefore seconded the proposals.

Following a question from Councillor Doherty, the Deputy Chief Executive explained that it was hoped this work would tie in with the other climate change projects the Council were pushing forwards with.

Having considered the report, and having heard from the Members present, Cabinet

Resolved to pledge to issue a Local Climate Bond, using the CMI model.

Record of Voting - for 8, against 0, abstention 0, absent 0.

22 Financial, Council Priority and Service Performance Report - 2020-21 Quarter Four

The Committee received a report from the Chief Executive, which provided an update on progress on the Council’s priorities and service performance. The report also outlined the Council’s current financial position.

The report reminded Members that since September 2019 the Council adopted the high-level council aim and priorities. A new performance management framework was developed, setting out six key strands of information as listed at paragraph 1.2 of the report. Members were also reminded of the impact of Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdowns encountered throughout the UK and a full update was provided at section 2 of the report.

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Despite the impact of Covid-19 on resources, progress had been made to deliver the actions in the Corporate plan and the Council Priority report was attached at Annex A. The Service Performance Report was attached at Annex B.

Section 5 of the report updated on the Financial Performance of the Council, with the Revenue Summary and Variances and a Summary of gross capital expenditure attached as appendices C and D.

The report recommended that, alongside noting the progress detailed, Cabinet delegate authority to the CEO in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive, Leader, Deputy Leader and any other relevant Cabinet Members to approve additional funding to Publica as set out in the report.

Members were also asked to approved the use of funds for consultancy support as set out in paragraph 5.33 of the report.

There were no alternative options identified.

The report had been considered at the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 29 June 2021 and the scrutiny members' comments would be reported to the Cabinet.

The Chief Executive outlined the report and reminded Members of the impact of Covid-19 on staffing levels. He took Members through the key findings of the report including the impact on Leisure Centres, parking income and other Council income streams.

It was therefore proposed and duly seconded that the recommendations be approved.

Having considered the report, and having heard from the Members present, Cabinet

Resolved that

- a) the overall progress on the Council priorities, service delivery and financial performance for 2020-21 Q4, is noted;
- b) authority is delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive and the Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and any appropriate Cabinet Members to approve additional funding to Publica as set out in paragraph 5.32 of this report; and
- c) the use of £30,000 for consultancy support on the Council's Leisure Strategy is approved, subject to consideration of a detailed proposal by the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing as set out in paragraph 5.33 of this report.

Record of Voting - for 8, against 0, abstention 0, absent 0.

23 Inquorate Parish Councils - Procedure for Appointing Temporary Members

The Committee received a report from the Monitoring Officer, which asked Members to consider adopting a procedure to ensure that the Council could promptly to situations where Town and Parish Councils became inquorate and would enable them to continue to work effectively.

The report advised that explained that a Town or Parish Council had to be quorate in order to operate and make decisions. A quorum was defined as one third of the Council's membership but no less than three.

The report recommended that moving forwards these approvals be delegated to senior officers, in conjunction with the political group leaders to enable Town or Parish Council members to be appointed promptly.

An alternative option was that Cabinet could choose to retain the decision making power on this however, due to the frequency of Cabinet meetings this could cause delay for Town and Parish Councils. It was felt that the appointment of temporary members could be delegated to officers in consultation with Group Leaders to ensure member involvement in the process.

The Monitoring Officer introduced the report and provided some background as to the impact that being inquorate could have on a Parish Council. It was noted that this had recently occurred at Poulton Parish Council leaving them unable to function.

Members raised a number of queries in relation to the practicalities of the process and the Monitoring Officer addressed their concerns.

It was therefore proposed and duly seconded that the recommendations be approved.

Having considered the report, and having heard from the Members present, Cabinet

Resolved that the procedure set out in Annex A for making appointments to inquorate Town and Parish Councils under section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972, is adopted.

Record of Voting - for 8, against 0, abstention 0, absent 0.

24 Proposal for Loan Finance to Cottsway Housing Association

The Committee received a report from the Deputy Chief Executive which asked Members to consider a proposal to provide loan financing to Cottsway Housing Association Ltd through its subsidiary company, Cottsway 2. The lower cost of finance would enable the provision of green energy generation via solar PV installation on fifteen houses at Davies Road, Moreton-in-Marsh.

The report reminded Members that Council had approved a Capital Investment and Recovery Strategy in September 2020 and this report was the first investment proposal under that strategy.

The report outlined a summary of the proposals, the views of the Capital Programme Investment Board, detailed the financial implications, legal implications and risks associated with the proposals.

Alternative options were that Cabinet could choose not provide the loan financing to Cottsway 2 Ltd but this would mean that Solar PV was not financially viable and would not be provided on the development. Cabinet could also request a higher rate of interest on the loan. However, this would reduce the financial viability of the development and would impact upon the provision of Solar PV on the development.

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Councillor Evely introduced the report and highlighted the key details.

Members raised a number of queries including possible amendments to the agreement to further improve the security of the loan (subject to agreement with Cottsway).

Members noted that appropriate due diligence work had been undertaken which had resulted in no significant issues being flagged.

It was therefore proposed and duly seconded that the recommendations be approved.

Having considered the report, and having heard from the Members present, Cabinet

Recommended that

- (a) the loan arrangement is approved by Council;
- (b) the loan is financed through Prudential Borrowing in line with the Council's Capital and Treasury Management Strategies;
- (c) subject to the approval by Council of recommendation (a), the negotiation of the detailed terms for the transaction be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive, following consultation with the, Head of Legal Services, Monitoring Officer and the Cabinet Member for Finance; and
- (d) the Audit Committee review performance as part of regular Treasury Management updates.

Record of Voting - for 8, against 0, abstention 0, absent 0.

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 7.15 pm

Chair