

Cabinet
01/November2021



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet held on Monday, 1 November 2021.

Councillors present:

Rachel Coxcoon
Tony Dale
Andrew Doherty

Mike Every
Jenny Forde
Joe Harris

Juliet Layton
Lisa Spivey

Officers present:

Caroline Clissold, Housing Manager
Mandy Fathers, Business Manager, Operational Services
Caleb Harris, Strategic Support Officer
Anwen Hughes, Strategic Housing Manager
Jasmine McWilliams, Estates Manager
Ben Patel-Sadler, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Jenny Poole, Deputy Chief Executive
Joseph Walker, Community Partnership Officer
Robert Weaver, Chief Executive

Observers:

Councillor Stephen Andrews
Councillor Patrick Coleman

40 Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

41 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

There were no declarations of interest from Officers.

42 Minutes

RESOLVED that, subject to the following amendments, the minutes of the meeting of the 4 October 2021 be approved as a correct record:

- At page 8 of the minutes (minute 38), the wording should reflect that the urgent decision was taken in August 2020.

Record of Voting – for: 8, against: 0, abstention: 0, absent: 0.

43 Chair's Announcements (if any)

At the request of the Chair, Cabinet Members and those in attendance stood for a minute's silence in memory of the Conservative MP Sir David Amess who had been killed at his constituency surgery in Essex.

The minute's silence was also held to remember and honour armed forces members who had died in the line of duty.

Cabinet noted the importance of regularly reviewing the safety and security of all Elected Members and Council Officers.

The Chair and Cabinet Members wished Her Majesty the Queen a speedy recovery and acknowledged the stability Her Majesty provided to the British people and others around the world.

In relation to the upcoming COP 26 conference, Cabinet acknowledged the work being undertaken by the Council to help address the climate emergency.

Cabinet noted that Members had completed carbon literacy training which would also be rolled out to Officers across the Council.

The Chair would be attending the conference to represent the Council.

44 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

45 Member Questions

There were no Member questions.

46 Consideration of Notice of Motion 6/2020/21 Flytipping

Councillor Andrew Doherty introduced the report.

Cabinet noted that because locations of flytipping across the District were spread over a wide area, there would be a practical difficulty and a high cost of installing CCTV cameras across all sites.

Because of the often random nature of flytipping, Cabinet noted that there were not specific areas where cameras could be installed which would guarantee offenders would be recorded.

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Cabinet further noted the intricacies of the regulations surrounding the use of covert cameras.

Cabinet noted that an appropriate method to tackle the issue of flytipping was the use of Council Officers to monitor sites and to gather evidence when the practice occurred (significant evidence was crucial if individuals were to be prosecuted for flytipping).

A view was expressed that the installation of static cctv cameras would not deter people from flytipping and that potential instances of cameras being vandalised/destroyed would place an additional cost burden on the Council.

Cabinet noted the existing Council strategy in relation to combatting flytipping including the Clean and Green Programme.

RESOLVED that Councillor Andrew Doherty proposed that Cabinet do not support the provision of overt or covert cctv to support flytipping prosecutions but continue with the present approach to investigating flytipping. This was seconded by Councillor Tony Dale.

Record of Voting – for: 8, against: 0, abstention: 0, absent: 0.

47 Freedom of Information Act Requests

Councillor Joe Harris introduced the report and emphasised the importance of the Council being as open and transparent as possible.

Cabinet noted the investment which had been made in relation to webcasting with the intention of ensuring that all decisions taken by the Council were as accessible as possible.

In relation to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, Cabinet noted that the Council was committed to ensuring that any FOI requests were responded to within statutory timescales and that the information contained in any replies was easily accessible to the public.

Cabinet acknowledged that that on occasions, FOI requests were not always necessary in order for residents to obtain information from the Council.

Cabinet noted that as much detail as legally permissible would be provided when the Council replied to any FOI requests.

Cabinet further noted that Publica and Ubico, along with other local authority owned companies, were subject to FOI requests.

Cabinet noted that further work was being undertaken by the Council via IT updates to ensure that more data and information could be shared with the public as a matter of routine. Member expenses were published online alongside all Council payments.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

a) Noted the report;

b) Supported the publication of quarterly statistics on the Council's website as set out in paragraph 4.1 of this report;

c) Requested that the Business Manager for Corporate Responsibility undertakes further research into the options available for publishing all Freedom of Information requests on the Council's website and reports back to Cabinet in January 2022; and

d) Whilst the options for recommendation c) were being considered, supported the creation of a frequently asked Freedom of Information requests webpage as set out in paragraph 4.3 of this report.

Record of Voting – for: 8, against: 0, abstention: 0, absent: 0.

48 HomeseekerPlus Policy Update

Councillor Lisa Spivey introduced the report.

Cabinet noted that HomeseekerPlus was the mechanism used to allocate social housing within the District.

The policy had been in operation for several years and so the opportunity had been taken to ensure that it now reflected any legislative changes/updates within the social housing sector.

Cabinet noted that a consultation exercise had been undertaken which had been open to residents. The changes made following the completion of the consultation were included in the report.

Cabinet further noted the shortage of social housing within the District and noted that further work around the policies would be undertaken with partners going forwards.

Cabinet noted that the current administration were committed to providing additional social housing.

Cabinet noted the importance of having a robust social housing policy in place so that properties could be allocated based on need.

Cabinet wished to place on record their thanks to the Council's Housing Team for the work they undertook to ensure that those who most needed accommodation were provided with it wherever possible.

Cabinet noted that a member(s) of the armed forces who had served anywhere in the United Kingdom could apply for social housing within the District.

Cabinet noted that having rent arrears would not preclude an individual(s) from being provided with a property. Officers would work with applicants to ensure that any offered and available properties were affordable for the individual(s) and that a plan was in place to pay down any rent arrears.

Cabinet noted that in addition to partners funding, housing associations also provided funding to support the designated Officer and associated IT infrastructure. Partner's payments were determined according to size of area and the number of social housing properties held.

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RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- a) Approved the Policy for adoption
- b) Gave approval for the HomeseekerPlus Management Board to:
 - 1) Confirm the date for adoption once all partners had approval through their individual authorities governance structure (likely to be early 2022)
 - 2) Professionally formatted the Policy prior to publication.

Record of Voting – for: 8, against: 0, abstention: 0, absent: 0.

49 Cotswold District Council Community Housing Fund (CHF)

Councillor Lisa Spivey introduced the report, with Cabinet noting the support of the Council in relation to community-led housing.

Cabinet noted that a mechanism was in place to ensure that any groups wishing to access community-led housing funding could be supported appropriately in their endeavours.

Cabinet noted that several community-led housing trusts were currently in operation across the District.

Cabinet noted that the Council was committed to ensuring that housing schemes were affordable and also that they worked towards achieving the net zero carbon target.

Cabinet further noted that Officers would use some of the available funding for publicity purposes in helping to ensure that Town and Parish Councils were made aware of the Community Housing Fund (CHF).

RESOLVED that Cabinet agreed:

- a) That the Council agree to authorise the determination of allocations from the Council's CHF small grants fund to an Allocations Panel, to consist of the Group Manager for Commissioning, the Strategic Housing Manager, the Community-led Housing Enabler/Housing Enabling Officer, and the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

Record of Voting – for: 8, against: 0, abstention: 0, absent: 0.

50 Community Funding for the 2022 Queens Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

Councillor Jenny Forde introduced the report with Cabinet expressing the view that such celebrations should be community and not Council-led.

Cabinet expressed a view that the communities across the District would undoubtedly participate in appropriate celebrations to mark the occasion of Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

If event organisers wished to apply for funding to assist in hosting celebrations to mark this occasion, then the County Council along with Town and Parish Councils could be contacted

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to direct individuals to potential funding providers. The District Council could assist with advice in relation to the closing of roads and any potential licensing requirements for events.

Cabinet noted that Crowdfund Cotswold was also a potential route for event organisers in relation to securing funding for events.

Cabinet noted that the Council should be proactive in terms of readying itself for an influx of enquiries as the event drew nearer. Being able to signpost residents to the correct organisations/bodies/groups would be key so that celebrations could be organised held appropriately. There was already a dedicated webpage on the Council's website which gave advice on the arranging and hosting of community-led events.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agreed that it is appropriate to signpost community groups to either their local Town or Parish Council for small value contributions to the 2022 Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations or to Crowdfund Cotswold for larger projects that require a financial contribution in excess of £500.

Record of Voting – for: 8, against: 0, abstention: 0, absent: 0.

51 Issue(s) Arising From Overview and Scrutiny and/or Audit

There were no issues arising from Overview and Scrutiny and/or Audit.

52 Property Works - Cirencester

At this point of the meeting the Chair requested that members of the public now left before Cabinet formally considered agenda item 13 which was in relation to proposed property works in Cirencester. The item was classed as exempt under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972'.

This was proposed by Councillor Mike Evemy and seconded by Councillor Joe Harris.

Record of Voting – for: 8, against: 0, abstention: 0, absent: 0.

Following discussions, Cabinet noted the reasons as to why the property works were required and approved the expenditure related to these works.

Record of Voting – for: 8, against: 0, abstention: 0, absent: 0.

The Meeting commenced at 6pm and closed at 07:20pm

Chair

(END)