



Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet held on Tuesday, 12 September 2023.

Councillors present:

Joe Harris - Leader
Claire Bloomer
Tony Dale

Mike Evemy – Deputy Leader
Paul Hodgkinson
Juliet Layton

Mike McKeown
Lisa Spivey

Officers present:

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

Ana Prelici, Democratic Services Officer
James Brain, Forward Planning Manager
Matthew Britton, Principal Planning Policy
Officer
Sophia Price, Heritage and Design Manager
Zoe Campbell, Assistant Director for
Organisational Effectiveness

Observers:

Councillors David Fowles, David Cunningham and Andy Parsons, Chief Executive – Cotswold National Landscape

160 Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

161 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Hodgkinson and Councillor Layton declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda item 7 as members of the Cotswold National Landscape Board.

There were no declarations of interest from Officers.

162 Minutes

The following amendments were suggested to the minutes for 17 July 2023:

- Minute 147 – Updated Procurement and Contract Management Strategy - it was noted that the seconder should be Councillor Joe Harris

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- Minute 159 (Para.4) – to amend the wording so it reads that the ‘The Cabinet also noted that card readers were being introduced in addition to the existing cash payment to provide more payment options’.

The minutes were proposed by Councillor Evemy and seconded by Councillor Bloomer.

RESOLVED: Cabinet APPROVED the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet of 17 July 2023 as a correct record, subject to the amendments being made.

Record of Voting – For: 7, Against 0, Abstention 1, Absent: 0

163 **Leader's Announcements**

The Leader first spoke regarding the concern around the use of RAAC concrete. The Leader had asked officers to investigate whether it may be present in the buildings the Council owns such as the Council Offices. It was confirmed that no RAAC is present in these buildings. The Leader also noted that housing associations had been asked to report if any RAAC concrete is present in any social housing. It was highlighted that any updates would be provided to Members in the first instance.

It was also noted that the Tour of Britain cycle race had been a great event for local communities and the economy.

164 **Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

165 **Member Questions**

There were no member questions.

166 **Employment and Health and Safety Policies**

The Leader revised the order of business on the request of the Chief Executive to consider this item first.

The purpose of the report was to update the Cabinet relating to the refresh of all Human Resources and Health & Safety policies for CDC.

The Assistant Director for Organisational Effectiveness introduced the report and outlined the report as presented. It was also explained that three policies had been withdrawn from the document for technical reasons; the Expenses Policy, Flexi-time TOIL and Overtime Policy, and the Redundancy Policy.

It was noted that the updated 23 employment policies and the health and safety policy presented would help to ensure that the policies would mitigate any risk of challenge. This would be further strengthened by the delegation to the Chief Executive to ensure the policies remain legally compliant.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Employment Policies Task and Finish Group, Councillor David Cunningham addressed Cabinet regarding the policies presented. It was

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noted that the policies withdrawn were additional policies being reviewed and were not part of the core policies being refreshed.

It was noted that the Task and Finish Group was satisfied with the policies presented, and believed that these policies would serve the council well.

In response to a question on the policies in relation to Publica, it was noted by Cabinet that the policies presented were for Cotswold District Council employees did not have any change to terms and conditions. However the processes would be the same to Publica employees to ensure their application is correct.

The Chief Executive commented that the policies would give a clear way forward for Cotswold District Council employees, and that the minor issues identified with the withdrawn could be dealt with under delegated authority.

In regards to questions around oversight to any changes, it was noted that the delegation to the Chief Executive would be overseen by Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update report given once a year.

It was noted that the updated policies would be communicated through the relevant portals.

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

RESOLVED: That Cabinet

1) **AGREED** the twenty-three employment policies and the Health & Safety Policy for consideration in Annex A.

2) **DELEGATED** authority to the Chief Executive to approve subsequent amendments to any Cotswold District Council employment policies that may be necessary in line with legal changes and best practice to ensure the Council's policies remain legally compliant.

3) **DELEGATED** authority to the Chief Executive to approve subsequent employment policies that come forward for approval.

Record of Voting – For: 8, Against 0, Abstention 0, Absent: 0

167 Endorsement of the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023 – 2025

The purpose of the report was to seek the Council's support for the Cotswolds National Landscape (Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty - AONB) Management Plan 2023 – 2025.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services, Councillor Juliet Layton, introduced the report.

It was noted that a re-published version of the report had an updated wording to the recommendation which was read out. However, it was highlighted that this did not fundamentally affect the Cabinet's position on the contents of the plan.

It was noted that the management plan which was subject to consultation with the Council, would be used as part of the evidence base for the partial review of the Local Plan. It was reaffirmed that the Local Plan would remain the primary planning policy document.

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It was highlighted that the Glover Review, which formed part of the previous management plan in promotion of National Park status, had not been endorsed by the Council. However, it was highlighted that this current management plan was in line with the corporate priorities on being 'green to the core' and tackling climate change.

The Chief Executive of Cotswold National Landscape, Andy Parsons, addressed Cabinet in regards to the management plan. It was noted that the plan was for two years as opposed to five years to ensure the plan remained relevant in line with upcoming changes from central government.

RESOLVED That Cabinet

1) **NOTED** the content and aspirations of the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023–2025 and recognise its importance in supporting and informing the following:

- part of the evidence base for the review of the Local Plan;
- part of the evidence base for the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans;
- part of the evidence base for the preparation and implementation of relevant Council strategies, policies and projects;
- the determination of planning applications (where compatible with relevant Local Plan and national policy) by acting as a material consideration; and
- the development and delivery of the Council's services and activities.

168 Review of the Cotswold District Local Plan housing requirement

The purpose of the report was to recommend to Full Council to approve the Review of the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031 Housing Requirement, which finds that the local housing need of the district has not changed significantly and that the minimum housing requirement provided by the Cotswold District Local Plan does not require updating.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services, Councillor Juliet Layton introduced the report to Cabinet Members. It was noted that Cabinet was being asked to recommend to Council that the 2011-2031 Housing Requirement review be approved.

It was noted that it was very important to support this review to avoid a switch from the Local Plan residual requirement to the government's standard method

The Forward Planning Manager, James Brain was invited to address Cabinet in terms of the review which was undertaken alongside the wider work with the partial update Local Plan.

It was noted that the numbers of sites for housing have not changed significantly, and that the Council continues with a comfortable 5-year Land Supply, and that the adopted plan has remains with the full weight in law. However, it was noted that this would need to be monitored in line with changes such a national planning policy and case law.

It was highlighted that this work was key to shape the future provision of housing in the District that's in line with the priorities of residents.

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It was noted that this would form part of the delivery of housing which is affordable for rent, social housing or for ownership.

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

RESOLVED That Cabinet

1) AGREED to recommend to Full Council to approve the review of the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031 housing requirement.

Record of Voting – For: 8, Against 0, Abstention 0, Absent: 0

169 Council Priority and Service Performance Report - 2023-23 Quarter One

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

The Chief Executive introduced this report to Cabinet, and highlighted that revised format to demonstrate the service performance for different areas.

The following points were highlighted:

- The council entered into a partnership with Make My House Green which will encourage Solar PV installation with the private sector.
- Reducing sewage discharge is a priority for officers and councillors. Thames Water had been engaging with council and partner councils to tackle this concern.
- The work by the Active Cotswolds team in promoting activity and healthy lifestyles with 'Mr Motivator'.
- The changing places toilets facilities had been completed at Cotswold Farm, in Cirencester Abbey Ground and the Birdland country park would be delivered in early 2024.
- The development and implementation of an Asset Management Strategy is slightly behind schedule but would be presented to November Council.
- The work with Cirencester College on the T Levels Programme would be rolled out in January 2024.
- The collection of Council Tax had increased above target alongside the processing of change of circumstances.
- Customer satisfaction is above the target of 90% at 98%
- Processing of planning applications within the agreed timescales is 84% against a target of 80%
- The performance of leisure centres is above target in terms of memberships and overall visits.
- The processing time of Council Tax new claims is 29 days against a target of 20 days with a number of actions highlighted to improve this.
- The percentage of official land charge searches in 10 days is 86% against a target of 90%, and work is being done internally to prioritise this.

The Cabinet noted the format change to show comparisons with other Publica partner councils is helpful.

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Whilst the improvement of Council Tax collection rates was welcome, there was some concern around the rate of non-domestic rate collection. It was also noted that this was behind other rural councils in the rankings presented.

Following queries raised, a response to the concerns regarding the low ranking for the collection of non-domestic rates would be compiled by the Deputy Chief Executive and the Managing Director of Publica to provide reassurance.

It was also noted that the processing time for Housing Benefit change of circumstances needed to be examined.

It was also noted by Cabinet that Building Control satisfaction was 100% following changes made.

It was highlighted that this report was a Q1 report and therefore only shows a limited picture in terms of provision.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet

- I) NOTED overall progress on the Council priorities and service performance for 2022-23 Q4 and the post reporting period events.

170 Financial Performance Report Quarter One - 2023/24

This report sets out the latest budget monitoring position for the 2023/24 financial year.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for the finance outlined the report and the recommendations within the report.

The following points were highlighted:

- It was noted that the forecasted financial position at ES1 and ES2 was £450,000 worse than budgeted for. This was due to a shortfall in fees and charges in various areas which include land charges.
- The increase in demand for waste and recycling containers. It was also noted that there was a lack of charging to developers on the provision of waste and recycling containers.
- There was also a £66,000 provision due to the closure of the West Bromwich store which Wilko was occupying before entering administration.
- There's also some uncertainty and risk in regards to the ongoing pay offer of 3.8% which was rejected by trade unions.
- There was also a £100,000 provision for Ubico if it is unable to make the £250,000 of savings also requested from Publica.
- On ES2, there was an underspend of £42,000 by Ubico.
- There was also an increased income from the rise in interest rates.
- There was also an underspend projected in the spending on ICT by the council.

It was noted that the Cabinet Member was working to ensure that the deficit figure can be eliminated. This was particularly important in light of the recent announcement of the S.114 notice by Birmingham City Council.

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It was reaffirmed that getting the revenue budget balanced which was imperative to continue providing services to residents locally.

The Leader commented that it was important to have an early focus to the financial position and how the future service provision may need to change in light of the challenges faced by all local authorities.

It was noted that retaining the current gap was not seen as option that could be taken.

It was also noted in debate that car parking was ahead of budget which was welcomed.

The recommendations were proposed by the Councillor Every, and seconded by Councillor Harris.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet

- 1) REVIEWED and NOTED the financial position set out in this report
- 2) ENDORSED the recommendation in paragraph 8.3 that the Cabinet Transformation Working Group review in-year opportunities with Publica and Ubico and provide Cabinet with an update in November on options to mitigate the forecast financial position.

Record of Voting – For: 8, Against 0, Abstention 0, Absent: 0

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

The Cabinet NOTED the decisions taken.

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

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

The Meeting commenced at 5.02 pm and closed at 6.30 pm

Chair

(END)