

Cabinet
02/October2023



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet held on Monday, 2 October 2023.

Councillors present:

Joe Harris - Leader
Claire Bloomer
Tony Dale

Mike Evemy – Deputy Leader
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)
Jon Dearing, Assistant Director for Resident
Services
Claire Locke, Assistant Director for Property
and Regeneration

Andrew Brown, Democratic Services Business
Manager
Caleb Harris, Senior Democratic Services
Officer
Michelle Clifford, Business Manager for
Customer Experience and Resources
Kira Thompson, Election and Democratic
Services Support Assistant

173 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Paul Hodgkinson.

174 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

There were no declarations of interest from Officers.

175 Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting on 12 September 2023 were considered as presented.

Councillor Joe Harris proposed and Councillor Claire Bloomer seconded.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 12 September 2023 be approved as a correct record.

Voting Record*

7 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention/Did not vote

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*Due to a technical error with the electronic voting, the casting of the votes for this item was done by a show of hands.

176 Leader's Announcements

The Leader first thanked Mr Motivator for his Active Cotswold event in the Bingham Hall in Cirencester, and for the officers involved in organising it. It was noted as a positive example of a proactive event to support health and wellbeing which was attended by over 100 people.

The Leader also noted the increase in contact by concerned residents in regards to accident and emergency waiting times. It was noted that in August, over 6,000 people were waiting over 4 hours to be seen with only 57% of people being seen within 4 hours, which is below the target of 95%.

The Leader highlighted that he would be writing to Sir Geoffrey Clifton Brown, MP for The Cotswolds, and the Department for Health and Social Care to raise the concerns outlined in regards to National Health Services in Gloucestershire.

177 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

178 Member Questions

There were no member questions.

179 Channel Choice and Telephone Access

The purpose of the report, in light of a continuous decline in demand, was to propose reduced telephone access hours to the public as a trial from Monday 16 October 2023.

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation introduced the report and outlined that it was an important decision in line with changes to customer interaction habits which had shifted towards online 'self-serve' options.

It was noted that new technology had provided the opportunity to move services online such as green waste licences which had seen a digital renewal rate of 90% last year.

It was also highlighted that it wasn't just about change of technology, but also about reducing costs for the Council. It was highlighted that it was likely to save over £100,000 per year in costs, and provide additional capacity to other services such as licensing.

It was noted that the changes would allow a focus of resources on busier periods such as lunchtimes which should improve response times.

It was highlighted that emergency events such as homelessness would be covered by the teams at the Council to ensure those services can be provided.

It was highlighted by the Cabinet Member that the proportion of calls relating to Cotswold District Council for the year to date was 48.74%. This was confirmed by the Assistant Director for Resident Services.

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The Leader noted the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which were added to the agenda. The Leader thanked Councillor Blomefield as Chair and the Committee for their diligent work.

The Deputy Leader as the Cabinet Member who attended Overview and Scrutiny Committee on behalf of Councillor Dale for this item addressed Cabinet. The following points raised by that Committee were addressed:

- It was noted on recommendation 1 that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be able to look at the future Cabinet report as part of their scheduling.
- It was highlighted that recommendation 2 had been covered during the presentation by Councillor Dale.
- It was highlighted at recommendation 3 that an equality impact assessment had been produced in advance of the trial and would be refreshed before the final decision is taken.
- It was noted at recommendation 4 that the Assistant Director had provided reassurances to staff. It was noted that the proposal would provide benefits to full-time staff with cross-training by supporting other departments, and more flexibility for part-time staff.

The Deputy Leader in seconding the proposal also reaffirmed that it was important to continually review services so that resources were used as effectively as possible.

It was highlighted by the Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation that communications would be sent out through all channels to confirm the new arrangements to residents.

The Leader in summary noted that the in-person services at the Council offices would be maintained for those who needed assistance despite the changes made. However, it was highlighted that the changes would make the contact centre more efficient, and provide digital options to meet customer needs.

Councillor Tony Dale proposed the recommendations and Councillor Mike Every seconded.

That Cabinet resolved to:

- 1) AGREE the reduced telephone access hours, on a trial basis, with effect from Monday 16th October 2023 for a period of six months, and
- 2) AGREED to receive a further report, detailing the findings and recommendations from the trial, to a Cabinet meeting early in May 2024.

Voting Record

7 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstention/did not vote

For	Against	Abstention/Did not vote
Claire Bloomer		
Joe Harris		
Juliet Layton		
Lisa Spivey		
Mike Every		

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Mike McKeown		
Tony Dale		

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

There were no decisions to note at this meeting.

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

There were no further issues arising from Overview and Scrutiny and/or Audit and Governance other than those presented in the meeting.

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 6.23 pm

Chair

(END)