

Cabinet
13/March2023



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet held on Monday, 13 March 2023.

Councillors present:

Joe Harris - Chair
Rachel Coxcoon
Tony Dale

Mike Evemy – Vice Chair
Andrew Doherty
Jenny Forde

Juliet Layton

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
Claire Locke, Assistant Director for Property
and Regeneration
Andrew Brown, Democratic Services Business
Manager

Mandy Fathers, Business Manager for
Environmental, Welfare and Revenues
James Brain, Forward Planning Manager
Matthew Britton, Principal Planning Policy
Officer
Paul James, Economic Development Lead
Jasper Lamoon, Senior Infrastructure Delivery
Officer
Ana Prelici, Democratic Services Officer

Observers:

Councillor Nikki Ind, Councillor Stephen Andrews

103 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Lisa Spivey.

104 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

There were no declarations of interest from Officers.

105 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6th February 2023 be approved as a correct record.

For 7, Against 0, Abstentions 0, Absent 1

The Leader noted the difficult events that had taken place since the 2019 District elections such as the Coronavirus Pandemic, and thanked Cabinet Members and Officers for their work to deliver the Council's corporate priorities during these times.

It was also noted that this was the first meeting to be clerked by Ana Prelici as a Democratic Services Officer in the absence of Senior Democratic Services Officer Caleb Harris who was on annual leave.

107 Public Questions

There were no Public Questions.

108 Member Questions

There were no Member Questions.

109 Business Rates Relief 2023/24. Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Scheme

The purpose of this report was for Cabinet to implement a scheme of rate relief for retail premises as outlined by the UK Government in the Autumn Statement of 2022

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report and highlighted the scheme at Annex A which Cabinet was asked to implement.

It was noted that the scheme could provide relief of 75% or up to a cash cap of £110,000.

The delegation to the Assistant Director for Residents Services was also noted to award the scheme within the policy criteria.

It was noted by Cabinet that there was no need for businesses to apply as the Council was aware of which businesses would be eligible. This was confirmed as correct by the report author.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet resolved

- a) NOTE the contents of the report;
- b) ENDORSE the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Scheme as detailed in Annex A; and
- c) DELEGATE AUTHORITY to the Assistant Director of Resident Services to award of such relief

Voting Record – For 7, Against 0, Abstentions 0, Absent 1

110 Council Priority and Service Performance Report - 2022-23 Quarter 3

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

The Chief Executive introduced the report.

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It was noted that the report had been separated into two to cover service performance and the financial performance of the Council.

The Peer Review was noted as it had provided comments regarding benchmarking with nearest neighbours within the quarterly reports.

The Chief Executive thanked officers for their ongoing work in delivering the Council's priorities.

The following points were noted by Cabinet from the Service Performance Report

- The Council Tax collection rate was up by 1%
- The Council had paid out £3.8 million for the core scheme and £135,000 for the Discretionary Council Tax relief scheme. The new relief schemes approved by Cabinet were noted as officers are contacting those who may be eligible for the scheme.
- The Homes for Ukraine Programme had 150 sponsors as of December 2022. The monthly sponsor amount given had also been increased to £500 which has helped to support families.
- Following the Legal Services review, the Phase 2 Service Review had been started with Cadence Innova being appointed to assist.
- There were improvements in departments such as Planning and Customer Services, with challenging circumstances for those such as Revenue and Benefits. This was noted as a consequence of the cost of living pressures that were taking place nationally.
- Increasing automation and communication channels with customers was also highlighted as part of the improvement programmes with many service areas.
- Determination of planning applications had continued to improve.
- Severe weather towards the end of 2022 had caused challenges for departments particularly waste collection.

It was noted that the report referred to the refurbishment of Trinity Road beginning in January and February and there was a query about if this had changed. The Chief Executive noted that the 16th March was the deadline for bids from contractors, and there were processes ongoing to produce timescales for the work.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet NOTED overall progress on the Council priorities and service delivery for 2022-23 Q3

III Financial Performance Report Q3 2022/23

The purpose of this report was to set out to Cabinet the latest budget monitoring position for the 2022/23 financial year.

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report and outlined how there wasn't much change from the position set out in the Budget in February.

It was noted by Cabinet that there hadn't been any significant changes to the financial outlook on the revenue budget with a variation of around £1.2 million.

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Whilst it was also stated that there was a £160,000 improvement as set out in paragraph 2.2 of the Executive Summary, it was emphasised that inflation, energy costs, fuel costs and staff pay awards were still the key factors that have contributed to the adverse financial position of the Council reported to Members during the financial year.

Cabinet also noted the following points

- £2.2 million of reserves would need to be used to balance the budgets in 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- A projected capital spend of £4.9 million with some variations expected from the Agile Working Strategy.
- The upcoming Budget on 15th March from the UK Government could impact on areas such as the support for commercial energy use, and independent economic forecasts for the year ahead.
- It was also noted that the position of trades unions regarding the national pay award may present some challenge to the Council's financial position.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance noted a saving of £125,000 due to no borrowing taking place in 2021/22, and how the administration was careful in its use of reserves due the exceptional circumstances faced.

RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the Financial Performance Report Q3 2022/23

112 Discretionary Council Tax Support Fund

The purpose of the report was to adopt the Discretionary Council Tax Support Fund for 2023/2024.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- UK Government had allocated £100 million to support vulnerable households in receipt of council tax support who had an outstanding liability.
- £102,731 had been allocated to the Council to support households.
- Table 3.3 in the report showed the Council's proposal to offer a payment of up to £50.
- The cost of this proposal was estimated to be £73,000.

Cabinet also noted the recommended delegation to the Deputy Chief Executive for approving the use of the surplus funds of this scheme in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- a) **APPROVE** a payment of £50 as detailed in para 3.3 of this report; and,
- b) **DELEGATE AUTHORITY** for the distribution of surplus funds to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

Voting Record – 7 for, 0 against, 0 abstention, 1 absent

113 Introduction of S106 Monitoring Fee Schedule

The purpose of the report was to set out the proposal of a S.106 Monitoring Fee Schedule for Cotswold District Council to help cover the cost of monitoring S.106 agreements.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Forward Planning introduced the report and outlined the proposal.

It was highlighted that the fee schedule would help to monitor how S.106 monies were spent and managed on infrastructure projects.

It was also noted how the fee would change depending on the size of the development and the time spent by officers on monitoring these projects.

RESOLVED that Cabinet APPROVED the introduction of a S106 Monitoring Fee Charging Schedule as detailed in the report

Voting Record – 7 for, 0 against, 0 abstention, 1 absent

114 UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update

The purpose of the report was to seek Cabinet's approval for the governance arrangements and allocation of funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation introduced the report.

The Cabinet Member thanked officers for their work at speed granting on these proposals.

Cabinet noted the following points as outlined by the Cabinet Member;

- The UKSPF as part of the Levelling Up fund granted the council £1 million over 3 years.
- 1st year 109,000 has now been allocated.
- Of the Year 2 funding of £219,000 and Year 3 funding of £617,000, the report proposes £135,000 to be allocated for each of these years to the Local Enterprise Partnership Business Growth Hub located on the Royal Agricultural College Campus in Cirencester to support their work.
- A service delivery agreement with the Council and the Growth Hub would be required.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet APPROVED to:

1. NOTE Government approval of the Council's UKSPF Local Investment Plan.
2. NOTE the allocation of funding to Year One projects.
3. APPROVE the governance arrangements set out in para 2.3.
4. APPROVE the allocation of up to £135,000 of Year Two (2023/24) UKSPF funding to the Cirencester Growth Hub, subject to entering into a satisfactory service level agreement, and up to £135,000 in Year Three (2024/25) subject to satisfactory performance.
5. DELEGATE AUTHORITY to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Economy and Transformation, to approve details of the service level agreement with the Growth Hub.

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6. DELEGATE AUTHORITY to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Transformation, to allocate the balance of Year Two funding.

Voting Record – 7 for, 0 against, 0 abstention, 1 absent

115 Approve the Cotswold District Council Vacant Building Credit Technical Advice Note

The purpose of the report was to request that Cabinet approve the Technical Advice Note which explains how the council will implement the provisions of national policy and guidance on Vacant Building Credit in Cotswold District.

The Leader of the Council invited the Principal Planning Officer as the report author to introduce the report.

The Principal Planning Officer outlined that there was ambiguity around the terms of Vacant Building Credits and how a building is defined as 'vacant'.

It was explained that the technical advice note seeks to clarify the Council's position for any future developments which will help to bring consistent decisions and reduce planning appeals.

RESOLVED that Cabinet APPROVED the use of the Cotswold District Council Vacant Building Credit Technical Advice Note from 13 March 2023

Voting Record – 7 for, 0 against, 0 abstention, 1 absent

116 Application to Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to designate land in Cotswold District as a rural area

The purpose of the report was to set out the various considerations around making an application to the Secretary of State to designate land within the District as a rural area under Section 157 of the Housing Act 1985.

The Leader of the Council invited the Principal Planning Officer as the report author to speak.

It was noted that this application would help to develop new affordable homes and that 15 -25 additional new affordable housing units would potentially be delivered by the end of the Local Plan period in 2031.

It was also noted that this designation would last beyond the end of the current Local Plan period.

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing welcomed the report as a good opportunity to get new affordable housing in the district.

RESOLVED That Cabinet APPROVED the proposal to apply to the Secretary of State to designate land within Cotswold District as a rural area.

Voting Record – 7 for, 0 against, 0 abstention, 1 absent

117 Sustainable Transport - Decarbonisation trajectory

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The purpose of the report was to set out a proposed trajectory for transport decarbonisation in Cotswold to meet the target of net zero carbon emissions by 2045.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Forward Planning introduced the report.

It was noted that this report, whilst focussing on an issue largely relating to the highways authority, had implications for Cotswold's local plan update and the Council's corporate priorities to tackle climate change.

The Cabinet Member highlighted that the background of this report was how emissions across the United Kingdom have dropped by 45% in the last 30 years. The Cabinet Member added that further reductions will be required to meet national net-zero targets in the next 30 years.

It was noted that transport emissions have only dropped by 5% in the last 30 years nationally, and there was a large increase in vehicle usage during that time.

It was outlined that the report sets out the trajectory and the steps to reach the Council's corporate target to reach net-zero by 2045. This included increasing the use of electric cars whilst reducing the overall number of car journeys by bringing services closer to residents.

Cabinet commended the work of the report author Hannah Fountain in the area of tackling climate change in the district, and engaging with residents on these issues.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet AGREED to proceed with the development of the Sustainable Transport Strategy using the proposed high level framework for transport carbon reduction in Cotswold, comprising targets to avoid, shift and improve vehicle journeys as set out in Table I.

Voting Record – 7 for, 0 against, 0 abstention, 1 absent

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

Cabinet noted the Schedule of Decisions.

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

There were none.

120 Approval of contracts for the management of the Council's leisure and culture facilities

The purpose of the report was to seek the authority of Cabinet (subject to Full Council's approval on the 15th March 2023) to award a contract for the management of the Council's leisure facilities and the management of the Council's culture facilities

Before proceeding with this item, the Leader outlined that there were exempt annexes and reminded Cabinet Members to exercise caution in discussing this item.

The Monitoring Officer advised that, to maintain confidentiality, the term 'preferred bidder' should be used when discussing the proposal. It was also noted that elements of the report were marked as exempt due to commercial sensitivities.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing introduced the item and noted the thorough work by officers on this item.

It was noted that this was about the delivery of the Cotswold leisure facilities in Cirencester, Bourton and Chipping Campden and the cultural facilities in Cirencester and Northleach.

Cabinet noted that this is one of the largest procurement decisions that this Council has to make.

Cabinet also noted the leadership of Cllr Forde in moving this procurement process forward.

Cabinet outlined that a large amount of detailed work had taken place on this item.

It was also noted that Recommendation 4 would be changed to ensure that the delegation would be to the Leader of the Council as well as the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing as she would be leaving the Council and therefore her Cabinet role on 8 May.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet agreed to recommend to Council to:

1. AGREE to award the Leisure Management Contract to the preferred bidder set out in EXEMPT Annex C (i).
2. AGREE to award the Culture Management Contract to the preferred bidder set out in EXEMPT Annex C (ii).
3. DELEGATE AUTHORITY to the interim Head of Legal Services for Contract finalisation.
4. DELEGATE AUTHORITY to Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, the Leader of the Council and Leadership and Management Team (Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Governance and Development), to accept capital investment proposals set out in preferred bidder's Leisure tender submission.
5. NOTE the position set out in paragraph 5.6 for the mobilisation period and in the early process of embedding the new contracts.

Voting Record – 7 for, 0 against, 0 abstention, 1 absent

121 Matters exempt from publication

Cabinet did not enter private session for Agenda Item 18 and did not discuss the exempt annexes.

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 7.30 pm

Chair

(END)