



COUNCIL

MEETING : Thursday, 28th February 2019

PRESENT : Cllrs. J. Brown (Mayor), Hyman (Sheriff & Deputy Mayor), James, Watkins, Cook, Noakes, H. Norman, Organ, Pullen, Hilton, Gravells, Tracey, Stephens, Lugg, Lewis, Morgan, Wilson, Bhaimia, Haigh, D. Brown, Dee, Taylor, Hansdot, Patel, Toleman, D. Norman, Hampson, Brooker, Brazil, Coole, Derbyshire, Finnegan, Hawthorne, Melvin, Ryall, Smith and Walford

Others in Attendance

Managing Director
Corporate Director (Partnership Working)
Corporate Director (Service Transformation)
Head of Policy and Resources
Head of Place
Head of Communities
Solicitor – One Legal
Policy and Governance Manager
Democratic and Electoral Services Team Leader

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. Hanman and Williams

59. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

59.1 That the minutes of the meeting held on 24th January 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record by the Mayor, save for para 57.15 being amended to state that Councillor Brazil and Ryall accepted the amendment.

60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

60.1 There were no declarations of interest.

61. CALL OVER

61.1 The Mayor invited Members to indicate whether they wished to reserve agenda items 8 and/or 9 for discussion. Members indicated that they wished to reserve both items for discussion.

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62. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

- 62.1 A Gloucester resident asked if any pay increases for Councillors were planned and, if they were, would it be explained why an increase was necessary. Councillor Hannah Norman, Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources, advised that Members received an allowance and the Council engaged an Independent Remuneration Panel to review these allowances. She further advised that, a 2% uplift had been approved by Council in January as well as an increase in the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to reflect the added commitment of the role.
- 62.1 A Gloucester resident informed Council that he had assisted an individual with a significant disability. He stated that he was being engaged with by P3 who had placed him in a hotel but that the resident had provided material assistance as well as cash. He asked that he be reimbursed for these expenses. He further asked why P3 had moved the individual to various temporary accommodations and not placed him in more permanent accommodation.
- 62.2 Councillor Watkins, Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods, thanked the resident for his question and advised that she could not comment on individual cases nor respond on behalf of P3. Councillor Watkins stated that she was grateful for the assistance the resident had given individuals.
- 62.3 The resident referred to previous changes to the funding of voluntary organisations and queried why this had been spent on Community Protection Officers. He asked if it was within their remit to physically remove people from the City Centre. Councillor Watkins advised that the Community Protection Officers were jointly funded and that they undertook important work which she praised. She stated that it was the first time she had heard of an issue regarding removal and advised that if there was a complaint, Gloucester City Safe was the appropriate body to contact.
- 62.4 A Gloucester resident addressed Council and informed Members that he was homeless and had been sleeping rough. He stated that he had been moved to a number of temporary accommodation sites and asked why the Council allowed P3 to have significant sums of money when it did not do its job.
- 62.5 Councillor Watkins stated that she was sorry to hear of the resident's circumstances and advised that she could not discuss individual cases publically but would take his details in order to provide a response.
- 62.6 Councillor Watkins advised that P3 was commissioned by the County Council and helped people every day.

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63. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

63.1 There were no petitions or deputations.

64. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor

64.1 The Mayor informed Members that June Ayland had passed away. She was the Mayoress in 1986/87 and Sheriffs Lady in 1990/91. Her husband, Tony Ayland, served as Mayor and Sheriff. The Mayor expressed her condolences on behalf of the Council.

64.2 The Mayor reported that Peter Smith had died. He was the Council's Cemetery and Crematorium operative and the Chapel attendant who had served with the Council for 19 years. She stated that he would be sadly missed by his colleagues and that she would express the Council's condolences to his family.

64.3 The Mayor thanked Members who attended the Civic Reception I hosted to thank the Windrush Generation for the enormous contribution they have made to the City of Gloucester. She reported that she had received a message from one of the organisers:

“We enjoyed the event and wish to express our appreciation for the time and trouble taken by you all to publicly thank the “Windrush Generation for our contribution to the development of the City of Gloucester.” During her time in Gloucester, since 1968, “this is the first public occasion in which I can recall being personally thanked for our services and contribution to the life and development of the Community in which myself and others like me have lived and worked over so many years.”

64.4 The Mayor encouraged Members to purchase tickets for the Civic Charity Ball which would take place on 18th May 2019.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

64.5 The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee informed Members that there would be a visit to the building where the new reception would be located on 7th March 2019 at 6pm. He further informed Members that there would be a meeting to specifically examine the plans on 12th March 2019 at 6.30pm in the Civic Suite.

65. FINAL BUDGET PROPOSALS (INCLUDING MONEY PLAN AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME)

65.1 The Mayor proposed how the debate would be conducted. She stated that The Leader would present the budget proposals. The Leader of the Labour Group followed by the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group would then respond. The Mayor then advised how amendments would be taken. She outlined that the Leader of the largest opposition Group (Labour Group)

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would present their first amendment. The Leader of the next largest Group (Liberal Democrat Group) would then present their amendment. Following this, the Labour Group would then present their remaining amendments. The Mayor sought a speech for and a speech against to be followed by a vote. At this point, the ten Labour Members left the room.

- 65.2 The Mayor put the proposal to the vote and it was carried. The Labour Group returned to the room. Upon their return, a recorded vote was requested. This was declined as the vote had been taken.
- 65.3 Council considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Hannah Norman, which sought approval for the 2019-24 Money Plan and the 2019/20 Budget Proposals.

Councillor James, the Leader of the Council, moved the recommendations as set out in the report. He thanked the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources and the Head of Policy and Resources for their work in preparing the budget proposals. He further thanked staff across the authority for their work over the past year as well as for the work they would undertake in the year ahead.

- 65.4 Councillor James stated that last 12 months had been a period of progress against the backdrop of a continued tough financial environment. He advised that the first phase of the Barbican student housing project had been completed which was an example of successful regeneration. He further advised that this had been possible due to the University of Gloucestershire's new business school as well as increased student numbers at Hartpury University.
- 65.5 Councillor James also outlined a number of successful projects during the course of the year such as:
- The completion of Phase 1 of the Bakers Quay development in August 2018 which comprised new homes, a hotel and a new restaurant;
 - The completion of phase I of Project Pilgrim at the Cathedral and the restoration of Llanthony Secunda Priory;
 - Planning permission granted for a new visitor centre at Robinswood Hill, with the Council contributing £200k to the £1 million cost
 - The opening of the new bus station;
 - £3.75m of investment was secured from GFirst LEP for the redevelopment of Gloucester Railway Station
 - The City was awarded Purple Flag status for the Council's management of the night-time economy;
 - The developers City and Country gained planning consent for 200 new homes on the site of the former Gloucester Prison;
 - Planning permission was granted for the first two phases of the redevelopment of Kings Walk Shopping Centre with initial phase one stripping out work completed;
 - Development continued at Black Dog Way by Rooftop Housing, Crest Nicholson and McCarthy & Stone alongside the canal and the new Next

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Home and Fashion store was due to open at the Peel Centre in the very near future and;

- The submission of a complex planning application which would enable the redevelopment of Kings Square and the wider Kings Quarter.

65.6 He also advised that good progress was being made to identify a development partner for the former Fleece site.

65.7 Councillor James stated that the financial environment the Council operated in had been challenging for a number of years and it continued to be difficult. He advised that cumulative saving of £5.4m had been achieved over the last six years through driving out efficiencies, sharing services with other council and by finding new income sources.

65.8 Councillor James stated that the Council, like numerous others, had been hit hard by funding reductions and that the coming year's settlement would see a reduction in government funding of a further £1m. Between 2016/17 to 2019/20, grand funding had been reduced from £9m to £4.9m. He referred to the Key Cities report which listed Gloucester as one of the worst top ten worst hit cities in the country but that Gloucester was one of the council which had raised charges the least. By way of example, Councillor James advised that there were no plans to increase car parking charges in the coming years. He further advised that the figures did not take into account additional project funding that had been secured from the Government nor the benefits from being a part of the Business Rates Retention Pilot.

65.9 Councillor James also reminded Members that the Council had been successful in securing capital and competitive funding such as:

£6.4 million for the new bus station;
£4.13 million for Blackfriars;
£1.5 million for the Great Place scheme;
£3.75 million for the railway station project and;
£400,000 for the UK Digital Retail Innovation Centre.

65.10 Councillor James reiterated that changes to the New Homes Bonus had disadvantaged the Council but that officers and the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources had met the Local Government Minister to lobby on behalf of small, urban district councils. The Council had continued to respond to technical consultations on the local government finance settlement to make the case that there should be no further reductions to the incentives within the scheme. He expressed that he was pleased that the Government had not increased the 0.4% deadweight before the New Homes Bonus was payable. Councillor James also advised Members that the Council had joined the Key Cities Group as an additional lobbying mechanism and to share best practice with fellow urban authorities.

65.11 Councillor James stated that, while the Prime Minister announced the end of austerity, this was unlikely to relieve pressure on district councils as it meant more money for priorities such as the NHS. With regard to the Business Rates Retention pilot monies, the money plan recommended that these be

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placed in a reserve in preparation for expected reductions in 2020/21 following the fair funding and business rates retention reviews. Councillor James therefore stated that it was prudent to place these monies in reserve in order to protect the Council in future years.

- 65.12 Councillor James outlined that the next phase of service transformation was under way and included a review of processes and investment in technology. He also outlined that the office move would deliver savings of £100k and enable the Council to work more closely with County colleagues. He also advised that this would make the current premises available for disposal. Councillor James also advised that the Property Investment Fund Board had met and identified the first investments. He stated that he would happily brief Group Leaders on a confidential basis. He confirmed that there were in Gloucester and would contribute to the City's ongoing regeneration. Income of £100k was therefore included for 2019/20.
- 65.13 Councillor James informed Members of a further area of proposed savings through Energy Efficiency Projects. He stated that the Council had a commitment to energy savings from investment in plant at high energy consuming buildings such as the GL1 leisure centre where there was a combined heat and power unit. This was delivering the expected savings that could be accounted for. He also outlined a programme of savings through lighting having been replaced with efficient LED light fittings. Councillor James also advised that the Council was on target to produce energy savings worth £50k through these projects and further lighting efficiencies.
- 65.14 Councillor James also explained that none of the budget savings proposals involved any reduction in services or staffing levels as difficult decisions had been taken up front.
- 65.15 He stated that the City Council was leading on investing in the City centre including the deal done with Reef Group for Kings Walk shopping centre which would also generate further income through both retail and other outlets. This was in addition to the £2m City Centre Investment Fund which had delivered a number of projects. Councillor James also drew to Members' attention that provision of £5m was made for the next two years to deliver the regeneration at King's Square.
- 65.16 Councillor James confirmed that a bid would be made to the Government's Future High Streets Fund as challenges to the retail sector meant that significant parts of the City Centre would require repurposing away from retail in the coming years. He stated that homes, workspace and community and leisure activities would sit alongside a consolidated retail core.
- 65.17 Councillor James stated that housing was a major issue in the city and was a priority for the Administration. He advised that the Council was in advanced discussions about a deal which would make a significant amount of emergency accommodation available in a matter of months as well as using some of the Council's own property to assist in meeting need.

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- 65.18 Councillor James informed Members that the budget for the Culture and Leisure portfolio was adjusted to provide a more realistic income target. He stated that savings would be achieved through the transfer of the Tourist Information Centre to both the Guildhall and the Museum of Gloucester. Councillor James also announced that entrance charges at the Museum of Gloucester would cease from 1st April 2019 other than for special exhibitions. The fees and charges book would be amended to reflect this.
- 65.19 Councillor James advised that a procurement exercise was being undertaken to engage a new operator for the Eastgate Indoor Market.
- 65.20 He also outlined the proposal to increase Council Tax by 2.99% and that this meant the average increase since 2004 was a little over 2%.
- 65.21 Councillor James concluded by stating that the budget proposals were ambitious for the City, would further regeneration, support Gloucester's communities and protect services.
- 65.22 Councillor Hannah Norman seconded the proposals and provided further financial details. She stated that Gloucester had benefitted from the 100% business rates retention pilot but had been unsuccessful in bidding to become part of the 75% retention pilot. She also stated that both Officers and Members had lobbied for further funding and would continue to do so.
- 65.23 Councillor Norman stated that Together Gloucester had entered its second phase, consultants Ignite were assisting in a number of process redesigns and major improvements had been made to the provision of IT across the Council.
- 65.24 Councillor Norman referred to the importance of consulting with residents on the budget proposals. She stated that there had been 320 responses and that a summary was available. Having considered responses and the budget proposals as a whole, Councillor Norman stated that she was confident it was a prudent budget.
- 65.25 The Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor Pullen, responded to the budget proposals. He stated that there had been nine years of Conservative led government and questioned whether austerity was over. He also noted the Centre for Cities report which highlighted 23% cuts and that Gloucester was the ninth worst affected city being the only one in the South West which was in the top ten of worst affected cities.
- 65.26 Councillor Pullen stated that the impact of austerity could be seen in Gloucester. He cited that the Council refused to deal with fly-tipping and that there were large areas of the City which had significant levels of litter. He also pointed to there being a lack of safe, local accommodation as well as the Amey contract's failures. Councillor Pullen shared his view that whilst there were proposals to increase council tax, there would be less delivery of services and that vulnerable people suffered most.

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- 65.27 Councillor Pullen welcomed the funding for the King's Walk development. He also expressed his appreciation that the Head of Policy and Resources had allocated £1m as contingency whilst the Liberal Democrat Group sought to use half of this amount which would be wasteful. He also advised caution in predicting what savings would be made from the office move.
- 65.28 Councillor Pullen noted that £150k had been allocated to transformation posts and queried why process redesign had not been considered prior to redundancies as part of Together Gloucester. With regard to housing, Councillor Pullen asserted that the Council had taken up short-term solutions and measures which only dealt with the symptoms of homelessness. He stated that more safe, decent temporary accommodation was required as well as social housing for rent.
- 65.29 Councillor Pullen advised that the Labour Group would be tabling a series of costed amendment under the financial advice of the Head of Policy and Resources. He further advised that the Group's main priority was housing and homelessness and that the Labour Group wanted the best for the City and those most affected by austerity.
- 65.30 The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Hilton, responded to the budget proposals and thanked Councillor James and Councillor Norman for their presenting the budget. He stated that the austerity imposed by Westminster was to the amount of £8.5m over a ten year period.
- 65.31 Councillor Hilton shared his concern that the office move would see the Council in cramped accommodation which could result in greater costs in the future. He also shared his view that the Streetcare contract was not fulfilling its role.
- 65.32 Councillor Hilton stated that the Council was no longer building homes for rent and that this could generate income as well as meet need. He also noted that the Culture and Leisure portfolio had overspent during the year and that this needed to be tackled. He concluded by stating that the amendment (and parts thereof) was intended to rebuild services that had ceased.
- 65.33 Councillor Stephens, seconded by Councillor Pullen, proposed the following amendment:
- Council resolves that:
1. The Property Investment Fund be reduced to £55,000,000
 2. A Private Sector Property Acquisition Fund be established to the value of £5,000,000
 3. That a Social Housing Investment Fund be established to the value of £20,000,000

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- 65.34 Councillor Stephens cited figures of those on the housing waiting list and/or residing in temporary accommodation. He also cited the example of Leeds City Council which had not placed anyone in temporary accommodation since 2013. He suggested that this could be done but that there was not political will to do it.
- 65.35 Councillor Stephens accepted that it was prudent to borrow to invest. He stated that he wanted to use this option to alleviate the housing crisis.
- 65.36 Councillor James did not accept the amendment.
- 65.37 Councillor Hilton shared his view that this did not constitute a budget amendment but was for a commitment to future borrowing. He stated that the priority should be to invest in homes for rent and that the Liberal Democrat Group would support the amendment.
- 65.38 Councillor Coole cited examples of poor housing conditions in Matson and Robinswood that he had been informed of at ward surgeries. He stated that the proposals for regeneration in Matson and Robinswood were not sufficient and that solutions must be found immediately.
- 65.39 Councillor Watkins, Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods, stated that all Members shared the goal to improve lives. She advised that tackle housing issues and homelessness was an absolute priority for the administration. Councillor Watkins further advised that the Council looked to provide a number of housing options and to assist with not only people's housing issues but the complex needs that may exacerbate this. She also noted that, since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act, much work had gone into developing personal plans for those who required assistance.
- 65.40 Councillor Hampson stated that 66% of homeless families were in their predicament due to eviction by private landlords. He further stated that it was unrealistic to expect the private sector alone to absorb this pressure. Councillor Hampson shared his view that social rent was the better option.
- 65.41 Councillor Toleman advised that he, along with other members of the community, undertook voluntary work with homeless people. He stated that numerous agencies were doing their best to find housing solutions.
- 65.42 Councillor Pullen stated that the Council should not continue to place people in bed and breakfast accommodation and that the amendment was a way to improve housing matters.
- 65.43 Councillor James advised that, under the property investment rules, the Council could invest where appropriate. He stated that there was insufficient detail in the amendment for it to be considered and shared his view that it was more appropriate to work with development partners to deliver further housing stock.

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65.44 Councillor Hilton, seconded by Councillor Wilson, proposed the following composite amendment (which consisted of nine independent constituent parts):

1 Employ an Urban Designer - permanent contract Cost: £41,000 Cost ongoing: yes. Source: Transformation Proposals

2 Employ a Principal Planning Officer - permanent contract Cost: £48,500 Cost ongoing: yes. Source: Transformation Proposals

3 Employ an Asset Manager - permanent contract Cost: £41,000 Cost ongoing: yes Source: Transformation Proposals

4 Increase Members Allocation Fund to £1,000 per elected member Cost: 39 @ £500 = £19,500 Cost ongoing: yes. Source: Transformation Proposals

Sub Total of first four parts: £150,000

5 Employ expertise to work up plans to establish a Housing Development Company Cost: £100,000 Cost ongoing: no Source: 100% Business Rates Pilot

6 Repair Grants for Community Buildings Cost: £100,000 Cost ongoing: no Source: 100% Business Rates Pilot

7 Cataloguing Museum Artifacts - two year project Cost: £100,000 Cost ongoing: no Source: 100% Business Rates Pilot

8 Establish Earmarked Reserve to defend planning decisions at appeals Cost: £100,000 Cost ongoing: no Source: 100% Business Rates Pilot

9 Extra Drinking Water Bottle Refill Points - City Centre Cost: £10,000 Cost ongoing: no Source: 100% Business Rates Pilot

Sub Total £410,000

Total Extra Investment £560,000

65.45 Councillor James did not accept the amendment in its entirety but stated that he would amend his motion by virtue of accepting point four: *Increase Members Allocation Fund to £1,000 per elected member Cost: 39 @ £500 = £19,500 Cost ongoing: yes. Source: Transformation Proposals.*

65.46 Councillor Hilton provided an outline of the amendment and informed Members that it constituted a £560k investment without an increase in council tax. He stated that a number of the parts of the amendment were to be funded through replacing the transformation proposals which he considered the continued implementation of austerity.

65.47 Councillor Hilton stated that employing further specialist staff would assist with regeneration projects and would help progress projects. He said that this would be a wise use of funds.

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- 65.48 Councillor Hilton thanked the administration for including the increase in the Members Allocation Fund to £1k per Member and stated that it would prove useful for supporting small scale projects in local communities. He also stated in relation to point 5 of the amendment, that expertise had been engaged for projects such as Kings Walk and this could similarly be done in order to establish a Housing Development Company.
- 65.49 Councillor Hilton outlined the proposal to provide repair grants for community buildings and that this was necessary given the condition of numerous buildings in the City.
- 65.50 Councillor Wilson, in seconding the motion, shared his view that there were considerable numbers of items of historical importance which remained uncatalogued. He argued that it was necessary to complete this work in order to restore a full complement of artefacts.
- 65.51 Councillor Wilson noted that efforts were made in the planning team to avoid appeals but that occasionally they did occur. He outlined the proposal to establish earmarked reserves to defend appeals should they occur. He further outlined that, while there was a bottle refill point for drinking water at the bus station, this was insufficient. To introduce a suite of refill points across the City would be advantageous to both the environment and to public health.
- 65.52 Councillor Haigh noted that, in moving the amendment, Councillor Hilton had criticised Conservative austerity policy and further noted that the Liberal Democrats had been in government with the Conservatives between 2010-15.
- 65.53 Councillor Stephens reiterated the need to improve the levels of housing stock in the City and that he supported the establishment of a Housing Development Company. He further stated that this would enable the Council to facilitate the building of good quality housing that people could afford.
- 65.54 Councillor Watkins stated that increasing the Members Allocated Fund would allow community work to grow and enable residents to make the most of assets in their area. She also encouraged Members to make use of the fund each year.
- 65.55 Councillor Cook noted that the matter of water refill points had been considered a number of times. He stated that there were discussions taking place to have provision for the public to refill bottles with water at City Council venues.
- 65.56 With regard to cataloguing museum artefacts, Councillor Noakes outlined a number of funding streams which were being pursued to improve the cultural offer of the City. She also pointed to the potential use of volunteers with particular areas of interest in order to assist with the organisation of artefacts.

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65.57 Councillor Organ stated that his primary objective as a Cabinet Member was improving the development of housing across the City. He further stated that the most appropriate way in which to do this was in partnership with developers, much of which had already been successful. Councillor Organ advised that the planning team went to great efforts to ensure that applications would not be subject to appeal but, were this to occur, the defence of such appeals was provided for in the existing budget proposals.

65.58 Councillor Hilton concluded by stated that the purpose of the amendment was to reinstate some matters which had been lost in previous years and would assist in the provision of housing, urban design and public health.

65.59 The amendment was put to the vote and was lost save for point four which was incorporated into the main budget proposals.

65.60 Councillor Stephens, seconded by Councillor Pullen, proposed the following amendment:

“Council resolves that the Capital Budget 2019/20 be amended by:

4. The establishment of a Neighbourhood Environmental Improvement Fund to the value of £100,000

The above to be financed by either:

- a) Capital Receipts if available or
- b) Transfer from VAT Shelter Reserve”

65.61 Councillor Stephens outlined the amendment and stated that a number of open spaces had been neglected. He further stated that parts of the City appeared to be lacking attention and that the Streetscene contract had had a role to play in this. Councillor Stephens also cited vehicles which had encroached on open spaces as partial reason for some areas appearing in a poor condition.

65.62 Councillor Hilton indicated that the Liberal Democrat Group would support the amendment also citing issues with the Streetscene contract.

65.63 Councillor Watkins stated that creating safe and attractive spaces across the City was a key aspect of her portfolio and that great effort was being made to improve areas which needed it. She praised residents who were getting involved such as those who had organised themselves to organise grass-cutting in some parts of Gloucester. Councillor Watkins also pointed to the recruitment of Community Builders who played a significant role in bring residents together to make the most of their skills and desires to see a better City.

65.64 Councillor Haigh stated that investment was necessary and it was neither desirable nor reasonable to expect residents to be doing work the Council should be doing.

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65.65 Councillor James, whilst he did not accept the amendment, stated that a report would be brought forward in the future to explore these issues and possible remedies. He assured Members that this would be considered in the near future and would be dependent on financial performance through the year.

65.66 The amendment was put to the vote and was lost.

65.67 Councillor Pullen, seconded by Councillor Stephens, proposed the following amendment:

“Council resolves that the Revenue Budget 2019/20 be amended by:

1. Increase Managing Director post to full time £79,000

The above to be financed by deletion of 2 x Service Transformation Posts £100,000.”

65.68 Councillor Pullen reiterated his view that process redesign and transformation should have been considered prior to the initial stage of Together Gloucester. He stated that the Labour Group accepted that there was a role for one Service Transformation post. He further stated that the amendment was not a personal reflection on the current Managing Director but that the funds could be better deployed in having a full time post with strategic oversight.

65.69 Councillor H. Norman stated that it was surprising that the Labour Group sought to delete posts at the Council rather than creating them where appropriate. She also stated that it was necessary to have the Service Transformation posts to consolidate the progress that had been made in making the Council fit for the 21st Century. Councillor Norman also pointed to the benefits of close working with the County Council afforded to the City by having a Managing Director of both Councils.

65.70 Councillor James advised that the budget proposals had been amended to include provision for two Service Transformation Posts rather than the earlier envisaged three. He too reiterated the close working relationship between both the City and County Council – something that was enhanced by the current arrangements with the Managing Director.

65.71 Councillor Stephens queried why the City Council did not have its own, full-time Managing Director given the work that was required in both the City and the organisation. He stated that the job required the full attention of its Managing Director and suggested this was a good use of Council funds.

65.72 The amendment was put to the vote and was lost.

65.73 Councillor Lugg, seconded by Councillor Hampson had circulated the following amendment prior to the meeting:

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“Council resolves that the Revenue Budget 2019/20 be amended by:

1. Increase Councillors Community Fund to £1,000 per Councillor £19,500
The above to be financed by deletion of 2 x Service Transformation Posts
£100,000.”

65.74 Following Councillor James’ amendment of the original budget proposals to include such provision, Councillor Lugg withdrew her amendment.

65.75 Councillor Haigh, seconded by Councillor Coole, proposed the following amendment:

“Council resolves that the 2019/20 Revenue Budget be amended by:

1. Period Dignity Project (1-year pilot) £5,000

The above to be financed by reduction in the Trading Development Reserve
£5,000.”

65.76 Councillor Haigh informed Members that a similar matter had been put to Council previously. She further informed Members that that matter had been in respect of period poverty and that this amendment sought to progress the debate to period dignity.

65.77 Councillor Haigh cited a number of Council’s which had piloted schemes whereby those who have periods could access sanitary products discretely and free of charge. She stated that this could be considered akin to requiring toilet paper and soap when using Council facilities and that both were a matter of health also.

65.78 Councillor Wilson praised the sentiment behind the amendment and stated that the Liberal Democrat Group would support it.

65.79 Councillor Watkins agreed that it was important to consider such a matter and that, as stated at a previous Council meeting, it was important to signpost people to services that provided sanitary products. Councillor Watkins queried if the public would be in favour of taxpayers money being spent on such a measure.

65.80 Councillor Coole stated that the essence of the amendment was to provide products as and when they were required when residents visit Council buildings whether it be the Council’s offices or during an evening’s entertainment at the Guildhall.

65.81 The amendment was put to the vote and was lost.

65.82 Councillor Coole, seconded by Councillor Haigh, proposed the following amendment:

Council resolves that the 2019/20 Revenue Budget be amended by:

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1. The establishment of a Council led Housing Development Company £10,000

The above to be financed by reduction in the Trading Development Reserve £10,000.

- 65.83 Councillor James did not accept the amendment.
- 65.84 Councillor Coole stated that, as had been raised previously during the meeting, there was a chronic undersupply of good quality housing to rent in the City. He further stated that this could be alleviated by the establishment of a Council led Housing Development Company. Councillor Coole stated that such a company could mean that long term vacant property or land could be used to progress much needed housing projects.
- 65.85 Councillor Haigh reiterated that there was a real need to increase supply of housing for social rent. She noted that a number of other council across the country had set up similar ventures which were established on a commercial basis and could generate income for the Council. Councillor Haigh also stated that much of the issue of housing under supply stemmed from the continuation of the right-to-buy policy which had resulted in the number of homes being available for rent had decreased significantly in recent decades.
- 65.86 Councillor Organ reiterated that his primary concern was improving the provision of housing in the City but that the administration would not support the amendment as the best way to increase supply was to engage with developers to progress projects. He noted that a number of projects were already underway and it was the partnership between the Council and developers which could provide the scale of housing that was needed.
- 65.87 Councillor Hilton stated that the Liberal Democrat Group would support the amendment. He noted that his Group had proposed a similar measure as part of its amendment but queried whether the figure proposed was sufficient to establish an ambitious housing development company.
- 65.88 The amendment was put to the vote and was lost.
- 65.89 Councillor James summed up in relation to the Final Budget Proposals including the Money Plan and Capital Programme.
- 65.90 Councillor James stated that he had outlined the financial difficulties ahead. He rejected the assertion that £250k of cuts was proposed, reiterating that the proposals did not cut staff of service delivery. He further stated that the savings from the accommodation move would see savings of £100k p.a for two years.
- 65.91 Councillor James informed Members that all asuch budget projections were a best estimate. He further noted, in respect of the discussions on housing stock, that all parties had supported the housing stock transfer which took place in 2015.

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65.92 The motion was put to a recorded vote and was carried. The results were as follows:

For	Against	Abstention
James	Pullen	J. Brown
Watkins	Stephens	Hyman
Cook	Lugg	Hilton
Noakes	Bhaimia	Wilson
H. Norman	Haigh	D. Brown
Organ	Hansdot	Brazil
Gravells	Hampson	Ryall
Tracey	Coole	(7)
Lewis	Derbyshire	
Morgan	Smith	
Dee	(10)	
Taylor		
Patel		
Toleman		
D. Norman		
Brooker		
Finnegan		
Hawthorne		
Melvin		
Walford		
(20)		

65.93 **RESOLVED that:-**

- (1) The proposals for the 2019/20 budget included in this report be approved.
- (2) The implementation of the target budget reductions set in the Money plan 2019/24 be approved.
- (3) It be noted that consultation has been undertaken on budget proposals to achieve the level of savings required in 2019/20.

66. COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2019/20

- 66.1 Council considered the report of the Leader of the Council recommending passing the resolution as set out in the Appendix 1 of the report relating to the setting of Council Tax.
- 66.2 Councillor James moved the recommendations as laid out in the report. In accordance with Part 4 Rule 18.05 of the Constitution and at the request of Councillors James, Watkins, H. Norman, Organ and Noakes, names were recorded as follows:

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For

Against

Abstention

**Brown J
Hyman
James
Watkins
Cook
Noakes
Norman H
Organ
Pullen
Hilton
Gravells
Tracey
Stephens
Lugg
Lewis
Morgan
Wilson
Bhaimia
Haigh
Brown D
Dee
Taylor
Hansdot
Patel
Toleman
Norman D
Hampson
Brooker
Brazil
Coole
Derbyshire
Finnegan
Hawthorne
Melvin
Ryall
Smith
Walford
(37)**

66.3 **RESOLVED:** That the Council pass the statutory resolutions as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

67. NOTICES OF MOTION

NOTICE OF MOTION BY THE LABOUR GROUP

67.1 The following motion was proposed by Councillor Pullen and was seconded by Councillor Stephens:

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“Gloucester City Council notes with concern that:

1. On 11 October 2018 it was announced that 74 crown post offices across the UK, including that in Gloucester, will be franchised to WHSmith. Taken together, successive franchise announcements mean the loss of 60% of the crown office network since 2013.
2. These privatisations are financed using millions of pounds of public money, despite the fact that the public has never endorsed the closures, indeed they have only ever protested against them. In 2014/15 alone, £13 million of public money was used to pay compensation to get rid of post office staff, and the CWU estimates the staff compensation cost of the latest privatisation will be at least £30 million, affecting as it does, 800 staff.
3. Reports by Consumer Focus (2012) and Citizens Advice (2016) have identified issues with the franchising of post offices to WHSmith including poor accessibility for people with mobility impairments, longer queuing times, and inferior service and advice on products.
4. Franchising means the loss of jobs with good terms and conditions at the Post Office. WHSmith replaces experienced post office staff with new employees on typically minimum wage part time roles. This is clearly bad for jobs in the local area and the Post Office workers, many of whom are CWU members.
5. The closure of our Crown post offices and relocation to a WHSmith, also means the loss of prime high street stores and this contributes to the demise of our town centres. No explanation has been given as to why the profit-making Crown post offices are being handed to a failing retailer with an uncertain future, and what will happen to these services if WHSmith folds.
6. All Crown post offices are under threat of closure and/or franchising in future, and if the latest round of privatisations is allowed to go ahead, it could prove the tipping point for the viability of the entire post office network.

This Council believes that;

7. Our post offices are a key asset for the community and the expertise and experience of staff there is invaluable.
8. The relentless franchising and closure programme of the profit-making Crown post Offices, points to a lack of vision rather than the plan for growth and innovation that is needed.
9. Government should therefore halt these closures and bring together stakeholders, including the CWU, and industry experts to develop a new strategy that safeguards the future of the Post office.

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This council resolves to

10. Write to Government to raise concern about the apparent managed decline of the post office network and the impact on high streets across the UK as well as the service in the franchised premises, and the poor-quality jobs that result.
11. Call on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Leader of the Council to meet with WHSmith and the Post Office to urge a stop to the planned franchise.
12. To join local campaigning to raise awareness of the value of our Post Office and the need for it to remain an asset of and for the people.”

67.2 The motion was put to the vote and was lost.

Time of commencement: 6.00 pm hours
Time of conclusion: 9.20 pm hours

Chair