



## COUNCIL

**MEETING** : Thursday, 24th September 2020

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

### **Others in Attendance**

Managing Director  
Corporate Director, Partnerships  
Corporate Director, Transformation  
Head of Communities  
Head of Place  
Head of Policy and Resources  
Solicitor (One Legal)  
Policy and Governance Manager  
Democratic and Electoral Services Team Leader

**APOLOGIES** : None

### **24. MINUTES**

24.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

### **25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

25.1 Councillor Toleman declared an interest in motion number 6 by virtue of his being a Trustee of the Aspire Trust.

### **26. CALL OVER**

26.1 The Mayor invited Members to indicate whether they wished to reserve agenda item 9 for discussion. No Member indicated that they wished to do so.

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26.2 Councillor Cook (Leader of the Council) moved and Councillor H Norman (Deputy Leader of the Council) seconded that the Appointment of the Independent Remuneration Panel be approved.

26.3 **RESOLVED that:-** the Appointment of the Independent Remuneration Panel be approved.

**27. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)**

27.1 Mr Gower asked, could the council inform him if people who are evicted from the hotels provided by city council and are therefore on our streets or sofa surfing, what is the mechanism for appeal such a decision made by council policy to be given duty by the council and did the council feel this was good practice at any time of year but during a pandemic extremely dangerous for all concerned.

27.2 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods, Councillor Watkins, responded that, following the 'bring everyone in' message from central government the Council housed a significant number of people in hotel accommodation across the County and continued to house those in need for several weeks,. Sadly, not everyone was able to sustain the accommodation and some were continually evicted despite new placements being found. However, work with these individuals was on-going across the countywide housing partnership to offer support where possible. There are also a number of individuals who have been evicted from hotels who we have not been able to maintain contact with. Some of these people may have left the area and we can assume that some will be sofa-surfing with family and friends.

27.3 In respect of appeals, Councillor Watkins further responded that if someone was placed under s189 localism act (non-priority need) and the Council ended accommodation this did not come with right of appeal. If someone was deemed in priority need and placed under s188 of housing act and then subsequently loses accommodation, they have a right to request a judicial review. However individual circumstances were kept under constant review. She stated that it was important to add that individuals evicted from hotels were evicted due to non-compliance with hotel rules and their own behaviour. The Council could not compel hotel owners to keep individuals who pose a risk to staff, property and other residents.

27.4 Councillor Watkins advised that extensive efforts had been made as part of the Council's COVID-19 response to bring those in who were rough sleeping and at risk of rough sleeping. Unfortunately sometimes people lose accommodation and are unable to sustain accommodation for a multitude of reasons. In these cases, Officers and commissioned services work hard to offer support.

27.5 Mr Gower asked if Councillor Watkins stood by the Council's policy to provide food only for those not on benefits living in hotels, during the pandemic and previously homeless. Councillor Watkins advised that this was not the policy and had never been. Food was initially provided to all residents

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and then on the basis of need. The Council assessed individual needs of households placed and if it was deemed reasonable to provide access to food services the Council would do so. However, as a general rule, households were encouraged and enabled to provide for themselves by ensuring they were in receipt of any benefits they were entitled to.

- 27.6 Mr Gower noted that the Covid 19 Emergency Plan written by the Government regarding homeless provision in hotels and the second statement of intent mentioned an assessment for all concerned. He asked how many assessments per occupant of all hotels used have had an assessment in Gloucester.
- 27.7 Councillor Watkins responded that all households placed into emergency accommodation were given a full housing needs assessment. If they were placed out of hours, the Council aimed to assess within one working day to ensure their needs and situation were known.

**28. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)**

- 28.1 There were no petitions or deputations.

**29. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**The Mayor**

- 29.1 The Mayor informed Members that facemasks with the Civic Coat of Arms were available for a donation to the Civic Charity and that if any Members would like one, they could contact her. She thanked Members who had already made a contribution.
- 29.2 The Mayor announced that she had, that morning, had met with Officers and representatives of the ARK and the RBL to begin preparations for the Remembrance Day commemorations. She noted that there would have to be significant changes to this year's events but that it was the intention for the City to mark the day with due respect.

**Members of the Cabinet**

- 29.3 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods, Councillor Watkins, informed Members that in July the Government had launched the Next Steps Accommodation Programme inviting local authorities to apply for funding to ensure those accommodated would not return to rough sleeping and prevent others at risk, from ending up on the streets. She announced that an initial award of £296,542 had been made to Gloucestershire which would go towards providing immediate and short term help including secure hotel accommodation across the districts. Councillor Watkins also informed

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Members that she hoped to hear further news regarding capital funding for 'move on' accommodation in a matter of weeks. She thanked all those involved in leading on the bid.

- 29.3 The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, Councillor Morgan, announced that a company had been awarded a contract to help provide the Tall Ships Festival for 2021.

**30. MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME**

- 30.1 Council Hilton asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Cook, if the Business Improvement District's (BID) investigation into Marketing Gloucester was complete and if the City Council had received a copy of the report. If a copy had been received, would a copy be shared with Group Leaders. Councillor Cook advised that a report had been completed by a firm of accountants and this had been shared with the Council. He further advised that some of the information in it was confidential and, as such, could not be shared without first seeking advice. Councillor Cook also confirmed that the report had been shared with Gloucestershire Constabulary.
- 30.2 Councillor Stephens asked The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy, Councillor Gravells, if the Council had yet made a bid for funding from the recently announced provision of £12bn for the affordable homes programme. Councillor Gravells stated that he and officers were working closely with registered providers to ensure they were bidding for additional funding. He further stated that he would shortly be meeting with Homes England to examine how the resources would be directed as well as meeting with a provider to explore how the Council could assist them in accessing further funding.
- 30.3 Councillor Hilton noted that, as part of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Review, a local housing needs assessment had been carried out that identified potential new housing sites in the JCS area. He asked Councillor Gravells when this would be published.
- 30.4 Councillor Gravells stated that the Local Housing Needs Assessment was still a work in progress. He advised that an update would be provided at the next meeting of the Planning Policy Members Working Group and that he was happy for members of the JCS team to attend and provide that update.
- 30.5 Councillor Hilton asked if it had not been published for political reasons as some sensitive sites had been identified, particularly in Westgate and Matson and Robinswood. Councillor Gravells advised that this was not the case and that the work had taken longer than expected to complete. He further advised that Members would be briefed as soon as possible.
- 30.6 Councillor Stephens informed Members that a crowdfunding campaign to support the King's Theatre had been launched and asked the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, Councillor Morgan, if he had had any

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conversations with the group to examine what support could be given. Councillor Morgan stated that he would be more than happy for the theatre to get in touch with him regarding any proposals.

- 30.7 Councillor Wilson asked Councillor Gravells if he could envisage supporting a proposal which could result in the City having less new affordable housing due to the proposed replacement of s. 106 monies and community infrastructure levies with a different system. Councillor Gravells reiterated his commitment to listening to Members' view in regard to this and for views to be included in a cross-party response to the consultation of the White Paper where possible.
- 30.8 In response to a question from Councillor J. Brown regarding ensuring that rivers in the City were improved, Councillor Cook advised that the Council continually examined the quality of the rivers in tandem with the Environment Agency who was the responsible authority and that he had met with them during the previous week. He also encouraged Members to pass any information on river pollution to the Environment Agency.
- 30.9 Councillor Coole noted the responses to his written questions and asked Councillor Cook if he agreed that it was regrettable that the Council had not met as Trustees for three significant pieces of land it owned. Councillor Cook agreed and stated his belief that the Council as Trustees should meet. He was unsure whether Councillor Coole's suggestion of training for Members in differentiating between their roles as Members and Trustees would be beneficial but that if Members felt this was appropriate, such training could be facilitated.
- 30.10 In response to Councillor D. Brown's request for an update regarding the provision of additional defibrillators across the City, Councillor Watkins advised that the Community Wellbeing Team would be in touch to provide such an update.
- 30.11 Councillor Lugg asked if two rough sleepers she had encountered were reflective of a change in position from the initial COVID response or if they had been removed from accommodation. Councillor Watkins advised that while the identities of the individuals could not be known through anecdote, the Council continued to engage with rough sleepers and that unfortunately, during the initial stages of the pandemic some rough sleepers did not take up offers of accommodation. She encouraged Councillor Lugg to pass on information to officers if she had not done so.
- 30.12 Councillor Field asked Councillor Gravells how it would be ensured that the Council did not fall behind in the Podsmead regeneration consultation in light of cancelled consultation events due to COVID-19. Councillor Gravells advised that meetings between Members and others involved in the consultation would continue and that there was always the opportunity to ask questions directly of him. He also stated that continued engagement with residents would be discussed at the upcoming meeting.

**31. APPOINTMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

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31.1 **RESOLVED** that:- The Appointment of the Independent Remuneration Panel be approved.

**32. NOTICES OF MOTION**

32.1 Councillor Hilton moved and Councillor Bowkett seconded the following motion:

“That this council welcomes the establishment of the City Centre Commission under the chairmanship of the Dean of Gloucester.

The changing nature of town and city centres shows how important the City Centre Commission will be in creating the ideas that can be implemented to breath life back into our city centre.

We need to make Gloucester’s historic centre a place for businesses to thrive, local shops to trade, great attractions to encourage visitors to enjoy, with wonderful places to eat and stay; and finally a city centre where many people live and work.

We encourage the City Centre Commission to use its remit to come forward with imaginative proposals that can be taken forward to fruition.”

32.2 The motion was put to the vote and was carried.

**32.3 RESOLVED**

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We need to make Gloucester’s historic centre a place for businesses to thrive, local shops to trade, great attractions to encourage visitors to enjoy, with wonderful places to eat and stay; and finally a city centre where many people live and work.

We encourage the City Centre Commission to use its remit to come forward with imaginative proposals that can be taken forward to fruition.

32.4 Councillor D. Brown moved and Councillor Ryall seconded the following motion:

“This council agrees that the cycling infrastructure within the city of Gloucester could be improved to encourage far more journeys to be taken on two wheels.

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This council agrees to work with the county council to improve cycling infrastructure in Gloucester.

This council requests that the appropriate cabinet member prepares a report on the current cycling infrastructure within the city boundaries, to include recommendations on how this infrastructure could be better interconnected and improved to make cycling a more popular mode of transport."

- 32.5 The motion was put to the vote and was carried.

**32.6 RESOLVED that:-**

This council agrees that the cycling infrastructure within the city of Gloucester could be improved to encourage far more journeys to be taken on two wheels.

This council agrees to work with the county council to improve cycling infrastructure in Gloucester.

This council requests that the appropriate cabinet member prepares a report on the current cycling infrastructure within the city boundaries, to include recommendations on how this infrastructure could be better interconnected and improved to make cycling a more popular mode of transport.

- 32.7 Councillor Cook with the consent of his seconder, Councillor H. Norman, withdrew motion number three.

- 32.8 Councillor Hilton proposed and Councillor Hyman seconded the following revised motion in place of the one set out in the agenda:

"This council notes that J Sainsbury PLC has announced the closure of its popular city centre store on Northgate Street.

This council notes that this wonderful supermarket has been serving customers for nearly half a century.

This council agrees that it should do all it can to stop the supermarket's closure by persuading J Sainsbury PLC to keep it open or if not possible, continue to work with Sainsbury's to secure their presence in the city centre at another location

- 32.9 Five Members indicated the motion be put to a recorded vote. The votes were cast as follows:

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstention</b>
Haigh		
Lugg		
Cook		
Norman H.		

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Gravells	
Melvin	
Morgan	
Watkins	
Hilton	
Stephens	
Tracey	
	Hanman
Lewis	
Wilson	
Bhaimia	
Williams	
Brown D	
Dee	
Taylor	
Field	
Hansdot	
Organ	
Patel	
Toleman	
Norman D	
Pullen	
Hampson	
Brooker	
Brazil	
Brown J	
Coole	
Derbyshire	
Finnegan	
Hyman	
Ryall	
Walford	
Bowkett	

**32.10 RESOLVED that:-**

This council notes that J Sainsbury PLC has announced the closure of its popular city centre store on Northgate Street.

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**32.11 Councillor Stephens proposed and Councillor Pullen seconded the following motion:**

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“Council notes that local government has played a crucial role in combatting the Covid-19 pandemic, supporting local communities and will have a vital role to play in monitoring and containing the virus, restoring public confidence and reinvigorating our local economies as we move forward.

Council further notes that the cost of dealing with Covid-19 has placed an intolerable strain on local government finances. The Institute for Financial Studies (IFS) has estimated that councils will be left with a £2 billion funding gap this year. Councillor Richard Watts, Chair of the Local Government Association’s Resources Board has estimated that the funding shortfall could be at least as high as £6 billion.

The CEO of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) has warned that: “...a financial tsunami of reduced income and increased cost is heading in councils’ way. While it’s vital that our health service is given everything it needs to fight this disease, we must not forget the crucial role of services like public health, social care and all community services.”

In Gloucester we are forecasting a shortfall in funding this year more than £500,000. Our budget in future years will be constrained by predicted reductions in business rates, lost council tax income, lost income from commercial property and increased costs. Unfortunately, Government has stated that it will not reimburse councils for lost commercial income.

Council believes that it is vitally important that we are properly financed to be able to deal effectively with this unprecedented crisis and provide adequate support and services for our communities.

Cancellation of local authority debt would significantly reduce the burden on local authorities releasing around £4.5 billion extra a year, this would enable councils to begin to stabilise and grow their services in line with social needs. In Gloucester we currently pay over £1.5 million per annum in interest payments to service our debt to the PWLB.

Council resolves to:

1. Make representations to the Government and City MP that we should be fully reimbursed (as promised) for all the costs of dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic including loss of commercial income.
2. Support the national campaign for the cancellation of local authority debt to the Public Works Loans Board and call on the Government and City MP to support this.”

**32.12 RESOLVED that:-**

“Council notes that local government has played a crucial role in combatting the Covid-19 pandemic, supporting local communities and will have a vital role to play in monitoring and containing the virus, restoring public confidence and reinvigorating our local economies as we move forward.

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2. Support the national campaign for the cancellation of local authority debt to the Public Works Loans Board and call on the Government and City MP to support this."

32.13 Councillor Pullen proposed and Councillor Stephens seconded the following motion:

"Council recognises that both GL1 – Gloucester Leisure Centre and the Oxstalls Tennis Centre are a vital part of the City's leisure and sporting infrastructure and make a significant contribution to the health and well-being of many Gloucester residents.

Council further notes that Aspire Trust has experienced serious financial problems due to lockdown during the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact of Covid-19 and in particular social distancing measures mean that capacity at

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both venues has been greatly reduced and it is therefore likely that a comprehensive support package will need to be put in place to support Aspire over the coming months to ensure its survival.

Council resolves:

1. To pledge its ongoing support to Aspire Trust to ensure that both GL1 and Oxstalls Tennis Centre remain open and continue to serve the needs of Gloucester people.
2. To continue to have regular dialogue with the Trust and its Board so that we are fully informed as to any problems the Trust may be experiencing.
3. At an appropriate time a report be produced and considered by the Council's Cabinet setting out the current and forecast financial recovery position and detailing if needed a package of support measures, including financial support that may be required to ensure Aspire remains a profitable concern."

32.14 Councillor Morgan proposed and Councillor Walford seconded the following amendment:

"Council recognises that both GL1 – Gloucester Leisure Centre and the Oxstalls Tennis Centre are a vital part of the City's leisure and sporting infrastructure and make a significant contribution to the health and well-being of many Gloucester residents.

Council further notes that Aspire Trust has experienced serious financial problems challenges due to lockdown the closure of premises during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council has worked with the Chief Executive of Aspire Trust and supported them throughout this period. The impact of Covid-19 and in particular social distancing measures mean that capacity at both venues has been greatly reduced and it is therefore likely that a comprehensive further support package will need to be put in place to support Aspire over the coming months to ensure its Aspire's survival.

Council resolves:

1. To pledge continue its ongoing support to Aspire Trust to ensure that enable both GL1 and Oxstalls Tennis Centre to remain open and continue to serve the needs of Gloucester people.
2. To continue to have regular dialogue with the Trust and its Board so that we are fully informed as to any problems the Trust may be experiencing.
3. At an appropriate time a report be produced and considered by the Council's Cabinet setting out the current and forecast financial recovery position and detailing if needed a package of any further support measures, including

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~~financial support that may be~~ required to ensure Aspire remains an ongoing concern."

32.15 Councillor Pullen accepted the amendment. The amended motion was put to the vote and was carried.

**32.16 RESOLVED that:-**

Council recognises that both GL1 – Gloucester Leisure Centre and the Oxstalls Tennis Centre are a vital part of the City's leisure and sporting infrastructure and make a significant contribution to the health and well-being of many Gloucester residents.

Council further notes that Aspire Trust has experienced financial challenges due to the closure of premises during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council has worked with the Chief Executive of Aspire Trust and supported them throughout this period. The impact of Covid-19 and in particular social distancing measures mean that capacity at both venues has been greatly reduced and it is therefore likely that further support will need to be put in place over the coming months to ensure its Aspire's survival.

Council resolves:

1. To continue its ongoing support to Aspire Trust to enable both GL1 and Oxstalls Tennis Centre to remain open and continue to serve the needs of Gloucester people.
2. To continue to have regular dialogue with the Trust and its Board so that we are fully informed as to any problems the Trust may be experiencing.
3. At an appropriate time a report be produced and considered by the Council's Cabinet setting out the current and forecast financial recovery position and detailing any further support required to ensure Aspire remains an ongoing concern.

32.17 Councillor Coole proposed and Councillor Hansdot seconded the following motion:

"This Council

- Notes that 2020 is the 25th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which saw over 8,000 Muslim men and boys killed by Serbian nationalist forces.
- Notes that in 2009 the European Parliament passed a resolution that 11 July should be recognised as the day of commemoration of the Srebrenica genocide all over the EU; and in 2015 urged the development of educational and cultural programmes that promote an understanding of the causes of such atrocities and raise awareness about the need to nurture peace and to

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promote human rights and interfaith tolerance. All UK political parties have supported the work of Remembering Srebrenica in this regard.

- Applauds the work of those involved in the pursuit of justice for the victims and their surviving relatives, including the International Commission of Missing People (ICMP) and the Mothers of Srebrenica, whose courage and humility in the face of unthinkable horror is an inspiration to us all.
- Commends the work of the charity, Remembering Srebrenica, in raising awareness of this tragic and preventable genocide and working in communities across Britain to help them learn the lessons of Srebrenica.

This Council resolves to

- Support Srebrenica memorial events in July each year throughout Gloucester as part of the UK-wide Remembering Srebrenica Memorial Week.
- Support the work of Remembering Srebrenica in communities across Gloucester to learn the lessons from Srebrenica to tackle hatred and intolerance to help build a better, safer and more cohesive society for everyone.
- Support the work of schools and education providers to bring the lessons of Srebrenica to young people across Gloucester.”

32.18 The motion was put to the vote and was carried.

32.19 **RESOLVED that:-**

This Council

- Notes that 2020 is the 25th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which saw over 8,000 Muslim men and boys killed by Serbian nationalist forces.
- Notes that in 2009 the European Parliament passed a resolution that 11 July should be recognised as the day of commemoration of the Srebrenica genocide all over the EU; and in 2015 urged the development of educational and cultural programmes that promote an understanding of the causes of such atrocities and raise awareness about the need to nurture peace and to promote human rights and interfaith tolerance. All UK political parties have supported the work of Remembering Srebrenica in this regard.
- Applauds the work of those involved in the pursuit of justice for the victims and their surviving relatives, including the International Commission of Missing People (ICMP) and the Mothers of Srebrenica, whose courage and humility in the face of unthinkable horror is an inspiration to us all.
- Commends the work of the charity, Remembering Srebrenica, in raising awareness of this tragic and preventable genocide and working in communities across Britain to help them learn the lessons of Srebrenica.

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- Support the work of schools and education providers to bring the lessons of Srebrenica to young people across Gloucester.

**33. WRITTEN QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS**

- 33.1 In respect of question 11, Councillor Field asked Councillor Cook if he felt the budget was too high, too low or 'about right'. Councillor Cook advised that there was an inherent flexibility in the budgets. Due to recent damage, it may have been that the budget was too low but that in other years it was 'about right'.
- 33.2 In respect of question 12, Councillor Field asked if the views of blind and partially sighted people had been considered. Councillor Cook advised that, as the proposal had been made only very recently by the County Council, the opportunity to consult had not yet arisen. He further stated that it was important that blind and visually impaired people as well as those with hearing difficulties were consulted as had been discussed by Cabinet when it had been made aware of the proposals.
- 33.3 In respect of question 15, Councillor Field asked Councillor Melvin what the position of the Farmers' Market was given the recent reduction in custom and what was being done to restore it to previous health. Councillor Melvin advised that the market was run by a third party and the Council was doing all it could to encourage the further take up of quality stalls as was the operator.

**Time of commencement: 6.30 pm hours**

**Time of conclusion: 8.55 pm hours**

**Chair**