



COUNCIL

MEETING : Thursday, 18th July 2013

PRESENT : Cllrs. Chatterton (Mayor), James, Wood, Dallimore, Organ, Patel, Hilton, Haigh, Gravells, Durrant, Tracey, McLellan, C. Witts, Smith, Lugg, Noakes, Ravenhill, Hanman, Lewis, Wilson, S. Witts, Williams, Llewellyn, Dee, Porter, Taylor, Beeley, Mozol, Randle, Toleman and Gilson

Others in Attendance

Peter Gillett, Corporate Director of Resources

Martin Shields, Corporate Director of Services and Neighbourhoods

Julian Wain, Chief Executive

Sue Mullins, Monitoring Officer and Group Manager Legal and Democratic Services

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. Hansdot, Hobbs, Bhaimia, Field and Brown

15. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the Special Council meeting and the Annual Council meeting held on the 20th May 2013 be approved and signed by the Mayor as correct records.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests.

17. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Kay Powell (a member of the public) asked the following questions –

Bakers Field's Tennis Courts

'At a time when many agencies and authorities are attempting to engage children in sporting activities, and bearing in mind that poorer families can't afford to spend money on the Oxstall's Tennis Centre or GL1, why are the tennis courts at Baker's Field not in use?'

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The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Leisure replied by stating he felt strongly about the support the City can give towards helping youngsters to become champions of the future through provision of sporting facilities and the recent opening of the refurbished Athletics track in Podsmead was an example of this. Currently a citywide consultation was taking place looking at all aspects that are needed in various areas and communities.

The Cabinet Member further commented that Baker's Field Tennis Court was in poor condition and was not suitable for use by children as it was unsupervised. He stated that the City would consider the comments made to see if there were possibilities for the future and thanked the questioner for highlighting the issue.

Crime and Disorder

'In 1987, Margaret Thatcher stated: "Every person is his own master in deciding whether he lives a decent life as a decent member of the community or whether he resorts to crime." Does the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods agree with this statement? And does she agree with me that the law-abiding majority in any community should not be inconvenienced in order to pander to the behaviour of the minority who choose to get drunk and fight in the streets?'

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods replied that she did not disagree with the comments of Margaret Thatcher and that it was right that everyone had a choice in regard to their behaviour but members of the community do not have a choice whether they are victim of that crime. Community safety was a key priority everywhere and in the City of Gloucester it was number one priority being recognised in the City Plan and a key priority for Members. It was important to create spaces in the City that were safe and conducive to everybody having a 'good night out'. She acknowledged that there were particular issues in relation to Eastgate Street, not only relating to fighting in the street, but also other things that cause concern for the Police and other agencies which is why closure of the street at certain times was being trialled. During the trial period the impact of crime, of user satisfaction and also the effects on the local economy would be measured.

In a supplementary question, Kay Powell (a member of the public) asked whether the Cabinet Member had reviewed the comments on the Citizen newspaper web site expressing views either in favour or against the Eastgate Street temporary road closures. She stated that some of the comments were derogatory towards the City Council and the way the City Council was run.

The Cabinet Member replied that she had seen all 17 comments on the Citizen newspaper web site and was aware of the particular article that had been referred to. She commented that it was generally the case that not everyone would agree on the same issue. The Eastgate Street closure on Friday and Saturday nights was experimental and the City Council would be taking feedback from all who may be affected and that comments would be considered after the six months trial period before a decision was made on whether restrictions were retained.

18. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

Slimbridge Road Triangle

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County Councillor Millard presented a petition signed by residents in the vicinity of Slimbridge Road requesting the City Council to reinstate the children's play area on the Slimbridge Road Triangle.

The petition was handed to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods for consideration.

19. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reminded Members that the opening service of the Three Choirs Festival was taking place on the 27th July 2013 in Gloucester Cathedral and that replies were still awaited from some councillors whether they wished to attend.

The Mayor also drew attention to a procedural note that had been tabled for information reminding Members of the deadline for receipt of Notices of Motion as contained in the updated Constitution.

Councillor James, Leader of the Council, informed Members that the Council had received an award from the Royal Town Planning Institute for regeneration and a waterways renaissance award.

Councillor Patel, Cabinet Member for Environment, informed Council that the company Amey had completed the acquisition of Enterprise, partner to the City in the delivery of Streetcare Services. One of the visible effects of this change in ownership would be a rebranding of vehicles through new livery.

Councillor Lugg, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, expressed concern that a press release had recently been issued in the name of the Committee without her or members of the committee prior knowledge. She asked that this practice be corrected.

20. SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

Moved by Councillor James (Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture), seconded by Councillor Dallimore (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods) –

RESOLVED: That Council Procedure Rules be suspended to allow the relevant officers to address the Council in respect of agenda Items 10 (Rugby World Cup) and 12 (Review of Members' ICT).

21. CHANGES TO GLOUCESTERSHIRE HOMESEAKER (CHOICE BASED LETTINGS SCHEME) POLICY - FOLLOWING CONSULTATION

The Council considered a report by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Leisure seeking approval to the revised Homeseaker Policy.

At its meeting held on 12th June 2012, Cabinet had approved a number of possible changes to the Gloucestershire Homeseaker (Choice Based Lettings Scheme) Policy (now referred to as the Homeseaker Policy) as the basis for consultation.

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The consultation had now concluded and comments had been fed into the revised Homeseeker Policy.

Moved by Councillor Organ (Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Leisure), seconded by Councillor James (Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture) -

RESOLVED: That the revised Gloucestershire Homeseeker (Choice Based Letting Scheme) Policy (now referred to as the Homeseeker Policy) be approved and adopted by all six District Councils in the County.

22. THE FUTURE OF MARKETING GLOUCESTER

The Council considered a report by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture addressing the issues of the changes that needed to be implemented in relation to the destination marketing of the City of Gloucester as a result of the winding up of the URC. The report was aimed at both the Council and the Board of Marketing Gloucester.

In presenting the report, Councillor James drew attention to the following revised recommendation –

‘That approval be given to the continued operation of Marketing Gloucester on the basis set out in the report.’

Moved by Councillor James (Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture), seconded by Councillor Dallimore (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods) –

RESOLVED: That approval the continued operation of Marketing Gloucester on the basis set out in the report.

23. RUGBY WORLD CUP 2015

The Council considered a joint report by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive advising members of progress with the bid and subsequent planning for the Rugby World Cup 2015, and seeking formal approval for the necessary expenditure.

Moved by Councillor James (Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture), seconded by Councillor Dallimore (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods) -

RESOLVED: That the sum of £350,000 be approved to meet the City Council’s obligations in being a host City for the Rugby World Cup 2015.

24. COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BID (ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE) - PROPOSED PROCEDURE

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The Council considered a joint report by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture and the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods outlining the policy and procedure required for dealing with the Community Right to Bid for assets of community value to meet the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and to approve consequential delegations to Officers.

Revised Flow Charts 1 (assessment and listing process) and 2 (the moratorium process) were tabled.

Councillor James (Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture) moved -

- (1) *That authority be delegated to the Asset Manager to determine nominations for the inclusion of local assets on the Council's list of assets of community value;*
- (2) *That authority be delegated to the Group Manager Planning and Economy to carry out internal reviews of any decision to list an asset under Section 92 of the Localism Act 2011;*
- (3) *That authority be delegated to the Head of Financial Services, in consultation with the Asset Manager and the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources to determine claims for compensation for listed land;*
- (4) *That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Resources, in consultation with the Group Manager for Planning and Economy and the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources to determine appeals in respect of compensation claims for listed land;*
- (5) *That authority be delegated to the Asset Manager, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Regeneration and Communities and Neighbourhoods and the Group Manager Legal and Democratic Services to finalise the detailed policy and procedure for dealing with assets of community value.*

The motion was seconded by Councillor Dallimore (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods).

Councillor Mary Smith moved the following amendment –

Add the following recommendation (6) –

'The community will need to raise the money for any purchase and the Council should not be expected to provide funds.'

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Haigh.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared carried. Following discussion the substantive motion was put to the vote and declared carried and it was -

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RESOLVED:

- (1) That authority be delegated to the Asset Manager to determine nominations for the inclusion of local assets on the Council's list of assets of community value;**
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Group Manager Planning and Economy to carry out internal reviews of any decision to list an asset under Section 92 of the Localism Act 2011;**
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Head of Financial Services, in consultation with the Asset Manager and the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources to determine claims for compensation for listed land;**
- (4) That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Resources, in consultation with the Group Manager for Planning and Economy and the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources to determine appeals in respect of compensation claims for listed land;**
- (5) That authority be delegated to the Asset Manager, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Regeneration and Communities and Neighbourhoods and the Group Manager Legal and Democratic Services to finalise the detailed policy and procedure for dealing with assets of community value;**
- (6) The community will need to raise the money for any purchase and the Council should not be expected to provide funds.**

25. REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ICT

The Council considered a report by the Corporate Director of Resources presenting options for future provision of ICT equipment and related services for elected Members, including consideration of the use of tablet computer devices as a replacement for printed meeting agendas and reports.

Councillor Taylor (Chair of the ICT Working Group) moved and Councillor Wood (Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources) seconded the recommendations set out in the report.

During discussion Councillor Sue Witts expressed a preference for option 2 and Councillor Smith commented that needs of those with disabilities also needed to be recognised.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That option 3 be approved and adopted namely to replace current ICT equipment and related services to Members, including broadband connections, with the provision of tablet computer devices intended as**

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an alternative to printed meeting agendas and reports whilst retaining the option to have a smart phone.

- (2) That the Members' Allowances Panel be requested to consider the impact of any changes to the provision of ICT equipment and related services to Members as part of the next review of Members' allowances.**

26. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

The Council considered a report of the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the committee's activities and the scrutiny role in the 2012/13 year.

RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2012/13 be noted.

27. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS (COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12)

(a) Written questions to Cabinet Members

Question 8 – From Councillor Mary Smith to the Cabinet Member for Policy and Resources. – Supplementary Question

Councillor Smith commented that the discretionary payments guidance manual paragraph 3.9 stated that the authority may disregard income from disability related benefits as they are intended to be used for people with disability and also such money may be committed to other liabilities which the money was intended for e.g. the provision of care. Councillor Smith asked as to the position of the Council in this respect and pointed out that decisions on disability allowance had been delayed. She offered to pass on the details after the meeting in the hope that the issue might be resolved.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources commented that the Council did have a scheme in place for discretionary housing allowance and commented that the processes adopted by this Council were good and the written answer that he had given outlined these processes in broad detail.

The Cabinet Member commented that on receipt of an application, the Benefits Team deal in a holistic manner and if necessary refer the applicant to the welfare advisers and 'sign post' them to other benefits they may wish to take up. The Cabinet Member also referred to the role of the Gloucester Advisory Panel whose remit was to examine problem cases. The Benefits Team followed best practice and the fact that a holistic approach was adopted, probably exceeded these best practices. The Cabinet Member agreed to follow up the issues raised by Councillor Smith in respect of the individual within her ward.

(b) Leader and Cabinet Member Question Time

Councillor Hilton commented that yesterday he had attended as an observer a meeting of the newly formed Gloucestershire Local Transport Board and

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questioned the list of priorities that had been agreed which had included refurbishment of Cheltenham Railway Station but not included the construction of a new Gloucester Bus Station.

The Leader of the Council commented that that he been appointed to the Board in his capacity as Leader of the Council along with other Councils in Gloucestershire and other major public sector organisations in the County and the Chief Executive as adviser.

The scoring of schemes had been based on technical assessments, so without having the necessary knowledge to challenge the assessments, it would be incorrect to state whether a scheme should be placed higher on the priority list over and above another.

The Board in agreeing to the list of priorities had placed an number of caveats on their decision. There needed to be a more sophisticated assessment of the economic benefit of each of the projects, and their deliverability within the timescales set by funding criteria needed to be revisited. There was a need for this assessment before final judgement was made on the ranking of projects and the consequence of this may be that the Cheltenham Railway Station project drops lower in the list and Gloucester Kings Quarter rises in the list. Gloucester Bus Station (part of the Kings Quarter redevelopment) was particularly related to economic growth and potentially had access to other funding resources that will compliment the scheme.

The Leader of the Council commented that whilst yesterday's decision of the Board was not necessarily good news, it was not a reason to be down hearted or defeatist at this stage for the reasons given.

Councillor Hilton asked a supplementary question commenting that the total cost of the Cheltenham Railway Station scheme was around £20 million whilst the bid approved at yesterday's board meeting was £3.3 million. He commented that Department of Transport funded projects had to be completed by March 2019 and the promoters of the Cheltenham Railway Station scheme did not have the remaining £17 million at this stage. He asked the Leader of the Council whether it was fortuitous to Gloucester that the lack of funds from Network Rail for the Cheltenham Station refurbishment scheme would benefit the ranking of the scheme to refurbish Gloucester Bus Station.

In response, the Leader of the Council commented that the role played by the Board yesterday was to reassure that assessments would be undertaken to judge deliverability and economic benefit which may result in a realignment of projects decided in a fair manner.

Councillor Haigh asked the Leader of the Council whether he would be prepared to bring to the September meeting of Council the Memorandum of Understanding between Gloucester and Paju having previously indicated that he was sympathetic to such an agreement particularly recognising the links that the Gloucestershire Regiment had played in the Korean War.

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The Leader of the Council commented that he had replied to Gloslinks indicating that the correct approach was for the City Council to pursue a Memorandum of Understanding rather than full twinning arrangements and that it was a previously agreed policy of the Council not to enter into new full twinning arrangements.

He commented that it would be reasonable to bring forward a Memorandum of Agreement to the September meeting but for this to happen, Paju would also need to have for their part an undertaking that they are willing to enter into an agreement.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Haigh asked what additional effort was the City undertaking to preserve these historic links.

The Leader of the Council replied that the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum was receiving a donation of £94,000 with which they proposed to create a Korean War room within the Museum. He also commented that the Memorandum of Understanding needed to be forward looking for example by highlighting the economic benefits to the city.

Councillor Hilton asked the Leader of the Council whether he continued to support the City Council resolution of the 27th September 2012 which sought to protect for open space purposes land at the former Civil Service ground, Escourt Road.

The Leader of the Council replied that he supported the efforts to keep as much as the open space as possible. A number of options were being pursued and pre application discussions were taking place with the owners of the site.

Councillor Hilton asked a supplementary question commenting that Richard Graham MP was supporting a proposal that would envisage housing on approximately half of the land and a new Football Stadium for Gloucester Athletic Football Club on the other half of the site; there would be no public space under this proposal which was contrary to the intentions of the City Council's September 2012 resolution.

The Leader of the Council commented that he understood that Richard Graham was promoting a potential solution to bringing Gloucester City Football Club back within the boundaries of the City. It was a matter for Planning Committee to decide on the planning application including open space provision. Insofar as the Football Club was concerned, there was potentially two options; a scaled back version of the Meadow Park proposal or the use of part of the land at the former Civil Service Club site. He commented that he understood why the Club should wish to keep these two options open given the period of time they had been playing outside the City boundaries. Discussions would continue, but judgement would be a matter for the Planning Committee on receipt of an application..

Councillor Haigh asked the Leader of the Council whether, following the inauguration of the new Regeneration Advisory Board, he would use his best endeavours to work with the Board to seek removal of the 'Golden Egg' building in King Square.

The Leader of the Council replied that the City Council would be working closely with the Regeneration Advisory Board. He stated that whilst he did not sit on the

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Board itself (avoiding any conflict of interest as Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture to whom the Board advised) he did attend meetings as an observer. Insofar as the 'Golden egg' was concerned, discussions continued with Aviva and a number of suggestions had been made to the company including an offer for the Council to buy the building and arrange demolition works. Aviva were currently considering their position.

Councillor Noakes asked the Cabinet Member for Environment what proposals he had in mind to manage the control of dogs in Barnwood Arboretum following an incident where a dog not on a leash had attacked a rabbit in its hutch in a neighbouring garden.

The Cabinet Member responded by commenting that currently in the Barnwood Arboretum there was a fenced off area in which cattle and sheep grazed at certain parts of the year. The Arboretum had defined areas and there were some parts that were well used by dog walkers. The Friends of the Arboretum Group had placed informal notices asking for dogs to be kept on leads although some people decide to ignore this. He had been contacted recently by a member of the Friends Group who stated that a dog had entered into their garden and that the person had also requested that legally binding arrangements be made for dogs to be kept on leads. The Cabinet Member commented that the introduction of formal arrangements was a lengthy process that required consultation and may not end up with the result that promoters of such arrangements wished. The Cabinet Member stated that there would be a meeting with the Friends Group to discuss a campaign that would include improved signage, education, and other improvements. Discussions would also be held with the Environment Group so that joint Council resources can be brought to the matter. A similar exercise was undertaken at Plock Court

Councillor Noakes asked the Cabinet Member not to totally rule out the option of a ban, although difficult to enforce, as this would act as a deterrent and local residents had offered to be 'eyes and ears' to 'police' such an arrangement.

The Cabinet Member responded by stating that a ban had not been ruled out and that all the options were currently 'on the table'.

Councillor Taylor asked the Leader of the Council for an update on the development of The Triangle observing the progress made in relation to the Morrison's Supermarket development off Metz Way and questioned when it was to be opened.

The Leader of the Council responded by stating that it was his understanding that the construction of the Morrison's store had been completed and the premises were ready to be handed over for shop fitting. The store was due to be opened in early to mid November 2013. He commented that when he had recently met with developers LXB they had commented that their dealings with their contractors Barnwood Construction were the best they had experienced which was an accolade for a successful local firm. There had also been interest expressed in the commercial units on the site and LXB wished to maintain momentum. Interest included a well known brand of coffee shop. There were still opportunities for businesses who may wish to relocate to the site whether large units or start ups.

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The transformation had been the most visible of the city's regeneration projects so far and one that the Council should be proud.

Councillor McLellan asked the Cabinet Member for Environment whether he could remind Neighbourhood Officers and Amey to be aware of the needs of blind people and in particular ensure that overgrown brambles are cut back especially at head level.

The Cabinet Member responded by stating he was not aware of this issue and thanked Councillor McLellan for drawing it to his attention. He asked that Councillor McLellan provide him with the particular location that has caused concern so that urgent action can be taken.

Councillor McLellan asked a supplementary question as to how the Cabinet Member proposed to consult with Blind persons and other people with disabilities about environmental issues of this nature.

The Cabinet Member replied that he would address this question and send a written answer.

Councillor Llewellyn asked the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources, in the light of recent comments made by Councillor Hilton in the Citizen newspaper concerning signing off of the 2011/12 final accounts, to update Council with the latest factual position concerning the closure of the 2011/12 accounts and the position concerning the closure of the 2012/13 accounts.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources replied by stating that he had been disappointed to read the comments made in the paper. He referred to his statement made on 2nd July 2013 informing the position in regard to the 2012/13 accounts which had been produced in quicker than average time. The accounts had been produced in May 2013 and presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on the 24th June 2013 and at the same time Members were given a copy of the draft accounts. All Members of Council had the opportunity to access and examine the draft accounts on line. He commented that the Council had moved on from the problems of the past. He also commented that the collection rate for Council tax was 97%, which was the best the City had ever achieved and was better than other authorities with similar financial arrangements. The Cabinet Member commented that every pound collected in the City was spent on services that the City needed and the City did not have to spend time chasing around to find that money.

The Cabinet Member stated that the Audit and Governance Committee would be receiving quarterly financial reports. Cabinet Members were also receiving a financial forecast on a monthly basis. All councillors had access to the accounts when they are submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee. The Cabinet Member paid tribute to the Corporate Director of Resources and the financial team who had produced the accounts in a timely fashion and the work of the previous Cabinet portfolio holder.

Councillor Smith asked the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources why the dates for next year had not been submitted to this Council for final approval.

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She commented that whilst a schedule of draft dates had been circulated, these had not been confirmed as finalised.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources commented that he did not understand why that question had been asked. All councillors had been circulated with a schedule of dates and there was also the opportunity to download these onto tablet devices.

Councillor Smith confirmed that she was aware of the draft diary but had not seen a finalised diary that had been presented to Council.

The Cabinet Member for Performances and Resources commented that he was content that he had received a finalised schedule of dates and assumed that all councillors had received the same. He stated however that he would look into the matter to see if there was a problem and would respond to Councillor Smith.

Councillor Toleman asked the Leader of the Council how would traders in the City benefit from visitors to the Gloucester Food Festival.

The Leader of the Council responded by commenting that the Festival was envisaged to be the biggest that had been staged in Gloucester attracting in the order of 160,000 visitors. The event will be extended further into the Docks which will help to link up with the City Centre. There will be stalls in the Gate streets and food units in the vicinity of Kimbrose Triangle and entertainment. He commented that hopefully this would be a good template to link the City Centre with Docks events in the future. With all the activity described, there will be awareness that something is happening within the Docks and the City this forthcoming weekend.

Councillor Tracey asked the Leader of the Council what steps are taken to avoid the Gloucester Carnival coinciding with other major events in the City, how many floats will participate in the Gloucester Carnival procession and when was it decided to reintroduce floats.

The Leader of the Council commented that it was last year that a decision had been taken to hold the Carnival in the middle weekend of the two week festival. This was to avoid a clash with the Food Festival and also to give people more time to get their floats and other entries prepared. The Three Choirs Festival was not organised by the City Council and best efforts had been made to ensure the timing of events allowed patrons to the Three Choir Festival the opportunity to visit City events if they wished. This demonstrated the number and range of events taking place over the summer. As far as floats are concerned, discussion had been held with the Police in regard to ensuring public safety. Floats would be moving alongside walkers to give protection but the Leader of the Council was unable to confirm the final number of entries at the present time.

Councillor Lugg asked the Leader of the Council whether appropriate checks on stewards will be in place at events in The Docks such as the Food Festival to ensure that a recurrence of circumstances does not take place where people, including her daughter, were trapped in the multi storey car park for two hours, the stewards having locked the gates and then vacating the premises.

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The Leader of the Council commented that he was aware that there had been issues with two of the Gloucester Quays events last year associated with the number of people present and the volumes of traffic. He commented that this year, when the Tall Ships Festival had been held, there were no significant traffic problems and a good traffic template had been used. The Leader of the Council commented that with regard to the Victorian Festival last year, one of the problems that attributed to traffic congestion was the failure of traffic signals in the vicinity of The Quays. He was confident that everything will be done to ensure people have a smooth passage in and out of the City during this year's Food Festival.

Councillor Lewis asked the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources for an update on Armed Forces Day which had been held on the 29th June.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources commented that the day proved a successful event and he was especially proud of the marching units. The Council had played a part in supporting the Steering Committee who had sourced funds. He paid particular tribute to Mr Mike Smith, the Chair of the Steering Committee.

Councillor Susan Witts asked the Leader of the Council why it appeared that Cabinet Members were able to give detailed responses to some of the questions which had obviously been researched in advance.

The Leader of the Council replied that Cabinet Members always try to be well prepared.

Councillor Chris Witts asked the Cabinet Member for Environment, given the dry spell of weather and the subsequent suspension of weed spraying, could he give a date when weeds that remain will be cut down.

The Cabinet Member for Environment replied stating that last year it appeared that the Council was blamed for issues relating to grass cutting – now it appeared the Council was being blamed for lack of weed clearance. The Cabinet Member commented that he would be happy to investigate if Councillor Witts wished to give locations.

Councillor Witts commented that the location of weeds he was referring to were within his Ward.

Councillor Pam Tracey asked the Cabinet Member for Environment whether he was satisfied with the new arrangements in Gloucester Park relating to the juxtaposition of the toilets and the café.

The Cabinet Member for Environment responded by saying that the new café adjacent to the Swiss Cottage in the Park was opened on Friday 12th July 2013. The toilets were one side of the Swiss Cottage and the Café of the other. There had been no complaints in relation to this arrangement which was a trial arrangement. By the end of September discussions will be held with the operator of the café to assess operation.

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Councillor McLellan asked the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources, whilst acknowledging the work undertaken to complete the 2012/13 accounts, could he confirm that the audit fee was £130,000 more than budgeted.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources commented that the overall cost of the external audit will be examined by the Audit and Governance Committee and he expressed the view that he would prefer to see the cost of the audit reduced to a realistic figure.

Councillor Hilton asked the Cabinet Member for Environment whether he knew the number of new gulls that existed after this year's breeding season in view of the fact that it appeared the City's gull population was increasing.

The Cabinet Member for Environment commented that urban gulls were a problem which was not exclusive to Gloucester. Herring Gulls are a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The Council was working very hard with contractors and partners taking a lead in dealing with the problem. Various methods were trialled, including oiling of eggs and egg replacement. 1,300 eggs had been treated by contractors to date. Other measures were being taken in relation to removal of trade waste from food outlets e.g. the introduction of new toughened trade waste bags in the City Centre.

Councillor Hilton asked if the Cabinet Member would view the number of young gulls in the City Docks as evidence that the egg oiling programme had failed.

The Cabinet Member for Environment commented that there was no evidence to support the claim that the gull population had exploded and controlling the population was being addressed.

Councillor Gravells asked the Leader of the Council whether he would be willing to talk to employees to ensure that they kept in good health during current hot weather by encouraging them to take effective preventive measures.

The Leader of the Council commented that the Council needed to ensure that employees get the best advice available, especially when working outside, and that this was a matter for the Chief Executive to action as appropriate.

28. NOTICES OF MOTION

Moved by Councillor Haigh, seconded by Councillor Smith -

RESOLVED: That this Council notes -

- **That by the end of this Parliament, Local Government will have been cut by 33%. In comparison, Whitehall departments will have faced reductions of 12%.**
- **That the Government Spending review will mean further cuts of 10% to Local Government**

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- **That the Council Tax freeze, due to be lifted next April, is now to be extended over the next two years.**
- **That the Local Government Association Chair, Sir Merrick Cockell, and over 150 Council Leaders have written to George Osborne to make the case that Local Government can no longer bear the brunt of these cuts.**
- **That devolving money from Whitehall to local areas to increase co-operation between public agencies, saves money and improves services**

This Council supports the Local Government's case made in Rewiring Public Services for Local Government finance to be put on a sustainable and independent footing in the future and will work with the Local Government Association to achieve that.

Time of commencement: 19:00 hours

Time of conclusion: 22:06 hours

Chair