



COUNCIL

MEETING : Thursday, 13th March 2008

PRESENT : Cllrs. Gill (Mayor), Lugg (Sheriff & Deputy Mayor), James, Gravells, Morgan, Noakes, White, Hilton, Smith, Durrant, Tracey, McLellan, Gillespie, Blakeley, Francis, Hobbs, Witts, Crawford, Gardiner, Hanman, Lewis, Ravenhill, Wilson, Heath, Jones, Emerton, Whittaker, Field, Haigh, Llewellyn and Williams

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. Lawlor, Bhaimia and Nethsingha

144. PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by the Mayor's Chaplain.

145. MINUTES

The minutes of the Council meetings held on 14 February and 21 February 2008 were taken as read and signed by the Chair.

146. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Gravells, Hilton, Tracey, Gillespie, Hanman and McLellan declared personal interests in matters relating to the County Council as Members of the County Council.

Councillors Durrant, Lugg, Emerton and Field declared personal interests in matters relating to Gloucester City Homes as Board Members of Gloucester City Homes.

Councillor Smith declared a personal interest in matters relating to GHURC as a Member of the URC Board, and a personal interest as her daughter was an employee of Gloucester City Homes.

Councillor Smith declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 77 as an employee of Gloucester Law Centre.

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147. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

Ms Kay Powell of Tredworth asked when the Council was planning to dredge Saintbridge Pond. In response the Leader of the Council explained that substantial funds from the Flood Recovery Grant had been allocated to carry out alleviation works. Tenders were currently being analysed with work commencing shortly with the aim of completion in November.

Mr Andy Berry of Tuffley expressed his concern regarding to the proposal to disband the Disability Equality Forum and merge it into the Generic Equality Forum. He asked the Council to consider alternative approaches. In response the Cabinet Member for Planning and Community explained that the Constitutional Working Party was investigating improving the opportunities for groups to access the City Council. He assured Mr Berry that full consultation and discussion would take place to ensure a positive change.

Mr David Harrington of Tuffley raised the issue of there being no statutory appeal procedure in relation to the Gating Order passed at Cabinet on 5 March relating to Chadwick Close. In response the Leader of the Council said he understood the gentleman's anxieties but the legislation required the adjacent property to be named in the advert. If a person thinks the Council has mishandled the application a judicial review was the only course of action. The provision of a review after twelve months was built into the process.

148. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (10 MINUTES)

There were no petitions or deputations.

149. ANNOUNCEMENTS (COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 2 (VII))

(a) Mayor

The Mayor reported that he had recently returned from a successful trip to India where he had forged good links.

The Mayor urged those Councillors who had not yet replied to the invitation to the Civic Service on 20 April to do so.

The Mayor gave his best wishes to those Councillors who would not be standing for re-election in May and wished all those who were standing good luck.

The Leader of the Council paid tribute to Councillor Gardiner who would not be standing for re-election and thanked him for his hard work and support and wished him a happy retirement.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group paid tribute to Councillor Blakeley for her dedication as a Councillor over the last twelve years and wished her well. He also thanked Councillor Nethsingha for her contribution to the Council during her term of office.

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The Leader of the Labour Group paid tribute to Councillors Gardiner, Blakeley and Nethsingha.

(b) Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council reported that a meeting had been held that day between himself, the Deputy Leader and the Chief Executive with officials from Post Office Limited to make representations regarding the proposed closures at Podsmead and Kingsholm.

The Leader of the Council thanked Phil Lane, the Assistant Director for Housing and Health, as he would be leaving the authority on 2 May. He expressed his best wishes for the future.

(c) Members of the Cabinet

The Deputy Leader of the Council paid tribute to Phil Lane, the Assistant Director for Housing and Health and Councillor Gardiner.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Health reported that the Housing Corporation would be announcing shortly that they would be funding the acquisition of 38 units for accommodation in Gloucester for a registered social landlord with a possibility of a further 32 to follow shortly.

He also reported that a bid had been submitted in December 2007 to DCLG for funding of the Night Shelter and accommodation for people with the most acute needs. The Officers concerned were confident that a positive decision was awaited.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Community advised Council that the Equality Steering Group was satisfied that the Council had achieved Level 1 of the Equalities Standard. He would keep Members informed of progress towards Level 2 and thanked those Members of staff involved in achievements to date.

150. WAIVER OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

Moved by Councillor James (Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture), seconded by Councillor Gravells (Deputy Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Housing and Health).

RESOLVED

That Council Procedure Rules be waived to allow Madeleine Townley, Chair of the Members' Allowances Panel to address the Council in respect of item 9 (Minute 151) on the agenda.

151. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2008/09 (RSC08009)

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Moved by Councillor James (Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture), seconded by Councillor Gravells (Deputy Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Housing and Health).

RESOLVED

That Council approve the following recommendations from the Members' Allowances Panel in respect of the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2008/2009 and make any adjustments from 1 April 2008.

- (a) That the Chair of the Audit Committee receive a Special Responsibility Allowance calculated at 0.6 of the basic allowance and the Vice Chair of the Audit Committee receive a Special Responsibility Allowance calculated at 0.2 of the basic allowance respectively.
- (b) That the transitional payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance to Members of the Planning Committee remain until the Members' Allowances Scheme is reconsidered in 2010/2011.
- (c) That with the exception of the above, the Members' Allowances Scheme remain unchanged.

152. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS (COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12)

- (a) Leader and Cabinet Members' Question Time (45 minutes)

Question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor Hilton

"The Citizen website has an article published on 10 March stating that the Government's Independent Adjudicator has ordered the consortium of District Councils in Gloucestershire to pay an extra £447,000 to Stagecoach for the cost of running the concessionary bus fare scheme in the year 2007/2008. Is this story correct and do we have enough money in our revised budget to cover any extra costs?"

Leader of the Council's response

"As Councillor Hilton may have imagined I have had a number of discussions with Officers on this particular issue over the last few days. In short we do not agree with the figures that Stagecoach have put forward and these figures do relate to the 2007/2008 financial year and we do make payments to Stagecoach on a regular basis. There has been some increased usage during the final quarter of the year and we have not settled with them for that particular element of it and as I understand it that money is not due yet. I do not think it is terribly helpful for these kind of debates to take place within the media, there are processes to go through to settle on the issue of concessionary fares and as Councillor Hilton will be aware we do employ consultants who are specialists in this kind of work to act for us and indeed they act for the six District Councils within Gloucestershire. The second point that I would make is that I do find it a matter of regret that we are put in a situation where there is a certain degree of confrontation between us and our

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local bus operators because clearly we wish to work with them closely to ensure the best possible public transport within the city, I am afraid that the arrangements put in place when the scheme was introduced has led to this situation. The final point that I would make that I have made consistently throughout the course of this budget round is of course we do not have sufficient funding from government to meet the cost of the concessionary travel scheme and city tax payers are having to fund it substantially to around £600,000 in the 2007/08 financial year and that gap is forecast to widen to somewhere near a million pounds in the 2008/09 financial year.”

Supplementary question from Councillor Hilton

“Thank you for the answer and I do agree with you that when you are trying to sort out the costs of a scheme it is probably better not to have a public debate with Stagecoach. The Local Authorities are trying to fund this scheme even though they don't get full funding from the government, or certainly Gloucester City doesn't.

What Parmjit Dhanda on 11 March was saying on his website, (I assume that it was in the Citizen as well), suggested that the scheme should be paid directly by the central government and of course if that happens we take away local management of the scheme. Would it not be better to transfer responsibility of the concessionary fare scheme from the six districts to Gloucestershire County Council? The County Council is already responsible for public transport for matters in this County should they not take on this responsibility as well?”

Leader of the Council's response

“We have discussed the issue of funding for concessionary travel with the City MP during our regular meetings that we hold with him, and we certainly did discuss recently the possibility of transferring that responsibility to the County Council. It does make some sense as they do have responsibility for transport. I think that would do wonders for this Authority's finances, whether the County Council would take such a positive view of that move would depend on whether overall, there was enough money in the pot. I am certainly happy to listen to the arguments about where it should sit. I certainly don't think the sensible place is at District Council level but it is after all a national concessionary travel scheme and you could make a case that a national scheme should be administered nationally it is not helpful for it to be placed on our shoulders without sufficient funding.”

Question to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources from Councillor Hilton

“The medium term Financial Plan indicates that at least £828,000 worth of savings are needed in the financial year 2009/2010 what savings does the Leader intend to make to achieve this objective.”

The Leader of the Council responded

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“We do our financial planning quite far in advance in this Authority but as we only set last year’s budget recently it has not even started yet. At this meeting it is probably a bit ambitious to expect me to roll out the details of next year’s budget, but I am grateful for Councillor Hilton’s confidence that we will still be in administration and I think it is very well founded. But what I would say to Councillor Hilton is that we are going through a restructuring of the Senior Management and that will bring savings in future years as that process moves down the Authority. We hope to achieve savings as well as efficiencies that will lead to improved services and in addition to that we have the review of Support Services which we hope will be able to drive efficiencies and cost savings as well. So that work is ongoing. I am not going to pretend it is going to be an easy financial year as indeed any year in recent memory has been, but indeed I am grateful for the confidence he has shown that we will still be here a year’s time.”

Question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor Hilton

“I think its my job to ask questions as an opposition group leader of the administration at the moment, certainly before an election it is important that people know whether the administration knows what it is going to do and it seems that it is relying solely on the restructuring to make these savings particularly the Senior Management team’s restructuring. My understanding is that the total savings in a full year will be £360,000 and we will only manage part of that in 2009/2010 so the likelihood is that Paul James, or any other Leader of this Council, after May 1, will have to find £700,000 within the next year. Do you think or have you got any ideas on how you are going to do that because at the moment you have only given me one answer and that is the Senior Management structure and a bit of other tinkering around.”

Leader of the Council’s response

“I am not entirely sure, Mr Mayor, which part of my answer Councillor Hilton did not understand. If he is asking me to set out the entire budget savings for the year 2009/10 then I think he is getting a little bit ahead of himself. We are not relying solely on the restructuring at all, Councillor Hilton ought to know the process. At the appropriate time we will start the budget planning in earnest and officers will come forward with their savings that we will consider. If we like them we will accept them and if we don’t we will reject them, but equally if the figure that Councillor Hilton quotes of £360,000 is anywhere near correct the fact that so far in advance we have identified such a big portion of savings required I would have thought it was pretty good going.”

Question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor Smith

“There is a sign at St Oswalds Park and Ride car park that informs the public that the car park is patrolled. Can you tell me if this is correct and if there is a guard on duty every day during the time that the public is charged?”

Leader of the Council’s response

“The answer to that is yes.”

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Supplementary question from Councillor Smith

“We have had a number of reports that there has been no guard on duty during the time that the car park is open, so would you investigate that and just ensure that there is a guard on duty?”

Leader of the Council’s response

“I am told that there are security guards who are at present on site there and they do patrol the main site, that is entirely separate from the County Council’s staff car park which is the subject to the number of questions from Councillor McLellan later in the agenda.”

Question to the Leader of the Councillor Smith

“Second question, it sounds a bit like a Ward issue but it is a much bigger policy issue I think. It is also about Gating Orders actually by coincidence. The report that came out from the Cabinet meeting the other day states that there will be a presumption against Gating Orders unless persistent crime and disorder is demonstrated to be a long term problem and in the opinion of the police the closure of the highway would have a beneficial impact in reducing crime and disorder or anti-social behaviour. The letter from the police has said, regarding Mellick Close, ‘We have received 9 calls relating to scooters and mini-motor cycles in Mellick Close since 1 January. This is more than one might expect for a road of this sort and location, there have been a further three calls regarding anti-social behaviour in the vicinity of the alleyway. It would be fair to say that crime levels are not disproportionately high but levels of reported anti-social behaviour are noticeably higher than average. The existence of the alleyway does seem to facilitate the use of motorised vehicles in this location. From a policing perspective the gating of the highway would in all probability assist in resolving the problem and I am wondering why, if the policy says that we will take the advice of the police that we then ignore that advice and refuse the Gating Order.”

Leader of the Council’s response

“My understanding of this particular situation is that the advice of the police is one of the elements to be taken into consideration but it is not the sole criteria for determining it. I do think that on a broader issue that Gating Orders do have to be the last resort because they are dealing with the symptoms of the problems rather than the cause of it. One of the resolutions at Cabinet when we consider this issue is that we would draw up a new set of criteria for Gating Orders that will come back to Cabinet fairly shortly. The issue of Gating Orders has been transferred to Environmental Health and they will be coming up with a new set of criteria. The other issue is that we don’t have a specific budget for implementing Gating Orders and we have to find savings from elsewhere if we chose to do so, but clearly we will keep the issues under close review.”

Question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor Smith

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“If I could just ask that that criteria is shared with other Councillors who have some input into that presumably it will come through Scrutiny in the same way. It is a very important issue and I think that the design, which at one time was very popular, with lots of little alleyways has now turned out to be a complete disaster in terms of anti-social behaviour and crime. If we could keep that under review I would be grateful, thank you.”

Question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor Lewis

“Under the Streetcare Partnership there was provision for some one-off spends to improve facilities throughout the city. I was just wondering what the latest position of those is?”

Leader of the Council’s response

“Councillor Lewis will well know about these issues from his time as the Cabinet Member for that portfolio, and you are quite right Councillor Lewis to bring Council’s attention to this because when we established the Streetcare Partnership we did set aside a significant amount of money for one-off spends coming into three different categories. First related to landscaping issues and those are now well under way and are making a real difference to the environment in a number of different locations in the city. Just one of the ones that immediately springs to mind is the turfing of the area by the Westgate Street car park that does very much enhance that gateway into the city. I know that work is going on in different locations around Gloucester, which is certainly making a major difference to the environment there. There are further elements of that one-off spend, another £60,000 for street furniture and there is £60,000 on top of that for play areas. The schedule for the first part of landscaping has been circulated to Members of the Streetcare Board and the two further elements will be agreed in a fairly short time.”

Question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor Ravenhill

“Regarding the regeneration of the Docks, I would like the Leader to advise us on what events we can expect in the Docks during 2008?”

Leader of the Council’s response

“That is quite a timely question given that we had a meeting of the Docks Stakeholder Group this morning. There are a number of different events going on in the Docks this year, probably the best Docks programme for some time. We have the Dragon Boat Racing, I believe taking place on 18 May and for the first time the Council is putting in a team and I think you have agreed to take part Mr Mayor as has the Chief Executive and a few other members of staff, but we have still got a few places so if Members would like to volunteer? We are giving advice and indeed a small amount of funding to the organisers who are Click Sargent. It is an important fundraising event for them. Members may be aware that at Cabinet last week we approved funding for two Antiques Fairs to take place in the Docks, I think that it is the end of May and in September as well. We are doing that in partnership with the Antique Centre

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which is a very exciting development and the press release has gone out. Smaller events, we do have the Rock on the Docks events at some point in August. I think the food festival is planned as part of the wider Gloucester Festival. We do have £23,000 put aside as our contribution towards another Maritime based event, we do hope that partners will help to fund it so that we can make it as good if not better than the first Tall Ships event that we organised for October 2007. Finally, on that issue, the Christmas event at the Docks will take place on Sunday 16 November and that will be done in conjunction with the procession and switch-on in the city centre, as a combined event. I am sure Members will agree that that is the best events programme that has taken place in the Docks for many years.”

Question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor Emerton

“Ever since I have first moved to Gloucester one of the things that most captivated me has been its rich history, can the Leader please advise what is being done to highlight that history.”

Leader of the Council’s response

“I will do my best to answer this one but I might need to refer to the Cabinet Member for Heritage and Leisure on a couple of issues. Certainly a couple of things that spring to mind, first of all on 19 and 20 April a Gloucester Through the Ages event will take place which is a major celebration of Gloucester’s history. It will be a fantastic weekend, around about 350 re-enactors in different locations around the city going right from Roman times to the Second World War. That is funded largely by the Heritage Lottery Fund for which we made a successful application, but we have also supplemented that from some of the Economy Recovery money to enhance the marketing of the event which we are very excited about. On a slightly smaller scale Members may be aware that there have been some new interpretation boards installed in Westgate Street and one in the Oxbode which details some of the history of some of the fine and historic buildings in those particular locations, so I think that is a very practical example of how we can make the great history of this city very accessible. I will with your indulgence defer to Councillor White for some other information.”

Cabinet Member for Heritage and Leisure response

“As you have heard Councillor James is responsible for the more entertaining side for presenting our history, I am responsible for looking after the Museums and so on. I can report that Members will know that we had a bid into the Heritage and Lottery fund for £900,000 to support the bid to completely change the way in which we present our Museum offering. We were obliged to increase the Council’s contribution towards the bid in December but even with that increased contribution we have just failed to get it. We were however advised to rejig the bid and get it back in in March, some of the conditions included things like getting planning permission for alterations for the Folk Museum which I am pleased was granted last week. We have also put in post an education officer which was required. I am hopeful that we will achieve that money. If we do get it, it will enable us to present the History of Gloucester in

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a much more meaningful way to visitors, residents, children and whoever is able to come and see it. We also have a tremendous feature in the centre of Gloucester that has become a bit of an eyesore, which is the Eastgate Viewing Chamber. It is basically a concrete and glass monstrosity, full of slots where people can post letters to the Romans into the cellar. We have put out to competition requests for designs to come back from members of the RIBA. We have had three very exciting proposals put to us which are being reviewed, Cabinet have seen them and have agreed to put them out for consultation and that will be happening shortly, so I hope that by the end of the summer that we will be well on the way to getting something done to present another major important part of Gloucester's history."

Question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor Durrant

"The road closure at the end of Eastgate Street on a Friday and Saturday night. The sign is still up saying that it closes between 9.15pm and 4.00am. Recently, a couple of times I have driven past when it should be closed and it has not been closed, could I have an update on the current position on that road closure?"

Leader of the Council's response

"It is certainly my understanding that that information is correct. I know that occasionally there are problems with the police having to come and put the bollards up and it sounds like Councillor Durrant has seen one or two occasions when that has been the case. Clearly, we will make representations to them to make sure that does not happen. I think while I am answering the question it may be worthwhile me updating Members in terms of the longer term issues there because, I know it is a source of controversy even amongst some of the elders of my party. Some people take the view that we should not be, as they see it, submitting to the drunken lot that go round on a Friday and Saturday night, but my view first of all is that we have a primary responsibility for people's safety and if people are blotto and are wondering around in the road then clearly it is not safe to mix traffic with that. There are some longer term issues that we need to look at particularly and we touched on this the other night at Scrutiny for the Built Environment in response to Councillor Whittaker's report, there are issues around the late night transport arrangements there and the fact that we have got road closure in place does make it difficult for the buses and taxis to come along to disperse people from the Clubs and bars as quickly as we would like so it is an issue that is very much on the radar of the evening Economy Group and I will report back to Council as the matter is taken forwards."

Question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor Tracey

"Can the Leader please give me an update on the redevelopment of Kings Square, I was there this afternoon and it is looking very tatty again. There are still a lot of marks where the ice skating rink has been on the pavement side. Are we going to get this sorted this year or next, or have we got to wait another twenty years?"

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Leader of the Council's response

"I would like to give Councillor Tracey the assurance that it won't be another twenty years. Just to bring Council completely up to date I took part in the judging panel with the help of Mick Thorpe going back a few weeks, to select the teams that would take part in the international design competition that is being organised for the URC by the Civil Institution of British Architects and there were a great number of applicants that I think from memory was about 80 and they were literally from all over the world and we have managed to whittle that down to 6 design teams which I believe includes at least one from Milan so it is truly an international design competition. I believe one of the teams that will be working on this were involved in designing for Brindley Place in Birmingham which is very much seen as an exemplar of that kind of regeneration. On 4 April we will have another session where those six teams that were shortlisted will come forward with some rough designs and we will choose one design for them to bring forward and develop in detail, beyond that there would be a procurement exercise to go through and we hope to be on site early in the new year, (2009). As Members will be aware from the debate we had last time at Council we do have £1.5m put aside in our capital budget as our contribution for a new Kings Square and that will be supplemented by funds from English Partnerships and the regional development agency to bring together the overall cost of £4m. So after years and years of waiting we will have a new £4m Kings Square which will be one of the best examples of a public square in the region I am sure.

I am sure as we go through the process of building up a detailed design there will be a huge amount of public consultation. I know that there is probably no greater issue that sparks the public's emotion in Gloucester than Kings Square so that public consultation will clearly include Councillors and I am sure Councillors will indeed have their own views on it."

Question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor Haigh

"I would like to thank the Leader for his reply to my question at the previous meeting about recycling boxes which apparently have a life of five years. I understand from one of the Officers that there are plans in hand to investigate how they can be disposed of once they 'die'. It has also come to my attention that the Council does use a large number of plastic glasses in its operations and I wonder if the Leader would come back to me on what happens to plastic glasses if they are made from recyclable materials and if they are then subsequently recycled."

Leader of the Council's response

"The issue of the disposable plastic cups I know is something that is being tackled by other Authorities as part of their environmental work and I agree it is a good idea that we should do the same. I don't have the specific answers to what happens to them or indeed what materials they are made out of but I will certainly look into that and they will be delegated to Councillor Morgan as part of the Climate Change strategy."

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Question to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources from Councillor McLellan.

“We propose to use £282k of LABGI monies for ongoing revenue expenditure. £150k of this money is estimated to come from 2007 grant which I don’t think has yet been announced. Is he still confident that we will get the £150,000 and does he know when the announcement will be made?”

Cabinet Member’s response

“I questioned this today actually but I don’t believe we have had assurance though we are chasing it because we would love to know the date. At the time we put the budget together I told Council that around £150k was a conservative estimate. That was a sensible figure put into our budget and we sincerely hope its higher. Obviously if the situation changes so dramatically that we don’t get any money we will look at it at the time but I am sure we are not going to be let down to that extent. We are, as I have just told you sincerely hoping it will be a lot more than £150,000. £150,000 was a prudent figure to put into the budget which is no more or no less than anybody else would have done.”

Question to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Community from Councillor Jones

“Is the Cabinet Member going to encourage the residents of Gloucester to support the Earth Hour later on this month?”

Cabinet Member’s response

“I would be grateful if Councillor Jones or any other Member would like to tell me what it is about, and then I would be happy to give an answer.”

Councillor Jones

“Earth Hour is going to take place around the world local time at 8.00p.m. on 29 March. People are going to be encouraged to turn off their lights. That’s the first thing. There is a website called www.earthhour.org and a similar thing took place just in Sydney last year but this year it is going to be world wide.”

Cabinet Member’s response

“Yes, I think if people wish to demonstrate their concern for the environment and to take part in that I would commend that and as you have brought it to my attention, if it is feasible for me to do so then I will join in as well.”

(b) Written Questions to Cabinet Members

1. Question to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Community by Councillor Haigh

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"Is the Cabinet Member aware of the Gloucestershire Biodiversity Partnership Nature Map and will this Council be signing up to the principles it espouses, which are, to create an Adaptive Strategy for wildlife? In particular, will we be taking into account for Planning, the findings included in the map which show Gloucester to be at the heart of the Low Wet Grasslands priority habitat?"

Cabinet Member's response

"At an officer level the City Council has been involved with the nature map from its inception and helped in the detailed drafting of the map itself. Nature mapping recognizes that in a world affected by climate change biodiversity cannot be maintained let alone enhanced through the management of small scale nature reserves, it requires large scale areas of appropriately managed habitat that allows for species migration as temperatures rise. The Severn Vale has long been identified by the City Council as an ideal north - south corridor and indeed policies contained in the 2000 local plan review (carried forward in the Second Stage Deposit) identified the Severn and its wash lands as a Prime Biodiversity Area. Appropriate policies are associated with the identified area. The City Council's Climate Change strategy takes this concept further and calls for the setting up of a regional park in the area to ensure that this strategic corridor is kept free from inappropriate development and managed in a manner to aid biodiversity. It is hoped this would build on the successful Severnside Countryside Management Project that we have hosted for the past 7 years in the area.

The City Council were only asked to sign up to the nature map in the middle of February and there is a need to clarify the implications. When it is launched and further information has been released we will do some further work on this.

This is a process that will require Cabinet Member approval and at the next convenient opportunity a report will go forward seeking endorsement of the process and an in principal agreement to build the concept into the on going LDF process. The reality is that the Nature Map areas identified in the city correspond to the City Council's Prime Biodiversity area and policies associated with this are similar to those suggested as part of the nature map process. On the ground we have carried out significant improvements as part of the Severnside Project, recent and proposed Netheridge Farm improvements and the ongoing work on Alney Island."

Supplementary Question from Councillor Haigh

"I was very concerned to hear at the launch of the Bio Diversity Map that other organizations have already signed up for this and yet Gloucester is lagging behind especially when Cheltenham is one of the Authorities that have signed up. I would like to have an update on the progress of this please."

Cabinet Member's response

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“I think to give you a thorough response I will have to give you a written answer on this one, if you will bear with me.”

2. Question to the Leader of the Council by Councillor McLellan

“In relation to the car parking facility for City and County Council employees at St Oswalds Park can the Leader provide me with the number of cars damaged at the site since Christmas, can he break it down by month and include figures for March to date?”

Leader of the Council’s response

“I do not possess this data. It may be helpful if I set out some background on this car park in respect of this and other questions on the same site.

The area of land is earmarked for comprehensive redevelopment as part of the St Oswald’s Park regeneration scheme. It was for some time used as a temporary home for the open markets and car boot sale prior to the move to the Barbican site. The site is fenced and has a security gate at the entrance. It is currently being used as a temporary staff car park for County Council staff (not City Council staff) under an arrangement with the City Council. Under that arrangement the City Council’s contractor merely unlocks and locks the site at the beginning and end of the working day. Any additional security service/patrols rests with the County Council. The County Council has recently asked whether it could pay for, through the City Council’s contractor, an enhanced security presence. Subject to final agreement from the County we will be able to meet this request. The County Council have also asked us to install a lockable height barrier at the car park entrance (at their expense).”

3. Question to the Leader of the Council by Councillor McLellan

“In relation to the car parking facility for City and County Council employees at St Oswalds Park can the Leader whether in the words of a member of the public he considers that fly tipping has been rife on the site?”

Leader of the Council’s response

“There have been some problems but I would not regard the situation as “rife” on this site. The undeveloped parts of the St Oswald’s Park site have been subjected to repeated fly tipping over the years. This is a problem that will only disappear with comprehensive redevelopment. The particular site (the County Council staff car park) which is fenced and gated has had less problems with fly tipping than more open areas.”

4. Question to the Leader of the Council by Councillor McLellan

“In relation to the car parking facility for City and County Council employees at St Oswalds Park can the Leader advise whether he will

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take urgent action to repair faulty lights on the site and if any action is being taken to improve lighting?”

Leader of the Council’s response

“This is in hand. Officers are progressing the necessary maintenance and repairs. A contractor has been instructed as a priority. Clearly we will not be embarking on major improvements in view of the future of the site.”

5. Question to the Leader of the Council by Councillor McLellan

“In relation to the car parking facility for City and County Council employees at St Oswalds Park can the Leader advise whether he feels that security for staff, particularly women staff members, is of a high enough level?”

Leader of the Council’s response

“As stated in response to the first question the County Council occupies this land under an arrangement with the City Council. Additional security is a matter for the County Council to provide or fund. The County has recently asked the City to provide a security patrol service. We have responded positively and await instructions.”

Supplementary question from Councillor McLellan

I am slightly confused by the answer so can I ask the Leader to clarify? He says that the County provides, or pays, the security patrol and he says the County has recently asked the City to provide a security service. Can he just clarify? I presume that means they are asking us to provide, and they are willing to pay a security patrol service and we are waiting for their response. Is that the position?

Leader of the Council’s response

“I would wish to express my sympathy for those whose cars have been damaged and vandalised in those incidents. In relation to a specific point you raised, the security is provided throughout the City Council’s contractor and it would be for the County Council to fund that or to provide their own security.”

6. Question to the Leader of the Council by Councillor McLellan

“In relation to the car parking facility for City and County Council employees at St Oswalds Park can the Leader of the Council advise of the number of incursions by travellers this year and what the Council is doing to stop traveller incursions on to the site?”

Leader of the Council’s response

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“In 2007 (Jan-Dec) there were five traveller incursions on the wider St Oswalds site. There has been one to date in 2008 (on the county staff car park). The Council and its developer partner (Hammersons) have used a variety of methods to prevent such incursions - these include rubble bunds, barriers and gates. However, these are of limited effect given the vast areas of derelict land awaiting redevelopment and the opportunity to encamp on the remaining open areas such as the roads and verges. If an encampment is established we instigate legal proceedings in order to gain possession.”

Supplementary question from Councillor McLellan

“I note as he says there has been quite a number of travellers incursions in the last 14 or 15 months. He says that the Council and its developer partner have used a variety of methods etc. Can he advise me of the time taken to procure an Order, to actually gain possession of the site and if we always pursue an Order to evict travellers from sites?”

Leader of the Council’s response

“I am not sure if I can give an exact timetable for how long it took on this occasion although I would say that we received an e.mail from the County Council thanking us for our speedy response to relieve the situation. As to whether we pursue an Order on each occasion, clearly we do when it is necessary to do so. That is the course we take.”

7. Question to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources by Councillor McLellan

“The Focus system does allow one to access information about requests for action to be taken. However the system whilst having many benefits does not allow Members to find the current position on requests nor is there, apparently, a system to report back when work is done or indeed if not to be done the reasons why. Can the Cabinet Member advise if these enhancements will be included in the system?”

Cabinet Member’s response

“The Focus system has a facility called the 'Web Portal'. It is accessible from any device capable of connecting to the Internet. Users can check the status of matters they have reported to the Customer Services team. Access to the system is controlled via a user id and password. To register contact Customer Services on ext. 6101/6403.

Once users have successfully logged into the system, they can view current and finished matters, as well as notes and related history. If the matter was resolved by Enterprise, then the notes and information will have been transferred from Enterprise's computer system Mayrise to Focus.

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ICT are working with Customer Services to extend the feedback facility by including the ability to send an SMS (text) to those reporting the matter. Currently, feedback can only be provided through telephone contact with Customer Services or via email. The development is in its final phase before testing commences within the next month.

All Members were emailed on 24 October with a user id and password to the system. The email also contained a link to access the system and a user manual.”

Supplementary question from Councillor McLellan

“It may be my lack of clarity but the answer does not quite answer the question I meant to ask. If I look at Focus and it says the request has been passed to Enterprise often that is the end of the position on Focus it does not then say what is happening to it. Now, I have an outstanding request for work from January 2008, with no information other than ‘passed to Enterprise’. How am I supposed to find out what has happened to my bold request for action. Am I supposed to phone Enterprise or will Focus be managed better to tell me?”

Cabinet Member’s response

“Yes, the whole validity of the system is that you go in and you look at the notes and they are there and they are not all there at the moment. That is being worked on. If you get a Focus task and Enterprise put the update on it would be extremely useful. That has to happen, it is improving, the new Streetcare Manager has already got that in hand along with the Chief Executive and we should start to see the improvements. Enterprise’s own system is a lot better than the previous Accord system. So it is on the way. I do take on board everything you are saying because I have been asking exactly the same question.”

8. Question to the Cabinet Member for Heritage and Leisure by Councillor McLellan

“I refer to an answer given by the then Cabinet Member for the Environment about the future of the Clock Tower Skate Park when he said if relocation had not happened by March 2008 he would ‘remove the equipment and put it in store until alternative funding can be identified’. In the light of this commitment and as relocation appears not to be imminent can the Cabinet Member tell me how he proposes to honour that commitment?”

Cabinet Member’s response

“A comprehensive consultation for the relocation of this equipment is currently taking place and the results are being reviewed. If we are not in a position to relocate the equipment on the 1 April 2008 then we will take measures to close the facility in its current location at that time. The main option for this as suggested previously is to place large chains and

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immovable objects such as concrete pipe sections on the ramps and skating surface rendering the site un-useable. Gloucester Enterprise are currently establishing the costs of this.”

9. Question to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Health by Councillor Witts

“As I still await an answer to this question I ask it yet again:

There is a concern nationally that there are as many as 3.5 million homes in this country fitted with the type of thermostat and tank that killed ten month old Rhianna Hardie from Somerset. In case anyone is not aware of this tragic story baby Rhianna was asleep in her cot beneath the plastic hot water tank in the roof space above. The thermostat failed and water boiled in the tank. Being plastic the tank became soft and buckled cascading boiling water through the ceiling and onto Rhianna. The thermostat in use was old and would carry on heating although it had failed.

This is not an isolated case as in 2002 there was a fatality in Cornwall when a hot water system of a similar design also failed.

Can the Cabinet Member for Housing and Health tell me if any council houses under the control of Gloucester City Council has this type of thermostat and plastic tank fitted?”

Cabinet Member’s response

“The Health and Safety Executive consider the level of risk to be low but as a precaution Gloucester City Homes has instigated a number of measures including issuing a press release, providing information on their website, writing to all tenants and placing information in various locations (sheltered schemes, neighbourhood projects).

GCH Actions to date:

Date	Action
10.01.2008	Local Government Association issued advice to all Local Authorities with a template press release.
11.01.2008	GCH issued press release which provides advice and information/guidance to tenants based on the LGA / Health and Safety Executive Advice. All Board and Councillors advised through a Members’ Information Sheet identifying the actions GCH are taking.
17.01.2008	The Citizen ran an article which focuses on “Alarm Sounded over Council House Boilers” following Council meeting.
18.01.2008	GCH issued follow up press release advising that an Action Plan is to be devised to review stock list

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	and develop an Action Plan.
22.01.2008	All Board and Councillors advised through a Members' Information Sheet identifying the actions GCH are taking which includes the review of the database and risk is eliminated through inspecting at risk homes.
21.01.2008	The Citizen ran an article "We don't know if families in danger".
22.01.2008	All tenants were written to and advised of potential risks, what warning signs to look out for and customer advice contact points if there is concern.
24.01.2008	The Citizen ran an article "Tenants re-assured over hot tank safety"
28.01.2008	The Citizen ran an article "Be careful on faulty boilers"
01.02.2008	GCH provided an interview for Gloucester FM Radio.
05.02.2008	GCH provided an interview for Gloucester FM Radio.

On 22 January, the GCH Board and City Councillors were issued with the following Action Plan:

Gloucester City Homes has commenced work with Gloucester City Council to ensure that all properties which have a risk, are visited and checked. This includes the following actions:

- Our existing stock condition database will enable us to identify all at risk properties.
- We will be working with our partners to ensure that all homes that have had replacement central heating systems installed as part of our improvement programme have the necessary safety cut out features.
- We will also be inspecting any remaining properties to identify any that may be at risk and take action to ensure that any such risk is eliminated.

In addition, Gloucester City Homes will check whenever a customer phones to report a problem with an immersion heater, whether any of the warning signs are present. Where faults are reported on immersion heaters and any repairs or renewals of immersion heaters are carried out, Gloucester City Homes will ensure that the immersion heaters have a safety cut out feature, and check to ensure that, if there is a plastic water tank or cistern located within the loft it has an adequate supporting base.

Since this action plan has been put in place, GCH has reviewed the database of 4,585 properties it manages and identified

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- 141 properties which have no likelihood of occurrence (on communal heating systems)
- 1,425 addresses which have low likelihood of occurrence (have a combi boiler or have a modern boiler under 4 years old)
- 1,670 addresses which have low to medium likelihood of occurrence (have a combi boiler or have a modern boiler over 4 years old)
- 348 properties in Sheltered accommodation (combination of gas and electric heating) which have low to medium likelihood of occurrence
- 1001 properties, of which 603 are all electric, which have medium to high likelihood of occurrence

Inspections are carried out through a number of methods including when a property becomes void, is visited by one of the strategic partners to undertake the surveys for identifying the works to be carried out under Decent Homes programme or has a stock condition survey undertaken.

Priority will be given to undertaking inspections on the sheltered accommodation and the all-electric properties and any information identified from these inspections is being recorded and our stock condition database will be updated to show that there is no risk at this property.

In addition, Gloucester City Homes and I have been contacted by a local company who claim to have a device which could possibly address some of these issues.

Their product is being evaluated by Gloucester City Homes. On top of that, as indicated above, Gloucester City Homes has asked its partners to undertake checks on all of our properties, with priority given to the 1001 cases highlighted.

Gloucester City Homes has done everything required, and more on top and done it all very quickly and efficiently.

In addition, this issue was reviewed by the Board at its February meeting, and all City Council Board Members endorsed the plan of action.

The City Council Board Members are happy with the response of the City Homes Management team on this issue. I am happy with their response, and City Council top-level managers are happy with the response too.

None of us are complacent. We will continue to be vigilant.”

Supplementary question from Councillor Witts

“Long answer, but no answer. So therefore can the Cabinet Member assure me, that when he does finally get an answer to how many, if any, we have of this type of thermostat and tank, will he finally answer my question?”

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Cabinet Member's response

"A very bizarre way of dealing with what is a very serious issue. I checked with Gloucester City Homes, Councillor Witts has made no contact at all with them on this issue and since the last Full Council meeting he has made no contact at all with me. I find it a very bizarre way of getting information on a subject which he believes to be close to his heart. I have given the reply that I have, I have given as much information as we have, to reassure Members I can tell you today that Gloucester City Homes advise us that 454 new thermostats and immersion heaters have been installed in the current financial year to date and 436 central heating systems have already been replaced and as Members will know, when new central heating is installed, combination boilers are put in, which means that hot water cylinders and thermostats are removed in accordance with BSP Safety Guidelines. If Councillor Witts still wants further information, I am perfectly happy and willing to organise a meeting for Chris with Ashley Green from Gloucester City Homes, with John Mann as Head Director and myself and we can sit round a table and discuss this issue rather than leave it until the Full Council meeting where Councillor Witts seems to want to raise these issues in public."

10. Question to the Leader of the Council by Councillor Whittaker

"What progress has the City Council made in helping find a permanent home for the 'Tigers' (Gloucester City Football Club)?"

Leader of the Council's response

"Members may be aware that Gloucester City AFC have recently secured a ground share arrangement with Cirencester Town for the next two seasons. Whilst this is not ideal it does give some breathing space for the club to progress options for a new home in the city. It also gives it an opportunity to build on an excellent 2007/2008 season on the pitch for which, given the problems experienced, the club should be congratulated.

We remain in close contact with the club on the exploration of a number of relocation options. These remain confidential at this stage but we will continue to assist the club where we can.

Members will also be aware that the club has been awarded £10,000 from the flood fund to help it through these difficult times."

Supplementary question from Councillor Whittaker

"It is good to hear that Gloucester City have found a home for them in the meantime at Cirencester Town but I think it is important that we realise that football is the National game and although this city is dominated by Rugby and you and I meet quite often on the steps of the Shed and I enjoy games at the Shed and I have enjoyed games at Meadow Park as

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well. I have had a similar experience in the past at two Clubs I have been associated with and it was very difficult finding a new venue for them. It is difficult to find a new venue because residents, once they lose the hold in the city, don't usually want them nearby and Clubs generally have to find somewhere which is more in an industrial type of venue or business park. So will the Leader assure us that the Council will carry on and not let up in the hope to try and find a place because a Football Club can die if it is not given that extra help. In these other two places the Council did help."

Cabinet Member's response

"I think the answer is contained in the written statement as a matter of fact. We remain in close contact with the Club on the aspiration of a number of relocation options. We are working with the Club all the time, we are trying to help them to find a location, there are very limited number of places within the city that we can accommodate them. We have, as you know, looked very closely at the site at Waterwells and that has turned out to be impractical and we are looking at all the options possible. They have been granted £10,000 from Severn Trent money which will help in the short term and as you know they have now signed an Agreement with Cirencester Football Club for a couple of years. So the short term future is assured, we need to carry on working with them to see if we can find anyway that we can to help them."

11. Question to the Leader of the Council by Councillor Whittaker

"What provision has the City Council made for public transport improvement into the city given the inevitable traffic congestion that will occur when the Quay's complex opens in 2009?"

Leader of the Council's response

"I am sure Council will welcome the significant and visible progress on the Quays development which will be Gloucester's largest regeneration scheme so far and will be of huge benefit to the city.

The Section 106 Agreement for the Gloucester Quays development secured a substantial contribution towards transportation schemes, including the Gloucester South-West Bypass, the improvement of M5 Junction 12, and public transport, walking and cycling improvements to ensure a good connection between the Quays and the city centre. Whilst the implementation of these transportation schemes rests primarily with the County Council, in its role as Highway Authority, the City Council is committed to working with the County Council to ensure that these schemes are delivered. With specific reference to public transport, a contribution of £1.2 million is available for the improvement of public transport, walking and cycling links serving the Quays, and dialogue between the two Councils, GHURC and the Quays developer continues on the precise measures to be implemented, including the format of the bus services that will serve the Quays site."

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Supplementary question from Councillor Whittaker

"I am really concerned that we do not seem to have any long-term transport policy for the city. We do not seem to have any bus lanes in this city. If we are going to have public transport used efficiently we have to have it so that it is convenient for people. At the moment the buses get caught up in the jams like everything else and I wonder if you would be looking in the future to actually having a transport system that does allow the buses to be more convenient to people?"

Leader of the Council's response

"I would first of all make the point that transport is a function of the County Council, they have responsibility for that. But, I don't share your view that there are no bus lanes in the city, there certainly are and in some places they are effective. Members will also be aware if we are talking about bus lanes that it is slightly out of our boundary but a new bus service has been put on the A40 to the west of the city to facilitate the Lynton Park and Ride Scheme when that comes on stream. Just going back for a moment to the Gloucester Quays links. Details of the schemes for the Links 1 and 4 which are basically through the Docks and around the other side going along the Quay down to the bottom of Westgate Street will be worked up and then they will be the subject to the bid to the recent Development Agency for something like £5m so that just shows how serious we are in ensuring that there are strong links between the Quays and the city centre to make sure that the whole of Gloucester benefits from the 3 million estimated visitors to the Quays as forecasted to achieve when it opens."

12. Question to the Leader of the Council by Councillor Whittaker

"Given the reported popularity of the Tall Ships Festival and the claimed net income to the city, shouldn't we be making this a permanent fixture in the city's calendar?"

Leader of the Council's response

"Last autumn's Tall Ships Festival was indeed a huge success and demonstrated that the city was back in business following the summer floods. That event benefited from significant flood relief funding and cost in excess of £100,000 to stage. I share Councillor Whittaker's aspiration to make this a regular event. Indeed, Cabinet have allocated £23,000 for this purpose. Discussions are ongoing with partners and potential sponsors on the detail, timing and funding of future events."

13. Question to the Leader of the Council by Councillor Whittaker

"Following the 'Post Christmas Survey of Retailers' it is clear that Christmas 2007 was seen as an improvement on 2006. What is being done this year to continue this trend?"

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Leader of the Council's response

"I am pleased Councillor Whittaker recognises that our efforts to improve the city's Christmas offer have been successful. As we have done in previous years, we will learn from our experiences and build on our achievements to provide an even better package for 2008. We are already exploring a wide range of initiatives.

Following consultation with the Chamber of Trade, Central Gloucester Initiative and City Centre Management Forum, the Christmas Procession and light switch-on has been fixed for Sunday 16 November. The procession/switch-on and Docks event will both take place on this date, as a combined and cohesive event. Once again, we hope to secure a celebrity to launch Christmas in Gloucester.

The Mall's Christmas Procession will take place the previous day.

We hope to bring the ice rink back to Gloucester for a fourth year, but this is dependent both on our negotiations with the operators and securing sufficient funding and sponsorship.

We are investigating a number of options for activities to sit alongside the ice rink, including festive markets and a Santa's Grotto.

The Christmas Window Display competition will take place again and we hope to see a further increase in participation from traders.

The trial parking tariffs for late night shopping Thursdays at a flat-rate £2 worked well and we would look to repeat them. We will also look closely at the charging arrangements for the Sundays in the run-up to Christmas.

There will also be a drive to improve street cleansing, general cleanliness and security through the festive period.

All in all a great Christmas 2008 is being planned."

Supplementary question from Councillor Whittaker

"In your Scrutiny Committee report you said as yet there was no provision for the 2008/2009 budget for the same scale of activities such as the ice rink and in the same document you go on to show how useful the ice rink has been. Many of the retailers stated that it contributes positively to the atmosphere of the city and then creates greater advantages including increase in footfall. Isn't the Leader somewhat ashamed that he is suggesting that there might not be an ice rink this time. He is putting a lot of effort it seems into the Docks but the ambience that the ice rink creates at Christmas is really important.

Leader of the Council's response

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"I am quite astonished by that question, I am not ashamed, in fact I am very proud that this administration has brought the ice rink to the city for the first time and for three years running and I recall when we took over as the administration and I went to a particular officer, who is no longer with the Authority thank goodness, but I did go in there as Cabinet Member in 2004 and asked what the city was doing to promote shopping in Gloucester this Christmas, and I got the answer 'Nothing, that's for the shops to do'. Clearly, we have taken a different and a more pro-active approach and we have put together the package of Christmas activities that there is detailed on the answer before you. I think at the stage of the year we are at, it actually shows a huge amount of advance planning. We are planning in advance much more than has been done before, but as I explained at Scrutiny for the Built Environment the ice rink coming back does depend on us having enough money either through our own funding or sponsorship or combination of both of them and when the LABGI figures are finally announced I imagine the Christmas activities will have an early call on those funds. It does have to be said that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to make an ice rink in the form that comes to the city, break even let alone make a profit. The first year that it was provided it was financed on a private basis and we know that those operators did not make a profit, indeed quite the opposite. So I do think it would have been irresponsible and foolish of us to try and put this in the budget before we knew the amount of LABGI funding, indeed Members on the opposite side criticised us for putting even small amounts in the budget that we have done to support the ongoing revenue situation in 2008/09, but we will make every effort to ensure that the ice rink returns and all the other activities are as successful, if not more successful, than previous years and it will once again promote Christmas in Gloucester."

14. Question to the Leader of the Council by Councillor Tracey

"Could the Leader of the Council please advise what arrangements there are for the welfare of animals in the city (particularly dogs and cats) and are arrangements for Dog Wardens in place?"

Leader of the Council's response

"The Council is responsible for the collection of stray dogs. This is included in the Streetcare Partnering Contract. If reported to the Call Centre, Enterprise will collect the stray dog and return it to the owner, if they can be identified. If the owner cannot be identified the dog will be delivered to Cheltenham Animal Shelter. If they are not collected by the owner within seven days then Cheltenham Animal Shelter will seek to find a home for the dog.

This applies to dogs only. The Council has no responsibility for the collection of any other stray animals."

Supplementary question from Councillor Tracey

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“As I know RSPCA does not take animals in. They do not collect stray animals at all, at least the Gloucester one doesn't. The police do not have anything at all to do with stray animals, dogs etc., so nowhere can these dogs go. Have we got any Wardens in this city and is it right that Enterprise will take on responsibility of stray animals because I don't think they will be qualified? I would like to know if they do will there be a Committee to interview these people for these stray animals. A 24 hour service really needed for stray animals.”

Leader of the Council's response

“We do have Dog Wardens and people trained provided through Enterprise and I understand that more training is being undertaken in April. In relation to the new responsibilities that you mention from 1 April I am not entirely sure of all the details of those but clearly we will ensure that we fulfil our responsibilities in the way that we always endeavour to do. The staff are part of our Streetcare contract at Enterprise and it would be a matter for them to appoint and to train and to make sure that their responsibilities under the Streetcare contract are adhered to.”

153. CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

(a) Housing Benefit Overpayment and Recovery Policy (RDF2755)

Moved by Councillor Gravells (Deputy Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Housing and Health), seconded by Councillor James (Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture).

Having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item Councillor Smith withdrew from the Chamber.

RESOLVED

1. That Council approve £7.30 as the maximum rate of recovery from ongoing housing benefit.
2. That Council review the standard maximum rate of recovery after 12 months.
3. That the revised housing benefit overpayment and recovery policy be adopted.
4. That the housing benefit write-off policy be adopted.
5. That Council review each policy after four years to take account of legislation change or amendments as a result of best practice.

Councillor Hilton moved an amendment “That Option 2 of Appendix A is supported and agreed as the appropriate action.”

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Field.

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On being put to the vote the amendment was declared lost.

The substantive motion was put to a recorded vote. There were 16 in favour, 9 against and 4 abstentions. The motion was therefore declared carried.

154. POTENTIAL JOINT CORE STRATEGY FOR GLOUCESTER, CHELTENHAM AND TEWKESBURY (PT13038B)

Moved by Councillor Morgan (Cabinet Member for Planning and Community), seconded by Councillor James (Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture).

RESOLVED

That Council formally support the preparation of a Joint Core Strategy for Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury.

155. REVISED DRAFT AFFORDABLE HOUSING SPD (PT13038C)

Moved by Councillor Morgan (Cabinet Member for Planning and Community), seconded by Councillor James (Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture).

RESOLVED

That the officer responses set out at Appendix 1 be agreed and that the revised draft Affordable Housing SPD attached at Appendix 2 be published for a six week period of formal public consultation in March 2008.

156. REVISED DRAFT NEW HOUSING AND OPEN SPACE SPD (PT13038D)

Moved by Councillor Morgan (Cabinet Member for Planning and Community), seconded by Councillor James (Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture).

RESOLVED

That the officer responses set out in Appendix 1 be agreed and that the revised draft SPD attached at Appendix 2 be published for a six week round of formal public consultation in March 2008.

157. ISSUE DEBATE (CONSERVATIVE) (COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 17)

Moved by Councillor James (Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture), seconded by Councillor Gravells (Deputy Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Housing and Health).

RESOLVED

That this Council:-

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- (a) note that there are major flood alleviation and repair works required in the city that we are not currently able to fund despite the vast majority of the Flood Recovery Grant being used for this purpose;
- (b) welcomes the award of £110 million to the UK from the EU's solidarity fund in response to last summer's flooding;
- (c) calls upon the UK Government to distribute these funds to affected local authorities fully and speedily;
- (d) resolves to write to Ministers at the Department for Communities and Local Government to put Gloucester's case for additional funding.

158. PLANNING COMMITTEE

Moved by Councillor McLellan, seconded by Councillor Gillespie.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 5 February 2008 be received.

159. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Moved by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Heath.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for the Built Environment held on 28 January 2008 be approved, adopted and confirmed.

160. CABINET RECOMMENDATION

- (b) Gloucestershire Airport Runway End Safety Area Works (RMD200804)

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

RESOLVED

That the item be deferred to future meetings of Cabinet and Council.

161. ITEM OF URGENT BUSINESS

CABINET RECOMMENDATION

- (c) Marketing Alliance

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

RESOLVED

1. That the Corporate Director of Strategy and Development, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Gloucester Marketing Alliance Shadow Board, implements the next key phase of the Project Plan. In particular it is essential that:
 - The Gloucester Marketing Alliance Company is set up.
 - The Gloucester Marketing Alliance Board is set up.
 - The Marketing Alliance appoint a Chief Executive to assist with the creation and set up of the branding and approach of the Company.
 - Suitable accommodation is identified.
 - Work continues to reach the anticipated partner funding target of £230,000.
 - Initial support to the Alliance is provided through City Council staff.
 - Grants amounting to £132,940 are paid to the Alliance in 2008/09.
2. That Members endorse the nature of the Company, its proposed objectives and aims, in particular the promotion of Gloucester through local businesses and events.
3. That the Council work in partnership with the Marketing Alliance Company to provide seed support and funding in the formative years.

Time of commencement: 19:30 hours

Time of conclusion: 21:50 hours

Chair