



COUNCIL

MEETING : Thursday, 8th July 2021

PRESENT : Cllrs. Finnegan, Walford, Cook, H. Norman, Gravells MBE, Melvin, Morgan, Hilton, Pullen, Tracey, Lewis, Wilson, Bhaimia, Williams, D. Brown, Taylor, Organ, Patel, Toleman, Brooker, J. Brown, Hyman, Bowkett, Ackroyd, Castle, A. Chambers, S. Chambers, Conder, Dee, Durdey, Evans, Hudson, Kubaszczyk, Padilla, Radley and Zaman

Others in Attendance

Managing Director
Monitoring Officer
Head of Communities
Head of Culture
Head of Place
Head of Policy and Resources
Policy and Governance Manager
Democratic and Electoral Services Team Leader

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. Field, Chambers-Dubus and O`Donnell

12. MINUTES

12.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2021 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Mayor.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

13.1 There were no declarations of interest.

14. CALL OVER

14.1 The Mayor invited Members to indicate whether they wished to reserve agenda item 9 for discussion and they did so.

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15. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

- 15.1 The following question was read by the Policy and Governance Manager on behalf of a Gloucester resident:

If it is felt that any tree needs to be cut down without delay, the evidence to support that decision should be so compelling as to be unchallengeable, so in the event that advance notice is not considered feasible, can the council guarantee that this evidence will be made available in such cases?

- 15.2 Councillor Cook, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment advised that, if the tree was the property of the Council, a solution could be found but if it was owned by another body, there would be no power for the City Council to act.

16. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

- 16.1 There were no petitions nor deputations.

17. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor

- 17.1 The Mayor reminded Members that the Civic Charity Ball would be held on Friday 17 September and encouraged Members to buy tickets.

Members of the Cabinet

- 17.2 Councillor Norman, Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources, advised that the Gateway reception had partially reopened and that there would be limited appointments aimed specifically at vulnerable people or those who did not have digital access. The frequency of opening would be kept under review and the service would respond to demand. Councillor Norman thanked Customer Services, Housing and the Revenues and Benefits teams for all their endeavours during their time working from home.
- 17.3 Councillor Gravells, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing, informed Members that the Examination in Public of the City Plan had taken place and that a decision was expected in August. He noted the comments of the inspectorate that the case had been put very eloquently and he thanked the Planning Policy Team for the preparation and submission of the examination.
- 17.4 Councillor Morgan, Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, announced that a sky art installation was in place at the Guildhall and encouraged Members to see it. He further announced that the latest exhibition at the Museum, 'The Wonderful World of Ladybird' had opened which showcased the work of some of the country's best illustrators through the years.

18. MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

- 18.1 Councillor Hilton asked Councillor Cook what progress had been made regarding the design of the commissioned Gloucester window to be situated

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at the Transport Hub. Councillor Cook explained that he had seen some further offering and that once the initial issues had been resolved, he would meet with the other two Group Leaders to settle on the design. In response to Councillor Hilton's supplementary question regarding when it might be ready, Councillor Cook stated that, whilst he would want it completed speedily, when the design elements are right, officers would meet to agree the final design.

- 18.2 Councillor Hilton asked Councillor Cook when construction work on the underpass at Bruton Way would begin. Councillor Cook advised that he would clarify this but he hoped it would be during this year. In response to a further query from Councillor Hilton regarding when work would begin, Councillor Cook advised that there were numerous stakeholders and that officers were working hard to agree a date with these stakeholders.
- 18.3 Councillor Pullen stated that he was pleased with extra funding to tackle fly tipping and asked how many camera there were for this purpose and what the criteria for their deployment was. Councillor Cook advised that additional funding streams had been identified and he anticipated an increase in the number of cameras. Councillor also advised, in response to a further query regarding whether cameras should be placed at flytipping hotspots, that their use was prioritised according to the level of flytipping in particular areas.
- 18.4 Councillor Pullen welcomed the reopening of the Gateway and asked what were the plans to promote and fully advertise its reopening and when it would reopen fully. Councillor Norman advised that all Customer Service agents would triage whether residents required an appointment. Further advertising would be pursued through advice agencies and that Councillors could assist in this. She further stated that she could not advise on a full reopening and that this would be reviewed post-pandemic.
- 18.5 Councillor Pullen noted that individuals who entered crisis or were in an immediate emergency where they required immediate assistance and asked what provision there was for this. Councillor Norman advised that officers would respond accordingly and act on an emergency.
- 18.6 Councillor Wilson commented that the retail sector had been particularly hard hit during the pandemic and asked whether the Council was taking or planning any mitigation to ensure shop fronts appeared aesthetic and not run down. Councillor Cook advised that a local artist had been commissioned to provide frontage and that this should be ready soon.
- 18.7 Councillor D. Brown asked, following the planned lifting of restrictions on 19 July, for an update on plans to re-introduce the community toilet scheme. Councillor Cook stated that he wasn't aware that the scheme had ceased and noted that many were closed during lockdowns. He anticipated that, following businesses reopening, their rigorous cleaning regimes meant that he saw no reason for the scheme to not continue. Councillor D. Brown stated that he was aware of one organisation which had not received payment for their participation. Councillor Cook invited him to share the details with him.

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- 18.8 Councillor Hyman noted that Gloucester was part of a pilot for the hire of e-scooters and stated that they were causing safety issues such as possible injury. He asked Councillor Cook if he would liaise with the County Council and the Police to avoid injury and death. Councillor Cook advised that the hire of e-scooters was subject to legal restrictions such as the holding of a driving licence. He advised that he met with other agencies such as the County Council, Police and health services and that he would invite Councillor Hyman to the next such meeting.
- 18.9 Councillor Radley asked what was the content of the consultation on changes to the open spaces strategy. It was agreed that a written response would be supplied in due course.

19. PLATINUM JUBILEE CIVIC HONOURS COMPETITION

- 19.1 Councillor Cook moved and Councillor Norman seconded the motion. Councillor Cook expressed that it would be an exceptional distinction to achieve Lord Mayor status and that following an application, Gloucester would be in a strong position to receive the honour.
- 19.2 Councillor Pullen stated that he valued the history, culture and tradition of the role and sought assurance that there would be no expenditure nor any additional mayoral spending. It was confirmed that this would be the case.
- 19.3 Councillor J. Brown recalled her time as Mayor, being the first US citizen to be in the role. She stated that if Gloucester was to be awarded Lord Mayor it would be a boost for the City, would draw visitors and give residents an extra sense of Civic pride.
- 19.4 Councillor D. Brown noted that a similar bid had been made some years ago which had some success and that he hoped Gloucester would be successful in this application.
- 19.5 Councillor Norman thanked Members for their enthusiasm and confirmed that the resource would be officer time in preparing the application and that being successful would far outweigh resources. Councillor Cook also confirmed that residents would be asked for their thoughts.
- 19.6 **RESOLVED** :- that the council enters the Platinum Jubilee Civic Honours Competition for Lord Mayor status and authority be delegated to the Managing Director, in consultation with Group Leaders, to prepare and submit the council's application.

20. APPOINTMENTS

- 20.1 The Mayor sought nominations for the vacant position on the Planning Policy Members' Working Group. Councillor Hilton proposed Councillor J. Brown which was put to the vote and was carried.
- 20.2 **RESOLVED that:-** Councillor J. Brown be appointed to the Planning Policy Members' Working Group.

21. NOTICES OF MOTION

21.1 Councillor Pullen moved and Councillor Bhaimia seconded the following motion:

“Tourism is a vitally important aspect of Gloucester’s economy. Visitors to the city contribute widely to many sectors of the economy including hospitality, accommodation, retail, museums and many other historic attractions.

When visiting Gloucester, it is important that visitors can quickly and easily familiarise themselves with everything the city has to offer and the Tourist Information Centre is crucial in ensuring this happens.

Currently the Tourist Information Centre is located in the Museum of Gloucester and whilst the service it provides is good it is not always easily found by people visiting the city for the first time.

This council should therefore explore options and consider relocating the Tourist Information Centre to a central location that is:

- In a position and venue in the new Kings Square / Kings Quarter development.
- At the heart of the city centre
- Close to the Transport Hub and Railway Station
- Well placed, easy to find and fully accessible to visitors

By so doing the Tourist Information Centre will be able to enhance the good service it already offers, improve its accessibility, footfall and visitor experience and ensure that visitors are able to take full advantage and explore everything Gloucester has to offer.”

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

21.3 Councillor Hilton moved and Councillor Conder seconded the following motion:

“This council agrees that it can and should do more to encourage city centre living through the conversion of redundant commercial/office buildings for residential use and by new build on brownfield land within or next to the city centre.

This council asks the cabinet member for planning and housing to report back to full council within six months with an action plan to identify new sites that could be suitable for the creation of new homes in or close to the city centre.”

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Note - The area of search be based on the city centre as defined in the draft Gloucester City Plan and areas of commercial land close to the city centre, which will be agreed by the cabinet member for planning and housing and the proposers of this motion, before the study begins.”

- 21.4 Councillor Gravells proposed and Councillor Melvin seconded the following amendment:

“This council agrees that it ~~can and should do more~~ **continue** to encourage city centre living through the conversion of redundant commercial/office buildings for residential use and by new build on brownfield land within or next to the city centre.

~~This council asks the cabinet member for planning and housing to report back to full council within six months with an action plan to identify new~~ **recognises that officers maintain a list of potential sites that could be suitable for the creation of new homes in or close to the city centre, and that this list is kept under regular review by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing. This list can be shared with the proposer of the motion and any other members on a confidential basis.**

Sites included in the list to be within the city centre as defined in the draft Gloucester City Plan and its immediate environs.

Finally, Council welcomes the fact that the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning and officers continue to meet with developers and associated professionals to discuss the repurposing of our City including the re-use of under-utilised and redundant buildings.”

~~Note - The area of search be based on the city centre as defined in the draft Gloucester City Plan and areas of commercial land close to the city centre, which will be agreed by the cabinet member for planning and housing and the proposers of this motion, before the study begins.~~

- 21.5 The amendment was not accepted. The amendment was put to the vote, was carried and therefore became the substantive motion.

- 21.6 **RESOLVED that: -**

This council agrees that it should continue to encourage city centre living through the conversion of redundant commercial/office buildings for residential use and by new build on brownfield land within or next to the city centre.

This council recognises that officers maintain a list of potential sites that could be suitable for the creation of new homes in or close to the city centre, and that this list is kept under regular review by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing. This list can be shared with the proposer of the motion and any other members on a confidential basis.

Sites included in the list to be within the city centre as defined in the draft Gloucester City Plan and its immediate environs.

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Finally, Council welcomes the fact that the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning and officers continue to meet with developers and associated professionals to discuss the repurposing of our City including the re-use of under-utilised and redundant buildings

22. WRITTEN QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS

22.1 There were no written questions.

Time of commencement: 18:30

Time of conclusion: 19:50

Chair