



## **CABINET**

**MEETING** : Wednesday, 16th June 2021

**PRESENT** : Cllrs. Cook (Chair), H. Norman, Gravells MBE, Hudson and Morgan

### **Others in Attendance**

Cllr. Castle

Managing Director

Monitoring Officer

Head of Place

Head of Policy and Resources

Democratic and Electoral Services Officer

**APOLOGIES** : None

### **1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **2. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021 are confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)**

A member of the public asked what happens to the food, garden and recyclable waste collected from doorsteps in the City. The Cabinet Member for Environment replied that food waste is taken to an anaerobic digestion facility where it is converted to biogas for energy generation. He stated that garden waste is taken to be composted in a special area at the Hempsted Recycling Centre to fertilise the topsoil on the former landfill site. The Cabinet Member for Environment noted that later in the year 10,000 trees will be planted in the soil on this site to become biomass to generate green energy. For recycled waste, including paper and glass, he reported that this went to various facilities in the UK to be processed for re-use in contrast to two years ago when it was sent overseas.

The member of the public referred to new public bins in Eastgate Street each partitioned for general and recyclable waste. They enquired if there were plans to introduce these bins in other areas such as Gloucester Park. The Cabinet Member for Environment affirmed that the number of recycling bins across the City was

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increasing despite problems in the past with people mixing general and recyclable waste. He further advised that later in the year a strategy would be introduced to increase the opportunities for recycling and address local needs, a strategy that could be summed up as 'right bin in the right place'.

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

There were no petitions or deputations.

**5. LEADER AND CABINET MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)**

There were no questions to the Leader of the Council or Cabinet.

**6. PERFORMANCE MONITORING YEAR END - 2020/21**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that informed Members of the Council's performance against key measures in Quarter 4 of 2020/21.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources placed into context the trends revealed in the report. She reminded Members that it had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (7<sup>th</sup> June 2021) and noted that the number of performance indicators had increased since the 2019/20 report.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure referred to the performance indicator red status for the Museum of Gloucester and Tourist Information Centre footfall (Appendix 1 CD & VE-1). He advised Members that this was due to restrictions to public access under COVID-19 guidance and that staff had taken the opportunity to concentrate on improving the cultural venues enabling them to re-open in a better position. The Cabinet Member for Environment emphasised that the indicator in question was a measure of footfall alone and that everyone appreciated the efforts being made.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy drew Members' attention to the improvement demonstrated regarding households in temporary and B&B accommodation (Appendix 1 H-13, H-14, H-15, H-16). He thanked the whole Housing Team both personally and on behalf of Cabinet for their work despite the difficult circumstances of COVID-19.

The Cabinet Member for Environment commented on the clear way in which the report presented the status of each indicator allowing focus to be directed where needed. He noted that these were all of green status with five at amber and that only one had crossed the red threshold.

**RESOLVED** that the Quarter 4 Performance Report 2020/21 at Appendix 1 of the report is noted.

**7. TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE - ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that sought Members to note treasury management activities for the

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period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, prudential indicators, interest rate forecasts and an overview of the financial year 2020-21.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources highlighted the key features of the report. She particularly drew Members' attention to the outperformance of the benchmarks by the Council's investment returns (3.4). The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources further confirmed that the Council had operated within the prescribed limits and practices (6.2) and had not entered into any new borrowing. She thanked the Finance Team for their work.

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the report are noted.

**8. BUSINESS RATES - EXPANDED RETAIL DISCOUNT 2021/22, NURSERY (CHILDCARE) DISCOUNT 2021/22**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that sought Members to approve expanded retail and nursery (childcare) discount schemes commensurate with the Government budget announcement of 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources confirmed that the costs of the discounts to the Council would be fully funded by central government.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the Business Rates Expanded Retail Discount scheme 2021-22 (Appendix 1 of the report) is the approved scheme for Gloucester City for 2021-22
- (2) the Business Rates Nursery (Childcare) Discount scheme 2021-22 (Appendix 2 of the report) is the approved scheme for Gloucester City for 2021-22.

**9. BUSINESS RATES - REQUEST FOR WRITE-OFF APPROVAL OVER £100K**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that sought Members to write off a non-domestic rates debt in excess of £100,000.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources outlined why the proposal was necessary. She reassured Members that there was provision to cover the loss and that should a new avenue to recover the debt arise at any time in the future then it would still be followed despite the write-off. The Cabinet Member for Environment reiterated that the Council does everything possible to recover debts and that write-offs are only considered when all other options had been exhausted. He further confirmed that this action would not prevent the debt being reinstated if beneficial to do so. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy expressed disappointment that the proposal was necessary. He informed Members however that he took comfort from the use of specialist enforcement agents (4.2) as it was his experience that if they could not achieve a successful outcome then no one would.

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**RESOLVED** that the non-domestic rates amount in paragraph 4 of the report is written off.

**10. ST OSWALDS REDEVELOPMENT**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy that sought Members to approve the disposal of the City Council's interest in a site pertaining to the comprehensive redevelopment of land at St Oswalds for up to 300 new homes in partnership with Rooftop Housing Association (RHA).

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy remarked on the technical complexity of this ambitious project which was reflected in the report and thanked the Head of Place and his team for their expertise and guidance in its preparation. He stated that the risks were consistent with the previous report to Cabinet (10<sup>th</sup> March 2021 Agenda Item 10). The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy reminded Members that 200 of the 300 planned homes would be affordable. He commented that this represented a step forward towards the goal of helping people find somewhere to live about which Cabinet are passionate.

The Cabinet Member for Environment expressed his own gratitude to officers for their efforts in what is a long and complex process towards providing homes that are desperately needed. He looked forward to the commencement of work on site. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure drew Members' attention to the removal of significant risk by the recommendations (7.1) and the next steps to be taken (8.1). He commented that it was right and in the interest of taxpayers that each stage of this complex process is to be completed absolutely correctly and ways found to minimise risk.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the Property Commissioning Manager is authorised, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategy, Head of Policy and Resources and Head of Place:
  - a. to accept a surrender from Tesco Stores Limited of the land edged **GREEN** in Appendix 1 of the report
  - b. to agree a new lease with Tesco Stores Limited for the land edged **GREEN** on in Appendix 1 of the report for a period of 250 years with no restriction to future development
  - c. the completion of both transactions taking place only when all other legal agreements referenced in resolution (iii) of the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021 Cabinet Report 'St Oswalds Redevelopment' complete
- (2) the Head of Place in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy, the Head of Policy and Resources and the Council Solicitor is authorised to take all necessary steps and undertake necessary procedures, including but not limited to

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entering into any legal arrangements or other documentation as may be required to facilitate resolutions (1)a and (1)b above

- (3) the recipients of the delegations set out in Resolutions (1) and (2) above are authorised to instruct the Council Solicitor to prepare such documents as considered appropriate to achieve the outcomes set out in those Resolutions.

**Time of commencement: 6.00 pm**

**Time of conclusion: 6.22 pm**

**Chair**