



## **CABINET**

**MEETING** : Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023

**PRESENT** : Cllrs. Cook (Chair), Norman (Vice-Chair), S. Chambers and Lewis

**Others in Attendance**

Cllrs Hilton, A. Chambers, Conder, Hyman and Wilson  
Managing Director  
Monitoring Officer  
Head of Finance and Resources  
Head of Place  
Director of Communities  
Head of Transformation and Commissioning  
Head of Culture  
Democratic and Electoral Services Officer

**APOLOGIES** : Cllr. Padilla

**48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**49. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 are confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

There were no public questions.

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

There were no petitions or deputations.

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

In respect of question 2 Councillor Hilton noted that in the time since support for Gloucester Airport Limited was reviewed by Council (15<sup>th</sup> December 2020) there have been elections and new officers in post. He enquired by what authority the airport could be sold without consulting Council Members. The Leader of the Council stated that the publication by the press of Councillor Hilton's open letter relating to a potential sale had preempted his intention to notify Group Leaders and Council Members. He referred to the relevant sections of the report considered at the Council meeting (agenda item 4) and further commented that the Council was always experiencing changes in personnel.

In respect of question 3 Councillor Hilton asked if consideration was being given to the retention of the freehold with a long lease issued, as is the case with other commercial operations in the City, so that the Council could maintain an interest in the airport. The Leader of the Council responded that any potential sale was in its earliest stages and nothing could be ruled in or out.

In respect of question 4 Councillor Hilton informed Members that he believed his open letter on the potential sale had increased the number of prospective buyers and queried whether the company referred to in the response had made their approach and the Non-Disclosure Agreement been signed before the Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the airport's business plan (25 September 2023 minute 40). The Leader of the Council gave assurance that a written answer would be provided.

In respect of question 5 Councillor Hilton sought reassurance that the airport would continue to operate in the long term, perhaps under a protective covenant, rather than the land being sold off for housing. The Leader of the Council noted that discussions with any potential buyers had not taken place yet. He confirmed that measures such as covenants would be considered when it becomes necessary.

In respect of question 6 Councillor Hilton asked whether the Leader of the Council considered that informing Council Members a few hours before the press release constituted proper consultation. The Leader of the Council commented that the matter was raised in public before he had a chance to inform Members as he would have liked.

In respect of question 14 Councillor Wilson sought clarification on whether the potential sale was driven by anyone else. The Leader of the Council reiterated that the issue was to have been addressed in the fullness of time anyway but that as an approach had been made the opportunity was being assessed.

In respect of question 15 Councillor Conder enquired how the best price for residents could be achieved if the airport had not been on the open market. The Leader of the Council stated that a third-party valuation would have to be sought. He however noted that although any plans were at their earliest stage, more prospective buyers had come forward to compete.

In respect of question 16 Councillor Conder asked if the airport board had undertaken due diligence. The Leader of the Council commented that he expected

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them to do so. He made it clear that he wanted them to maintain an aviation hub on the site well into the future.

**53. IMPACT, RECOVERY AND LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE CYBER ATTACK IN DECEMBER 2021**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that sought Members to note the impact of the cyber-attack on the Council, residents and customers, and the lessons learnt from the subsequent recovery.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources reminded Members that the report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (27<sup>th</sup> November 2023 minute 68). She took the opportunity to express her gratitude to all officers who had worked so hard to ensure that the authority could continue to operate throughout the incident. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources gave special thanks to the Managing Director, the S151 Officer and the entire IT Team for their dedication.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure highlighted the stress experienced by officers at all levels and added his own gratitude for them having performed so well in such challenging circumstances. The Cabinet Member for Environment informed Members that he believed officers to have done an amazing job.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the contents of the report on the cyber-attack are noted;
- (2) it is noted that the Council has learnt a number of lessons from the cyber-attack that occurred in December 2021 and that these will be monitored by the Council's Information Governance Board to ensure they are embedded.

**54. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2024/25**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that sought approval to retain the current Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2024/25.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources placed the report in the context of current central government regulations.

**RECOMMENDED** that:

- (1) the current Local Council Tax Support scheme, as the approved scheme for Gloucester City in 2023/24, be adopted for 2024/25;

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- (2) the scheme approved be updated to align with any legislation changes in January 2024 and to be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024;
- (3) any urgent amendments to the scheme approved, in the event of a national emergency and authorised by the government, be adopted and implemented immediately.

**55. REVIEW OF OFFICE ACCOMMODATION FOR FACE-TO-FACE APPOINTMENTS**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that proposed moving face-to-face bookable appointments from The Gateway, 92-96 Westgate Street, to the management suite at Eastgate Shopping Centre and reviewed the service to identify service improvements and costs associated with maintaining The Gateway.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources drew Members' attention to impact of COVID-19 on the way people interact with the Council (3.5-7) which was reflected in only 92 of 510 face-to-face appointment slots being taken up (3.8) and other methods being preferred by customers as a means of contact (Appendix 3). She outlined some of the benefits of the proposed move for both the Council and customers (3.19-20). The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources especially thanked the Asset Management Investment Officer and Customer Service Manager for their hard work on the proposal.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy pointed to the experience of the Housing Support Team where out of 660 face-to-face appointments offered, only 67 customers had accepted (3.21). She noted that the proposed range of methods of delivering support would reduce additional pressure for people in the already stressful situation of housing disruption as well as bringing a substantial financial saving to the Council. The Cabinet Member for Environment commented that having the Council Offices close by would enable additional support to be available to resolve difficult situations.

**RESOLVED** that the option to relocate face-to-face appointments to the Eastgate Shopping Centre as soon as is viable is approved.

**56. CAR PARKING- TARIFF INCREASE & CHARGING HOURS AMENDMENTS**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that sought Members to review car park tariffs and zoning to ensure consistency and that they reflect changing demand and the Council's carbon neutral aims.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources advised Members that the recommendations sought to clarify changes approved earlier in the year (Cabinet 11 January 2023 minute 70).

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**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) Hare Lane North and Great Western Road car parking tariffs are adjusted to reflect the new proposed tariffs (Appendix 1 of the report)
- (2) the tariff options for purchasing tickets for users of the car parks are regularised removing the 1-hour option and including a 2-hour option (where applicable)
- (3) Kings Walk and Eastgate Car Parks are removed from the traffic regulation order
- (4) authority is delegated to the Property and Investment Manager in consultation with the Head of Finance and Resources and the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources to undertake the necessary statutory procedures to implement the changes outlined in the report
- (5) the contractual arrangements are reviewed for all car parks regarding app-based payments taking into account the new National Parking Platform proposed by the Department for Transport
- (6) GL1 car park remains under the existing chargeable tariff times without change, due to the unique relationship between sports and leisure providers and the Council.

**57. FINANCIAL MONITORING: QUARTER 2 2023-24**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that presented the year-end forecasts, financial pressures on the Council during the Quarter ended 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and performance against certain key financial performance indicators.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources highlighted the decrease to the General Fund balance versus the budgeted position (2.1). She detailed some of the major pressures on the Council (4.3) and within her own portfolio (5.4). The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy noted the challenges faced in her portfolio and advised that measures being taken to increase accommodation available were already having a positive impact for both the finances and residents. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure anticipated that the cost pressure of operating the leisure service (5.14) would improve following the appointment of Freedom Leisure. He informed Members that he was very happy with progress being made in his portfolio and thanked the Head of Culture and all staff. The Cabinet Member for Environment commented that national factors had had a negative impact on the overall position.

**RESOLVED** that it is noted that:

- (1) the forecast year end position is currently for a decrease to the Council's General Fund balance of £1,078k against a budgeted decrease of £104k;

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- (2) the details of specific budgetary issues identified by officers and the actions being taken to address those issues;
- (3) the current level of Capital expenditure as shown in Appendix 1 of the report.

**58. TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE - MID YEAR REPORT 2023/24**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that updated Members on treasury management activities for the six month period of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Code of Practice for Treasury Management.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources summarised the report. She confirmed that the optimum yield on investments would continue to be sought and that no new external borrowing was undertaken. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources reassured Members that the Council has operated within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement limits.

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

**59. TOURISM AND DESTINATION MARKETING PROGRESS REPORT 2023 & 2024 OBJECTIVES**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure that presented progress on the Tourism and Destination Marketing function against the objectives issued in October 2023, and sought approval of objectives for 2024.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure reminded Members that the 2023 objectives had been adopted only in draft form due to the hiatus between current and former managers (3.1) and that those for 2024 needed to reflect changes in the visitor economy (3.2). He listed some of the successful activities of the past year (Appendix 1), noted the 50% growth in subscribers to the 'What's On' guide and endorsed the dual approach addressing both visitors and residents. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure commented that the function was going from strength to strength. He thanked the Tourism and Destination Marketing Manager for putting Gloucester on the map.

The Cabinet Member for Environment informed Members that he could already see the difference made by the Tourism and Destination Marketing Manager in what he considered a great list of activities over 2023 (Appendix 1). He noted that engagement through social media platforms had increased (Appendix 1 5.4) and looked forward to even more success in 2024.

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**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the updated Tourism & Destination Marketing objectives for 2024 are approved;
- (2) the Tourism and Marketing Progress Report is noted, and that the progress made against the Marketing Plan in 2023 is endorsed.

**60. CHELTENHAM, GLOUCESTER AND TEWKESBURY COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY JOINT COMMITTEE**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy that proposed the establishment of a Joint Committee to facilitate governance of the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts received by Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy outlined the background to the proposed committee which she hoped would ensure the most effective use of the CIL funds to deliver strategic scale infrastructure to support growth for communities.

**RECOMMENDED** that:

- (1) it be agreed that the establishment of a Community Infrastructure Levy Joint Committee under s101(5) and s102 Local Government Act 1972 and under Part 1A Chapter 2 Section 9EB of the Local Government Act 2000 and pursuant to the Local Authorities (Arrangement for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012;
- (2) it be agreed that the Community Infrastructure Levy Joint Committee Terms of Reference (Appendix 1 of the report);
- (3) it be agreed that the pooling of strategic infrastructure Community Infrastructure Levy monies by the three partner Councils of Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury with governance as set out in the Community Infrastructure Levy Joint Committee Terms of Reference;
- (4) engagement with wider infrastructure providers outside the local authorities be entered into to identify any wider infrastructure priorities to be considered by the Community Infrastructure Levy Joint Committee.

**61. INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT 2022/2023 AND ANNUAL COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) RATE SUMMARY STATEMENT**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy that sought approval to publish the Infrastructure Funding Statement and the Annual CIL Rate Summary Statement.

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The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy summarised the report.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the publication of the Infrastructure Funding Statement relating to the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 (Appendix 1 of the report) is approved; and
- (2) it is noted that the annual Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Rate Summary Statement (Appendix 2 of the report) will be published alongside the Infrastructure Funding Statement by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

**62. ADOPTION OF UPDATED VALIDATIONS CHECKLIST FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy that proposed that the updated validations checklist for planning applications is adopted.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy advised Members that the proposed changes would help progress planning applications to the benefit of both developers and residents. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure informed Members that he believed the changes would simplify matters for ordinary people engaging with the planning process.

**RESOLVED** that the updated validations checklist (Appendix 1 of the report) is adopted with immediate effect.

**Time of commencement: 6.00 pm**

**Time of conclusion: 6.32 pm**

**Chair**