



Gloucester City Council

Cabinet

Meeting: Wednesday, 10th January 2024 at 6.00 pm in Civic Suite, North Warehouse, The Docks, Gloucester, GL1 2EP

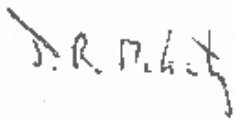
Membership:	Cllrs. Cook (Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment) (Chair), Norman (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources) (Vice-Chair), S. Chambers (Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy), Lewis (Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure) and Padilla (Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods)
Contact:	Democratic and Electoral Services 01452 396126 democratic.services@gloucester.gov.uk

AGENDA

1.	APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive from Members, declarations of the existence of any disclosable pecuniary, or non-pecuniary, interests and the nature of those interests in relation to any agenda item. Please see Agenda Notes.
3.	MINUTES (Pages 7 - 14) To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 6 th December 2023.
4.	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES) The opportunity is given to members of the public to put questions to Cabinet Members. A question may be rejected if it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Is not about a matter for which the local authority has responsibility or influence; or (ii) Is illegal, improper, defamatory, frivolous or offensive; or (iii) Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council, Cabinet or Committee in the past 6 months; or (iv) Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information; or (v) Is related to confidential staffing matters; or (vi) Is relating to the personal affairs or conduct of individual Members or Officers. To ask a question at this meeting, please submit it to democratic.services@gloucester.gov.uk by 12 noon on Friday 5 th January 2024 or telephone 01452 396203 for support.

<p>5.</p>	<p>PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)</p> <p>To receive any petitions or deputations provided that no such petition or deputation is in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matters relating to individual Council Officers, or • Matters relating to current or pending legal proceedings
<p>6.</p>	<p>LEADER AND CABINET MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)</p> <p>Any Member of the Council may ask the Leader of the Council or any Cabinet Member any question upon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any matter relating to the Council's administration • Any matter relating to any report of the Cabinet appearing on the summons • A matter coming within their portfolio of responsibilities <p>Only one supplementary question is allowed per question.</p> <p>Questions must be submitted to democratic.services@gloucester.gov.uk by 12 noon on Friday 5th January 2024. Responses to questions will be published in an addendum to the agenda by 12 noon on the day of the Cabinet Meeting.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>PEER CHALLENGE PROGRESS REVIEW (Pages 15 - 34)</p> <p>To consider the report of the Leader of the Council sharing the findings of the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge Team's feedback report from October 2023 and providing an update on the recommendations.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (ERDF) GLOUCESTER URBAN GREENING COMPLETION REPORT (Pages 35 - 56)</p> <p>To consider the report of the Cabinet Member for Environment giving an overview of the recently completed ERDF funded 'Urban Greening Project'.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNT FOR CARE LEAVERS (Pages 57 - 70)</p> <p>To consider the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources proposing a change to the Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers amending the definition of a care leaver to a young person between the ages of 18 and 24 residing in Gloucester.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>COUNCIL TAX - SECOND HOMES PREMIUM AND AMENDMENTS TO THE EMPTY HOMES PREMIUM (Pages 71 - 86)</p> <p>To consider the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources recommending that from 1st April 2025 council tax be increased for properties occupied only periodically and for empty homes.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF LAND FOR BLACKBRIDGE SPORTS HUB (Pages 87 - 96)</p> <p>To consider the report of the Cabinet Member for Policy and Resources bringing to Members' attention to an objection received to the proposed disposal of public open space at Laburnum Road Podsmead intended for a Blackbridge Sports Hub, following the publication of an S123 Notice.</p>

<p>12.</p>	<p>REVIEW OF GLOUCESTER CEMETERY RULES AND REGULATIONS (Pages 97 - 128)</p> <p>To consider the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources outlining proposed changes to the rules and regulations for the Gloucester Cemeteries following a decision by Council to review the 2014 rules.</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>EVENTS AND FESTIVALS REPORT ON 2023 & PLAN FOR 2024-25 (Pages 129 - 154)</p> <p>To consider the report of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure providing a review of festivals and events activity in 2023 and proposing a programme with budget for 2024-25, and an approach for funding.</p>
<p>14.</p>	<p>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>To resolve:</p> <p>that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the following item of business on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public are present during consideration of this item there will be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended.</p> <p>Agenda Item No. Description of Exempt Information</p> <p>15 Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).</p>
<p>15.</p>	<p>TRANSFER OF SITES IN PODSMEAD TO ENABLE THE REGENERATION OF THE ESTATE (Pages 155 - 166)</p> <p>To consider the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy seeking approval of a draft heads of terms for the disposal of sites in Podsmead to Gloucester City Homes (GCH) and to progress the delivery of estate regeneration.</p>



Jon McGinty
Managing Director

Date of Publication: Tuesday, 2 January 2024

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NOTES

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

The duties to register, disclose and not to participate in respect of any matter in which a member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest are set out in Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

Disclosable pecuniary interests are defined in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 as follows –

<u>Interest</u>	<u>Prescribed description</u>
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the Council) made or provided within the previous 12 months (up to and including the date of notification of the interest) in respect of any expenses incurred by you carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between you, your spouse or civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner (or a body in which you or they have a beneficial interest) and the Council (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the Council's area. For this purpose "land" includes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for you, your spouse, civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the Council's area for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) – (a) the landlord is the Council; and (b) the tenant is a body in which you, your spouse or civil partner or a person you are living with as a spouse or civil partner has a beneficial interest
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where – (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the Council's area and (b) either – i. The total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or ii. If the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, your spouse or civil partner or person with

whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

For this purpose, "securities" means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

NOTE: the requirements in respect of the registration and disclosure of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and withdrawing from participating in respect of any matter where you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest apply to your interests and those of your spouse or civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner where you are aware of their interest.

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- You should proceed calmly; do not run and do not use the lifts;
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings;
- Once you are outside, please do not wait immediately next to the building; gather at the assembly point in the car park and await further instructions;
- Do not re-enter the building until told by a member of staff or the fire brigade that it is safe to do so.

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CABINET

MEETING : Wednesday, 6th 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 8th 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 (15th 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 (27th 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 1st 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 30th 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 1st April 2023 to 30th 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 31st 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 31st 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



Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	10 January 2024
Subject:	Peer Challenge Progress Review		
Report Of:	Leader of the Council		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
Contact Officer:	Tanya Davies, Policy and Governance Manager		
	Liam Moran, Policy and Development Officer		
	Email: tanya.davies@gloucester.gov.uk	Tel: 39-6125	
	liam.moran@Gloucester.gov.uk	39-6643	
Appendices:	1. Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review Report 2. Progress Update on Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to share the findings of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Team’s feedback report, following on from their visit in October 2023 to review the Council's progress towards the implementation of the recommendations from the Peer Challenge that took place in November 2022. An update on the recommendations as of October 2023 is included in the Action Plan appended to this report.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the information contained in the report and make any recommendations to Cabinet.

2.2 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that the:

- (1) Corporate Peer Team Progress Review report be welcomed;
- (2) progress report be circulated to Members, Officers and partners involved in the Corporate Peer Challenge and made available to the public via the council’s website;
- (3) Action Plan updates prepared for the Peer Team ahead of their October 2023 visit be noted.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

3.1 As part of its approach to sector led improvement, the Local Government Association (LGA) offers a fully funded Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) every four to five years.

- 3.2 The LGA offers the following description of the CPC process: “By bringing together political and managerial leadership, through the use of member and officer Peers, a Peer challenge provides robust, strategic and credible challenge and support to councils. Peer challenge also enhances the capacity of the sector and helps to avoid insularity within councils.”
- 3.3 The CPC process is not an inspection; rather it is about continuous improvement. There is an expectation that councils share the feedback report widely to demonstrate openness and transparency about how they are led and managed.
- 3.4 The Peer Team considered the following five themes, which form the core components of all Corporate Peer Challenges and are critical to councils’ performance and improvement:
1. Local priorities and outcomes
 2. Organisational and place leadership
 3. Governance and culture
 4. Financial planning and management
 5. Capacity for improvement
- 3.5 In addition, the Council asked the Peer Team to provide feedback on:
- How the council responded to the cyber incident.
 - Whether the work undertaken by the Council to tackle inequalities is improving outcomes for residents
- 3.6 As required by the CPC process, a ten-month progress review after the initial corporate Peer challenge took place on 6 October 2023. The progress review is designed to provide space for the Council’s senior leadership to:
- Update Peers on the early progress made and to receive feedback on this including how the action plan aligns to the CPC’s recommendations.
 - Consider Peer’s reflections on any new opportunities or challenges that may have arisen since the Peer Team were ‘on-site’ including any further support needs.
 - Discuss any early impact or learning from the progress made to date
- 3.7 The progress review was attended by the following Peers:
- Huw Bowen, Chief Executive, Chesterfield Borough Council
 - Linda Haysey, former Leader, East Hertfordshire District Council
 - Kathryn Trant, Peer Challenge Manager, Local Government Association
- 3.8 The report at Appendix 2 outlines the Peer Team’s feedback on the Council’s progress towards implementing the recommendations as set out in the Peer Team’s report.
- 3.9 Within the progress review report, the Peer Team highlighted the challenges facing the sector and the Council since the Peer Review in October 2022. This included the revenue budget gap, significant issues with temporary accommodation provision arising from the cost-of-living crisis, and the unexpected liquidation of Aspire, the

Council's previous leisure provider. The Peer Team acknowledged that the challenge around homelessness is common across the sector and not unique to Gloucester. The Peer Team also considered progress against the Council's Action Plan along with the outcomes of meetings held during the day.

- 3.10 Some key points from the report are detailed below and the full reported is at Appendix 1.
 - 3.10.1 The Peer Team saw evidence of, and were encouraged by, our evolved approach to the Council's performance management framework through a Council Plan update that was presented to Members in early 2023.
 - 3.10.2 The Peer Team welcomed the increase in senior management capacity through the appointment of a Head of Transformation and Commissioning and noted that they would lead on the recommended reviews of delivery arrangements for external communications and HR delivery. The Team also noted positive comments regarding HR advice being provided and feedback from managers that external communications had improved.
 - 3.10.3 With regard to the development and maintenance of robust project governance arrangements, the Peer Team noted that the Council responded with confidence to questions regarding the Forum development and saw evidence that the review of the business case is now embedded in the Major Projects reporting framework.
 - 3.10.4 The Peer Team noted that a permanent Monitoring Officer had been appointed and recognised that the architecture of good governance was in place. However, they also noted that not a lot has changed in terms of Member behaviour, with a minority of Members behaving badly. The Peer Team was concerned that staff and managers had become conditioned by this behaviour and looked to the 2024 Member Induction as an opportunity for a reset.
 - 3.10.5 The Peer Team noted that, at the time of their visit, the whole organisation review of the cyber incident was underway. They repeated their previous comments that the Council has come through the cyber incident well, and staff did very well to sustain services. They noted that engagement in the staff survey had been positive, and advised that it would be important for the Council to act on the feedback to support staff morale.
 - 3.10.6 Finally, regarding the development of a strategic priority framework for tackling inequalities, the Peer Team noted that some progress had been made and highlighted the importance of adequate staff resource to be able to link together the Growth Strategy, Council Plan, and framework for tackling inequalities.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

- 4.1 A new strategic priority framework and corporate resource plan for tackling inequalities is being developed, which includes social value considerations.

5.0 Environmental Implications

- 5.1 The Peer Team noted the Council's commitment to acting on climate change, which, along with tackling inequalities, are the two key cross cutting themes that run through the Council Plan.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

6.1 The LGA expects councils to produce and publish the CPC progress review report and an Action Plan, therefore no alternative options are available.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

7.1 The Peer Team's findings and recommendations are welcomed. Publication of the report demonstrates the Council's desire to be open and transparent.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

8.1 Continued delivery of the Action Plan will be monitored by Cabinet and SMT.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

11.1 Effective engagement with sector led improvement is an important part of good corporate governance. The findings of the Peer Challenge have provided us with assurance and its recommendations will enable further improvement of the Council's processes, practice and service delivery.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

12.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

13.1 There are no community safety implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

14.1 There are no staffing and trade union implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

Background Documents:

[LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Report November 2022](#)

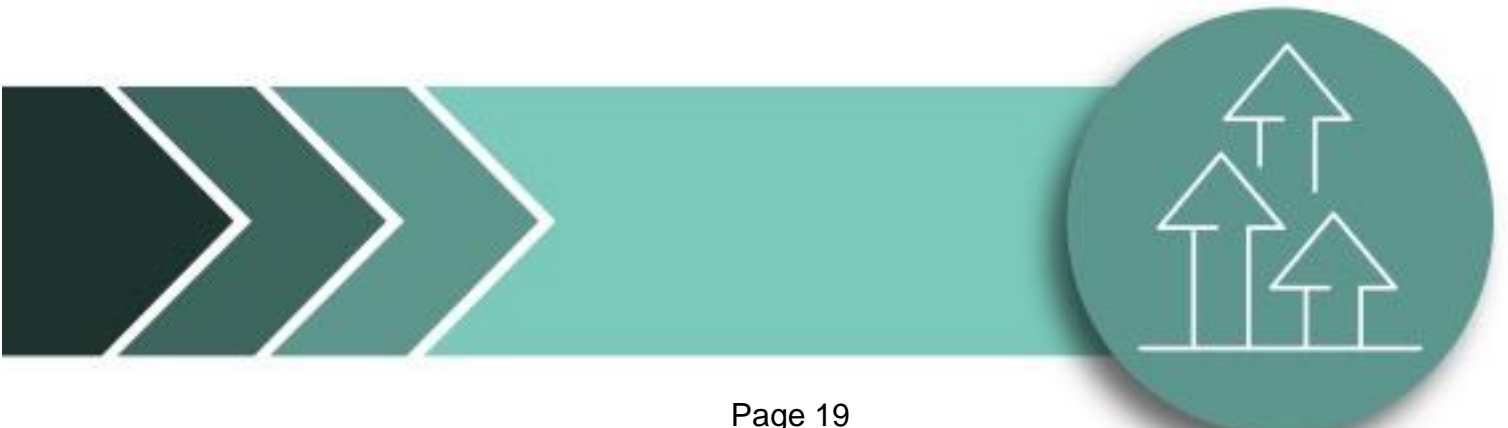
LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – Progress Review

Gloucester City Council

Corporate Peer Challenge: 22nd – 25th November 2022

Progress Review: 6th October 2023

Feedback





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1. Introduction

The council undertook an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) during 22nd – 25th November 2022 and promptly published the full report with an action plan.

The Progress Review is an integral part of the Corporate Peer Challenge process. Taking place approximately ten months after the CPC, it is designed to provide space for the council's senior leadership to:

- Update peers on the early progress made and to receive feedback on this including how the action plan aligns to the CPC's recommendations
- Consider peer's reflections on any new opportunities or challenges that may have arisen since the peer team were 'on-site' including any further support needs
- Discuss any early impact or learning from the progress made to date

The LGA would like to thank Gloucester City Council for their commitment to sector led improvement. This Progress Review was the next step in an ongoing, open and close relationship that the council has with LGA sector support.

2. Summary of the approach

The Progress Review at Gloucester City Council took place on 6th October 2023.

The progress review focussed on each of the recommendations from the Corporate Peer Challenge, under the following theme headings:

- Local Priorities and Outcomes
- Organisational and Place Leadership
- Governance and Culture
- Financial Planning and Management
- Capacity for Improvement

For this progress review, the following members of the original CPC team were involved:

- Huw Bowen, Chief Executive, Chesterfield Borough Council

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Acting Chief Executive: Sarah Pickup CBE

Local Government Association company number 11177145 Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government company number 03675577

- Linda Haysey, former Leader, East Hertfordshire District Council
- Kathryn Trant, Peer Challenge Manager, Local Government Association

Following pre-engagement calls with the Leader, Managing Director and Monitoring Officer, the peer team met face to face at Gloucester City Council over the course of 1 day with the following groups from the council:

- Cllr Hannah Norman, Deputy Leader
- Jon McGinty, Managing Director
- Managers Focus Group
- Councillors Focus Group

3. Progress Review - Feedback

Gloucester City Council (GCC) has made progress since the corporate peer challenge (CPC) took place in November 2022. The recommendations arising from the CPC are being progressed through an Action Plan which was updated and shared with the peer team ahead of the progress review taking place, and which sets out in some detail the progress made by the council against each of the original recommendations.

Despite the council applying its best efforts to continue along its improvement journey, the peer team were told that the revenue budgetary position at GCC has deteriorated since the CPC took place. Significant issues with homelessness provision arising from the cost of living crisis, reduction in private sector housing market, migrant and refugee activity and the impact of the Home Office fast track process have all adversely combined so that GCC is now forecasting an in year overspend on the homelessness budget of £1m.

The homelessness issue is one that is prevalent across the sector and not unique to GCC. To address it the council is tackling supply as a matter of urgency and is liaising closely with Gloucester City Homes about availability of more housing units. There are plans for further partnership working by directly intervening in the market and using partners to manage properties although it may take time for the benefits of this approach to be realised.

To further exacerbate the budgetary position, the Aspire Trust that was contracted to provide leisure services on behalf of GCC until September 2024, unexpectedly announced recently that they were going into immediate liquidation.

The council acted promptly to respond to the situation and there is a direction of travel to appoint an interim service provider for 12 to 18 months. The council has been approached by organisations who want to help, and a shortlisting process is being undertaken with a report being presented to an extraordinary council meeting within the next two weeks.

Further adverse budgetary impacts have been reported as in year reductions in both planning and commercial income which on their own would not have prevented the council from balancing the revenue budget at year end, but the additional impacts of both homelessness and leisure have required urgent mitigating action by the council.

The peer team then considered the council's action plan along with the outcome of meetings held during the day and consequently shared the following comments and feedback with GCC.

Performance Management Framework

One of the peer team recommendations was to evolve an outcome focused approach to the council's performance management framework by utilising the Council Plan to create a SMART framework that was qualitative based. The framework would demonstrate progress made against actions to achieve delivery of the Council Plan. The peer team saw evidence of progress in the Council Plan Progress Report presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet earlier this year. As well as setting out progress against actions, the report drew attention to significant achievements such as the opening of the Learning Hub at the Forum, completion of the Kings Square regeneration project, successful transition to a new waste partnership, and the securing of funding from the Arts Council England for £600k capital investment into improvements in cultural venues.

The next report will be presented in March 2024. The progress made is encouraging, and given the election in May 2024, it will be important to reset the framework with the new Council Plan, as set out in the Action Plan update.

Review delivery arrangements for external communications and Review HR delivery arrangements

Little progress has been made as yet on the recommendations and corresponding actions relating to reviewing the delivery arrangements for external communications and HR. However, GCC has appointed a Head of Transformation and Commissioning, (linked to a later recommendation relating to senior management capacity), and it was always the intention that part of their role will be to progress these actions. The peer team did hear from some that external communications had improved, though this was not a view that was consistently expressed. As part of the review of delivery arrangements it would be beneficial to ensure that GCC is on 'the front foot' and able to 'control its narrative', particularly in addressing public responses that are factually incorrect. Media today is instantaneous and the ability to respond quickly is important to preserve the council's reputation and staff pride in the work they do.

Similarly with HR delivery, although no formal progress has been made, the peer team heard positive comments about advice being provided, particularly in respect of the recent difficult situation arising with the leisure trust staff. However, the peer team also heard evidence of issues around recruitment that present a less than favourable view first impression of GCC to new starters. The Head of Transformation and Commissioning will be progressing these actions according to the Action Plan.

Develop and maintain robust project governance arrangements

The council responded positively to the recommendation to develop and maintain robust project governance arrangements for major projects, by creating the Major Projects Board. The Board provides leadership and financial oversight and ensures a balance between momentum and risk. Attendees include the Managing Director and s151 officer, and the Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources. The scale of ambition in the council remains palpable and there is a lot to build on in making Gloucester a tourist destination. GCC responded with confidence to peer team questions regarding the Forum development and continuous review of that business case is now embedded through the Major Projects reporting framework. Large exposure to risk when the sector is under challenge will need to be managed carefully but the governance measures put in place are evidence of positive progress.

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Overarching Growth Strategy

Progress has been made on development of an Overarching Growth Strategy which will pull together all strands of the growth and regeneration work. There is a target date for adoption of the strategy in March 2024 and a project plan has been developed. Work is ongoing with external stakeholders to gain views and opinions. Aligning the strategy to the new Administration from 2024 to 2028 is sensible.

Address worklessness and improve the skills and employability of local people

GCC has started to make some progress with this recommendation and there is evidence of specific projects taking place to develop a skills programme to create employment opportunities in construction and hospitality. An understanding of devolution and where the council sits with the county council and the Local Enterprise Partnership will be important if this work is to progress successfully. There are opportunities to work with the college and university and positioning this work within the Overarching Growth Strategy will maintain a focus on this to avoid polarisation of existing residents.

Review staff resources against Council Plan requirements

GCC has made significant and positive progress in responding to this recommendation. A senior management restructure has been implemented and capacity at the senior level has increased. A permanent Monitoring Officer has been appointed which should help to put the statutory stability behind the organisation. The longstanding s151 officer left the organisation but his replacement was an internal appointment and the new s151 officer is establishing himself and dealing with significant budget challenges. Finally, the recent appointment of the Head of Transformation and Commissioning completes the restructured senior management team and the increased capacity at that senior level has already provided essential additional resource necessary to address the critical issue that recently arose with the leisure trust.

Review the role of Members

Code of Conduct protocols have been reviewed by the Monitoring Officer and the

architecture of good governance is being put in place. This is all positive, but the peer team have heard that not a lot has changed in terms of member behaviour. A minority of members behave badly, and the peer team concern is that staff and managers have become conditioned by it. We heard examples of intimidation and bullying behaviour that is accepted by managers as there is a sense of there being no value in reporting it. It cannot be right that bad behaviour is accepted. The council now has a Monitoring Officer with the capacity to act and a wider understanding of the role of the Monitoring Officer will strengthen the link with managers and build their confidence. Staff should be supported in any bullying claims that come forward.

That a work programming event took place for Overview and Scrutiny is positive, and the right people were in the room. However, the peer team have not yet seen evidence of Overview and Scrutiny working in the way it should by providing critical challenge to add value with pre-decision, monitoring and policy development.

There is a huge opportunity with the election in May 2024 to reset the landscape of member/officer relations and behaviour expectations of members with officers. The work of the Member Development Group in reviewing the Induction Programme will help to support a comprehensive new Induction Programme that will ensure members are well informed and understand the role of the councillor and how the council works. Further actions and training linked to this recommendation are planned to align with the timing of the election in May 2024.

Whole organisation review of the cyber incident

GCC has come through the cyber incident well, it was a huge issue, and the council did very well to sustain services. A staff survey has been carried out to support the recommendation of a whole organisation review.

Engagement in the staff survey was positive and it will be important to act on the feedback to support staff morale. Linked to improving morale, the council may wish to consider regular in person sessions for managers similar to the session held earlier with the peer team. Coming together as a group created a positive energy and the peer team believe managers would appreciate the opportunity and it would act as a support mechanism for them.

Develop a strategic priority framework for tackling inequalities

There has been some progress on developing a strategic priority framework for tackling inequalities, and linking to the Overarching Growth Strategy will be important so that resource implications can be managed. Once the council has reset from May 2024, ensure the new Council Plan has sufficient capacity and resources to be delivered. Any preparatory work that can be done in advance to understand resource implications will be helpful.

4. Final thoughts and next steps

The LGA would like to thank Gloucester City Council for undertaking an LGA CPC progress review.

We appreciate that senior managerial and political leadership will want to reflect on these findings and suggestions in order to determine how the organisation wishes to take things forward.

Under the umbrella of LGA sector-led improvement, there is an on-going offer of support to councils. The LGA is well placed to provide additional support, advice and guidance on a number of the areas identified for development and improvement and we would be happy to discuss this.

Paul Clarke (Principal Adviser) is the main point of contact between the authority and the Local Government Association (LGA) and his e-mail address is paul.clarke@local.gov.uk.

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**LGA Corporate Peer Challenge
Gloucester City Council Action Plan**

No	Recommendation from the peer team	Our response and current/planned action. (May 2023)	Update (September 2023)	RAG Rating	Timescale
1.	<p>Performance Management Framework Utilising the Council Plan as a base document; the council needs to evolve a SMART performance management framework that promotes timely challenge and proactive management action where needed, and allows the council to better communicate and celebrate its successes</p>	<p>Agreed. We will review the current input-based performance reporting information provided to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny with a more qualitative, outcome-focused approach that demonstrates the Council's progress towards achieving the vision and aims set out in the Council Plan. This work had already commenced with the production of the first bi-annual Council Plan Progress Report in January 2023.</p> <p>We will retain the existing performance framework for internal monitoring of service delivery and performance, as this has proved a valuable mechanism for identifying service challenges and ensuring appropriate and timely action.</p>	<p>The first Council Plan Progress Report was received by Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny in January 2023. It reported on progress against the Council's strategic objectives, including, where available, details of outcomes and relevant performance. Each action had a RAG rating. The next report is scheduled for March 2024, to coincide with the end of this Council's term.</p> <p>After the 2024 local elections, work will commence on a new Council Plan and greater importance will be placed on identifying outcome-focused actions and measures.</p>	Complete	December 2023
2.	<p>Review delivery arrangements for external communications For the council to be better able to communicate and celebrate its successes, an urgent review is needed of the council's current delivery arrangements for external communications and marketing</p>	<p>Agreed. We will undertake a review of current arrangements, working with the Communications Business Partner and Managers to understand what works and what improvements are required to ensure that external communications are proactive and appropriately resourced. Following the review, we will consider options for future delivery of the service. As part of this, we will consider whether a dedicated LGA Communications Peer Review would assist the analysis.</p>	<p>A new Head of Transformation and Commissioning has been recruited and will begin to progress these actions when they start on 18 September.</p>	Not Started	March 2024

3.	<p>Review HR delivery arrangements The Council needs to carry out a review of its current strategic and transactional HR delivery arrangements with a view to optimising the ability of Gloucester City Council to recruit and retain the very best staff</p>	<p>Agreed. We will undertake a review of current arrangements, working with the HR Business Partner and Managers to understand what works and what improvements are required. The current arrangements consist of a collection of functions provided by different teams at Gloucestershire County Council and, as part of the review, we will take the time to fully understand the relationships between these functions. Following the review, we will consider options for future delivery of the service.</p>	<p>A new Head of Transformation and Commissioning has been recruited and will begin to progress these actions when they start on 18 September.</p>	Not Started	March 2024
4.	<p>Develop and maintain robust project governance arrangements If Gloucester City Council is going to continue on its current growth trajectory, it must develop and maintain robust project governance arrangements that provide timely line of sight for the political leadership on matters of budgetary management and control, and risk and sensitivity analysis, for example, it is recommended that the Forum Business Case is subject to continuous review and refresh to consider the impact of increased borrowing costs and contract inflation on delivery and the council's medium term financial plan</p>	<p>Agreed. We recognise that our ambitious growth agenda must be supported by rigorous governance arrangements, resource planning and risk management to ensure its success, while also maintaining the financial viability of the Council as a whole. We have begun formalising the project governance arrangements already in place for our major schemes, and the newly created Major Projects Board will provide the essential leadership and financial oversight needed to balance momentum with risk, through a robust reporting framework.</p> <p>In respect of The Forum, continuous review of the business case is already in place but will be embedded through the new major projects reporting framework.</p> <p>This work will be guided by the new overarching Growth Strategy highlighted in recommendation 5, to ensure that the Council takes a broad view across all major City-wide schemes and projects.</p>	<p>New reporting measures were put in place for major project governance in February 2023. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources now attends the Major Projects Board, alongside the Leader of the Council, Managing Director and S151 Officer.</p>	On time completion expected	Ongoing

5.	<p>Overarching Growth Strategy The council needs to consider pulling all the strands of its growth work into one overarching Growth Strategy which should align with the Council Plan</p>	<p>Agreed. The Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy expired in 2021 and, while the Council's ambitious growth agenda has pushed on at pace, regenerating the City and creating clear economic benefits, we agree that a new strategy is now needed to draw this work together. Building on the work of the City Commission, the new strategy will pull together the Council's priority regeneration projects alongside the actions and objectives of the City Commission, while putting equality of opportunity for all residents at the forefront of our plans. The strategy will also highlight the essential role that our partners play in achieving our vision.</p>	<p>Work is underway on the development of the growth strategy with a target date for adoption of March 2024. The terms of the strategy have been agreed by the Senior Management Team and Cabinet, and have been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A resource has been appointed who has developed a project plan and is working with a range of external stakeholders to gain views and opinions.</p>	On time completion expected	March 2024
6.	<p>Address worklessness and improve the skills and employability of local people Active consideration needs to be given to the development of new programmes to address worklessness and to improve the employability and skills of people within the city's most deprived communities</p>	<p>Under consideration. The role of District Councils viz-a-viz other authorities such as the County Council in relation to the skills agenda is currently under review, following the County Council's Devolution bid and incorporation of adult skills resource from the Local Enterprise Partnership, and the Government's recent announcement that it is minded to cease funding Local Enterprise Partnerships from April 2024.</p> <p>The City Council is already delivering individual projects to improve the skills and employability of local people through its Social Value Policy application to various projects. In particular, it has contracted with Kier as part of the Forum development to develop a skills programme to create employment opportunity in construction and hospitality industries.</p>	<p>Activities currently underway include: Securing a mechanism to enable the Learning Hub at The Forum to continue beyond the build programme. Officers are discussing with Kier the legacy of the Hub and how it might continue to support skills development in the city centre after 2024.</p> <p>Ensuring the delivery of Employment & Skills Plans within major developments. The Gloucester City Plan, which was adopted by the Council in spring 2023, includes a policy requiring the developers of larger housing and commercial sites to prepare an Employment and Skills Plan. Two schemes have now been consented and the Council is working with them to ensure the developments provide opportunities for local people.</p> <p>The Council is also supporting a Construction Careers Roadshow amongst secondary schools in the County, delivered by the membership organisation, Constructing Excellence (Gloucestershire).</p> <p>City Council officers met recently with County Officers within the Learning and Skills team to share understanding of each others' activities. The County Council has a much greater resource directed at Employment & Skills activities, particularly targeted at overcoming the barriers to securing employment and skills that face many residents.</p>	On time completion expected	<p>End 2024</p> <p>Ongoing task</p> <p>Ongoing Task</p> <p>Ongoing task</p>

7.	<p>Review staff resources against the Council Plan requirements</p> <p>There is an urgent need to take stock as to the sufficiency of the council's senior staff resources to continue to deliver everything that the council is seeking to do through the Council Plan and at a pivotal time for the local government sector</p>	<p>Agreed. A Senior Management Restructure has been developed, consulted on, and is in the process of being implemented, with the primary aim of increasing strategic capacity by replacing the Director of Policy Resources post with two Head of Service posts, one for Finance and Resources and one for Transformation and Commissioning, along with the bringing together of a number of lines of business to provide greater synergy and cooperation, and to improve the customer journey. Increasing the Senior Management Team by one full time post will add to the capacity and resilience required to ensure that the Council is equipped to deliver the ambitions set out in the Council Plan and the focus on 'transformation' will allow important work to improve the customer journey to continue at pace, while also providing the necessary capacity to meet recommendations 2 and 3.</p>	<p>The Senior Management Restructure has been implemented, with the final personnel changes taking place in September with the arrival of the new Head of Transformation and Commissioning.</p>	Complete	September 2023
8.	<p>Review the role of members</p> <p>The council is recommended to seek external advice and support to review the role of members within the organisation and to help address a number of current challenges including member/officer relations, member conduct, and clarity on roles and responsibilities. The recruitment of a permanent Monitoring Officer, with sufficient capacity, would also help inform such a review and lead on any identified</p>	<p>Agreed. A permanent Monitoring Officer has been in post since January 2023, and we will undertake a programme of activity, steered by the Council's internal Corporate Governance Group and supported by the LGA as appropriate, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of and update to key documents in the Constitution relevant to Member and Officer conduct and the relationship between Members and Officers. • Refresher training for all Members on the Code of Conduct. Training for 	<p>The Corporate Governance Group has agreed a rolling programme of work that includes items relating to the role of Members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has adopted a countywide Members' Code of Conduct and a revised Protocol on Member/Officer Relations. The Officer Code of Conduct is in the process of being reviewed, so that it aligns with these newly adopted documents, and is scheduled for adoption in November 2023. • Refresher training for all Members on the Code of Conduct was delivered by the Monitoring Officer and was well-attended. Further 	Complete	Summer 2023

	<p>improvements</p>	<p>Members and Officers to allow better understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In consultation with the Member Development Working Group, a review of the Member Induction Programme ahead of the 2024 City Council Elections and consideration of how the ongoing Member Development Programme can build on recent positively received sessions aimed at setting realistic expectations and increasing Members' understanding of how the Council works, and the Councillor's role within this. Discussion with the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Lead Members about how, alongside the successful pre-decision scrutiny, O&S can add value through policy development in areas that will have a positive impact on residents and businesses. 	<p>training will take place after the 2024 local elections.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Member Development Working Group and Senior Management Team have reviewed the 2021 Induction Programme, referring back to feedback gathered at the time and undertaking a survey of Members in their first term of office to seek views on what they now think would have been helpful to include in the Induction. All feedback has been predominantly positive and, while the programme will be tweaked and the content updated, the main change will be to spread the sessions over an extended period to prevent information overload. Following the 2024 Induction, the Member development programme will focus on briefings about key service areas to ensure that new Members are well informed and able to support and advise their constituents in relation to common issues and concerns. Following discussion with the O&S Lead Members, the first Annual Work Programming workshop was held on 24 July, with Committee Members, Cabinet Members and Senior Management Team Officers. During the session, the Committee identified areas of interest to examine over the course of 2023-24 and Cabinet Members provided updates on their priorities and upcoming plans and policy changes. agreed a longer-term work programme to include areas of policy development alongside routine pre-Cabinet decision scrutiny. which the O&S Committee may wish to input into. Three key themes were identified and a longer term work programme, including areas of policy development alongside routine pre-Cabinet decision scrutiny was formally approved on 4 September and is available online at: (Public Pack)Agenda Document for Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 04/09/2023 18:30 (gloucester.gov.uk). 		<p>Spring 2024</p> <p>May 2024</p> <p>Autumn 2023</p>
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9.	<p>Whole organisation review of the cyber incident</p> <p>At the anniversary of the cyber incident, it is considered an opportune time for GCC to take stock of its recovery programme; it is important that this is a whole organisation review and not just centred on the technology aspects of the recovery</p>	<p>Agreed. In response to this recommendation, we included questions about the initial and ongoing impact of the cyber incident in the Staff Survey in order to better understand how the incident affected and continues to affect staff morale, and to highlight any blind spots in terms of the ongoing recovery.</p> <p>We will carry out a 'stock take' with our internal staff 'Change Champions' group to delve into the detail of the Staff Survey feedback and discuss the workarounds that improved service provision and should therefore be retained.</p> <p>This work will inform the organisation-wide recovery plan and associated communications plan, to ensure that ongoing recovery workstreams are captured and progress is communicated effectively. As part of an internal review of the incident already agreed to, there will be a full assessment of valuable lessons learned.</p>	<p>The staff survey was carried out in Jan/Feb 2023 and received a high response rate and a strong positive engagement score.</p> <p>Some of the specific cyber incident-related responses were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did your personal morale suffer as a result of the cyber incident? 49% (agree or strongly agree) - Is your personal morale still suffering as a result of the Cyber incident? 32% - I think the organisation has worked well together to tackle some of the issues experienced due to lack of systems? 58% <p>The change champions staff network are reviewing all of the feedback arising from the staff survey and developing an action plan.</p> <p>In addition, officers have begun drafting a 'lessons learnt' report to take to Overview & Scrutiny Committee before the end of the calendar year. A round table lessons learnt workshop was recently carried out and this is being taken forward to an action plan to embed these lessons into the council's procedures. The recently published ICO report will also feed into this to ensure those actions are picked up.</p>		December 2023
10.	<p>Develop a strategic priority framework for tackling inequalities</p> <p>It is recommended that the council develops a strategic priority framework for tackling inequalities, both internally and with its partners, to be matched by adequate resource</p>	<p>Agreed, we are in the early stages of a scoping exercise.</p>	<p>Some consultation and data gathering has been completed to enable us to scope the breadth of the strategy. A proposal was reviewed by SMT on 19th September with a revised timetable of commencement in Autumn 2023 with completion expected in mid-2024.</p>	Delayed	<p>December 2023</p> <p><i>New deadline July 2024</i></p>

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	10 January 2024	
Subject:	European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Gloucester Urban Greening Completion Report			
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Environment			
Wards Affected:	10 of 18 (see Section 3.2)			
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No	
Contact Officer:	Nick Chadwick - Water & Environmental Consultant			
	Email:	nick.chadwick@gloucester.gov.uk	Tel:	396657
Appendices:	1. Photographs of Some of The Work Carried Out			

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To give an overview of the recently completed ERDF funded 'Urban Greening Project'.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that the contents of the report and success of the project be noted.

3.0 Background and Key Issues (Overview)

- 3.1 The ERDF 'Urban Greening' project commenced in 2019 with Gloucester City Council as the lead delivery partner, and three further sub-delivery partners (Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC), Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC), University Of Gloucestershire (UofG)).

The project was originally forecast to have a three-year duration, but due to a number of factors, ended up taking four years to complete. These factors included:

- COVID-19.
- Serious issues with a contractor led to a contract being terminated and re-procured.
- A delivery partner project manager sadly passing away – Gloucester City Council had to take on responsibility for delivering that organisation's outstanding outputs.

Practical completion was achieved on 31st May 2023

- 3.2 The project entailed many types of interventions across 34 sites in Gloucester, and a further 6 sites in Cheltenham and Tewkesbury. Examples of the types of work carried out are shown in Section 3.4, below. The wards where work was carried out comprise:

Abbeydale; Barnwood; Elmbridge; Grange; Hucclecote; Kingsway; Longlevens; Matson, Robinswood & White City; Podsmead & Westgate.

3.3 The finance figures are set out in Table 1, below.

Table 1 - Project Expenditure (All Partners):

Delivery Partner	Total Expenditure	Total Hectares Of 'Output' Delivered	Expenditure Per Hectare Of 'Output' Delivered
Gloucester City Council*	£ 1,230,424	48.22	£ 25,517
CBC	£ 61,582	8.66	£ 7,115
TBC	£ 49,706	3.58	£ 13,904
UofG	£ 150,779	4.80	£ 31,406
All (totals)	£ 1,492,491	65.25	£ 22,873

* Includes outstanding commitments such as retention and tree watering

The total funding available for the Gloucester City Council works under the project is £1,242,293, so there has been an underspend of £11,868. This sum will be kept aside for contingency (for example tree replacements) over the next two years.

Observations on the above:

As the lead partner, Gloucester City Council delivered the majority of the interventions / outputs under the project and has had the largest expenditure.

The 'cost per hectare' varies widely depending on the nature of the interventions. For example, CBC's and TBC's cost per hectare is comparatively low since most of the work they delivered was lower cost planting and seeding. By means of comparison, Gloucester City Council's and the UofG's cost per hectare is higher as there were more projects here that involved engineering & construction (for example, river restoration and retrofit SuDS (sustainable urban drainage) schemes).

The area of 'outputs' (improved habitat) contracted under the ERDF funding agreement is 62 hectares. The area that has actually been delivered is 65.25 hectares, so the targets have been exceeded by circa 5%.

3.4 The key interventions delivered under the project are shown in Table 2, below. The project has delivered a number of important benefits including:

- **Improved habitat and biodiversity** (lots of new, varied, habitats have been created, including wildflower meadows, woodlands, wetlands, and streams, supporting and attracting many species of flora and fauna).
- **Flood mitigation** (watercourse re-naturalisation slows flow and delivers enhanced flood plain storage volume; planting intercepts surface water runoff and increases evapotranspiration).
- **Physical and mental well-being for people** (more aesthetically pleasing, nature-orientated spaces have been created for people to enjoy)
- **Water quality improvements** (the various works help reduce polluting inputs to water bodies).
- **Urban cooling** (the increased areas of waterscapes and planting in urban areas are helping to mitigate increased temperatures through climate change).

Table 2 – Summary Of Interventions Delivered Under The Project & The Associated Benefits

	Units	Total	Gloucester City Council	Benefits				
				Improved Habitat & Biodiversity	Flood Mitigation	Physical & Mental Well Being For People	Water Quality Improvement	Urban Cooling
Watercourse re-naturalisation schemes (removal of artificial concrete channel)	no.	3	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Length of riverbank improved or two stage channel	m	1086	606	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Retrofit SuDS (sustainable urban drainage) schemes	no.	2	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wetland creation - new scrapes and ponds	no.	28	23	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Length of new swale (shallow ditch for flood water conveyance)	m	562	562	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wildflower meadow seeding	hectares	32.64	23.05	✓	✓	✓		✓
Change in meadow maintenance (non-seeded)	hectares	26.61	19.26	✓	✓	✓		✓
Semi mature trees planted	no.	432	381	✓	✓	✓		✓
Small trees / whips planted	no.	11748	10925	✓	✓	✓		✓
No. of native spring bulbs planted (daffodil, crocus, snowdrop, fritillary, bluebell, anemone)	no.	102555	90605	✓		✓		
Area of woodland improved by enrichment planting	m ²	23393	23393	✓		✓		
No. of bird and bat boxes	no.	95	95	✓		✓		
Length of sweet chestnut fencing installed (to facilitate grazing)	m	1122	1122	✓		✓		
No. of new gates	no.	13	13	✓		✓		
No. of new benches	no.	18	11			✓		
Area of sustainable (perennial) planting	m ²	850	-	✓		✓		

The above is not an exhaustive list.

3.5 The project has won three CPRE (The Countryside Charity) awards for high quality environmental improvement schemes:

- Oxstalls Campus & Plock Court Nature Reserve
- Sudbrook Riparian Restoration (re-naturalisation)
- Barnwood Park Environmental Improvements

3.6 The only significant negative feedback from the public has been at the Sudbrook site (Linnet Close). This was not opposition to the watercourse re-naturalisation, but opposition to the conversion of an area of short mown utility grass to wildflower meadow.

3.7 Examples of positive feedback from the public on the Holmleigh (Whaddon Brook) re-naturalisation scheme:

'It's lovely to see more wildlife and look at the wildflowers'

'Please continue each year more funding for these projects. Great for education, mental health and generally gorgeous to look at. Increase nature connections'

'It has been wonderful to see the transformation. Thank you and well done.'

4.0 Social Value Considerations

4.1 Since Gloucester City Council adopted the Social Value Policy, three of the sub-projects within the Urban Greening project have met the £50k contract threshold for social value forming a formal part of the tender. These have delivered social value sums as set out below:

- Meadows & Planting 2021 (Ventureserve Ltd) - £22,297
- Meadows & Planting 2022 (R F Gardiner Ltd) - £13,969
- Works Tender 2022 (Sanctus Ltd) – £163,616.5

4.2 In total, £199,882.50 of social value has been delivered through the project.

4.3 It is also worth noting that:

- Gloucester City Council adopted the Social Value Policy part-way through the ERDF project so not all the work has had its social value outcomes measured.
- The Urban Greening project as a whole has delivered significant social value:
 - It is contributing to both the physical and mental well-being of the public who frequent these open spaces, through improved aesthetics and a stronger connection to nature (Themes 1 & 5)
 - It has helped to provide mitigation against climate change (Theme 3)

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

5.1 Not applicable

6.0 Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 Cabinet are asked to note the contents of this report.

7.0 Future Work and Conclusions

7.1 Having left the European Union, the UK is not eligible for future ERDF funding. However, many alternative funding streams are available for biodiversity improvement / flood mitigation / water quality projects. Funding often targets multi-benefit schemes, such as those delivered here. There is also the planning associated BNG (biodiversity net gain), which is likely to provide developer credits to help deliver future biodiversity projects in Gloucester.

7.2 Severn Trent Water (STW) is in the process of investing £76 million in Mansfield into a community integrated SuDS project to alleviate flood risk during storms and reduce sewage spills into rivers. STW has expressed interest in delivering a similar project in Gloucester, subject to match funding being available. This is in the preliminary stages of development. Gloucester City Council has emphasised that maintenance needs to be a key consideration (who will pay for / deliver the maintenance of the rain gardens etc).

7.3 On the back of the success of the ERDF watercourse re-naturalisation schemes, Gloucester City Council has won funding for further projects of a similar nature from the EA / LLFA / Enover / GWT. Notably, Whaddon Brook restoration Phase 2, Plock Court wetland extension and Owl Close river restoration.

7.4 Delivering the ERDF funded project was particularly bureaucratic and time consuming in terms of project management, particularly as Gloucester City Council was acting as the lead delivery partner. When applying for future funding, due consideration needs to be given to the complexity of the administration involved.

7.5 With all these projects, maintenance is an extremely important consideration, particularly in light of the ever-increasing financial pressures on local authority budgets.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 In terms of project delivery, the key financial data is set out in Section 3.3, above.

8.2 The financial implications in terms of maintenance are set out in Section 10.0, below.

9.0 Legal Implications

9.1 None, other than the maintenance risks associated with ERDF funded sites either being destroyed, or not maintained, as set out in Section 10.0 below.

- 9.2 Partnership agreements have been put together by One Legal and signed up to by delivery partners, to ensure that any risks associated with outputs not being maintained sit with the relevant delivery partners.
- 9.3 One Legal was consulted on the content of this report and has not requested any amendments.

10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

10.1 Under the funding agreement, ERDF interventions must be maintained for 7 years post practical completion (31st May 2023). Not maintaining the interventions could comprise two scenarios:

- Removing the intervention - for example, building a play area in an area of ERDF funded wildflower meadow.
- Not maintaining the intervention correctly, in the more literal sense – for example not carrying out annual ‘cut and collect’ on a wildflower meadow.

There is no written guidance from the managing authority (DLUHC) on the ramifications if ERDF interventions are not maintained for this 7-year period. DLUHC has been pressed to provide some kind of steer on this, and on the potential magnitude of any financial penalties which may result. However, they have insisted that they are unable to provide any advice in this regard, and that if an ERDF funded intervention is not maintained, then the lead delivery partner would need to write to DLUHC, and the matter would be assessed on a ‘case by case basis’.

Informally, the ERDF technical advisor who was assisting Gloucester City Council with the project suggested that:

- If an area of intervention is not maintained through either of the scenarios above, then mitigation could be carried out by creating an equal area of intervention, of equal merit, elsewhere. So, if a hectare of meadow is lost at site A, then a hectare of meadow could be created at site B. The replacement intervention must also have a management plan.
- If an area of ERDF funded intervention is removed or not maintained correctly, and no mitigation is carried out, financial penalties apply. In this case, fines of up to 100% of the grant sum could be levied. The exact amount would depend on the area not maintained and the nature of the intervention, but for wildflower meadow works out at an average of circa £12k per hectare.

To mitigate the risks of ERDF interventions being inadvertently destroyed, the ERDF team has provided the POS team with the ERDF GIS layer – so that the ERDF areas can clearly be seen on corporate GIS. The ERDF team has held handover meetings with the POS team, Ubico and the Rangers.

10.2 The bulk of the maintenance associated with the ERDF project is related to the wildflower meadows. For them to thrive and support good biodiversity (and be aesthetically pleasing), they must undergo ‘cut and collect’ each year – that is, when they undergo their main annual hay cut in the summer, the arisings must be gathered up, rather than dropped in situ.

The ERDF project team assisted the POS team in the purchase of a specialist cut and collect machine to be towed behind a tractor to conduct this work. This has been used successfully the last two summers at all the Ubico cut and collect sites.

- 10.3 Once the arisings have been gathered up by the machine, they must be put somewhere. This leads on to the topic of potential fire risk relating to piles of grass clippings, which arose in the hot, dry summer of 2022. The extremely hot and dry weather resulted in wildfires in certain parts of the country. This led to concerns that piles of meadow clippings piles could combust – either via arson or by natural means.

The only solution to fully eliminate the risk of fire is to remove the clippings from site, but this is extremely time consuming and expensive and not very sustainable – multiple lorry-loads at each site - plus a location is required to deposit them. In the end, a pragmatic approach was taken, following risk assessments, and clippings were only removed from sites where it was considered there was no sensible place to leave them, or where there had previously been arson. The considerations for ‘sensible’ included being away from property and being tucked away in a more discrete location. None of the grass clippings piles in Gloucester combusted in 2022, and 2023 (a very wet summer) has similarly been trouble free.

- 10.4 Under the funding agreement, the ERDF asset register must be maintained for 7 years post completion. All project data, including all procurement records, must be maintained until 31st December 2033. This data is currently held on Gloucester City Council’s corporate OneDrive / The Southwest (procurement) Portal.
- 10.5 It is worth noting that the watercourse re-naturalisation schemes have actually reduced Gloucester City Council’s risk exposure going forward. Prior to the project, the concrete channels were significantly deteriorating in places – their elimination has removed an expensive maintenance liability for Gloucester City Council at these locations.

11.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

- 11.1 A PIA is not applicable. Safeguarding is not applicable.

12.0 Community Safety Implications

- 12.1 Creating more aesthetically pleasing, nature-orientated spaces, can reduce anti-social behaviour leading to an increased sense of security for the public. In certain places, dense undergrowth next to through-paths has been managed to provide increased safety and security.

13.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

- 13.1 Not applicable

14.0 Sustainability

14.1 The ERDF project as a whole has been focused on sustainability.

Background Documents:

Appendix 1 – Photographs Of Some Of The Work Carried Out

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Appendix 1 - ERDF (Urban Greening) Completion Report - Photographs Of Work

Wildflower Meadows

 Gloucester City Council
@GloucesterCity

The Randwick Park wildflower meadow is buzzing with pollinators 🐝🦋 and providing a cheering display of colour 🌻🌻😎.

#ERDF #Urban Greening.



1:01 PM · Jun 13, 2023 · 215 Views



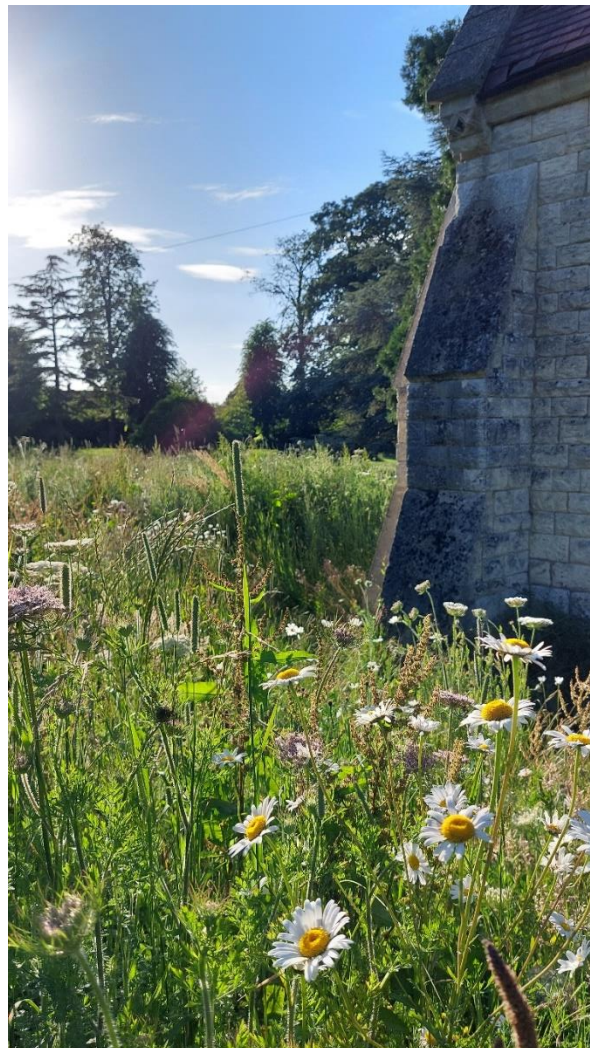
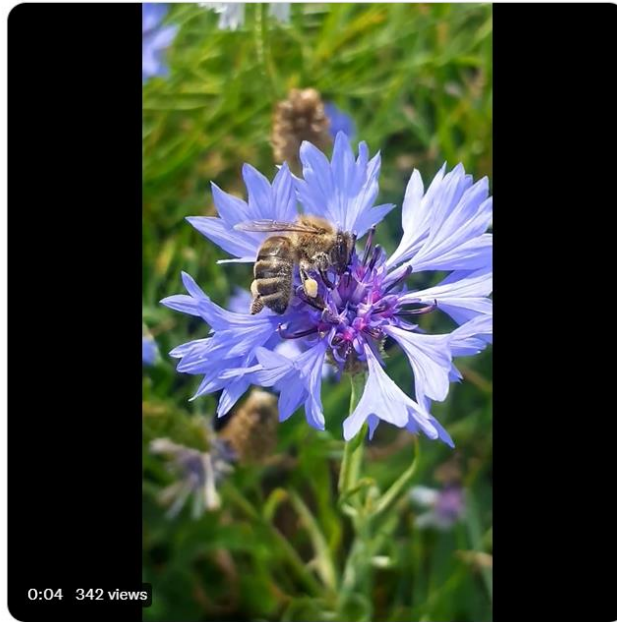
Saintbridge dry basin



Gloucester City Council @GloucesterCity · 30 Jun

...

Another happy pollinator today at King George V playing fields 🐝. Thanks to #ERDF funding areas all over the city have been sown with wildflower seeds as part of #urbangreeningproject 🌻🌻🌻🐝🦋



Barnwood Park – Perennial meadow



Gloucester City Council @GloucesterCity · 26 Jun



Wildflower meadows in Gloucester are buzzing with pollinators and providing a cheering display of colour.

#ERDF #Urban Greening #mygloucester. These photos are from Haycroft Drive 🦋 🐝 😊



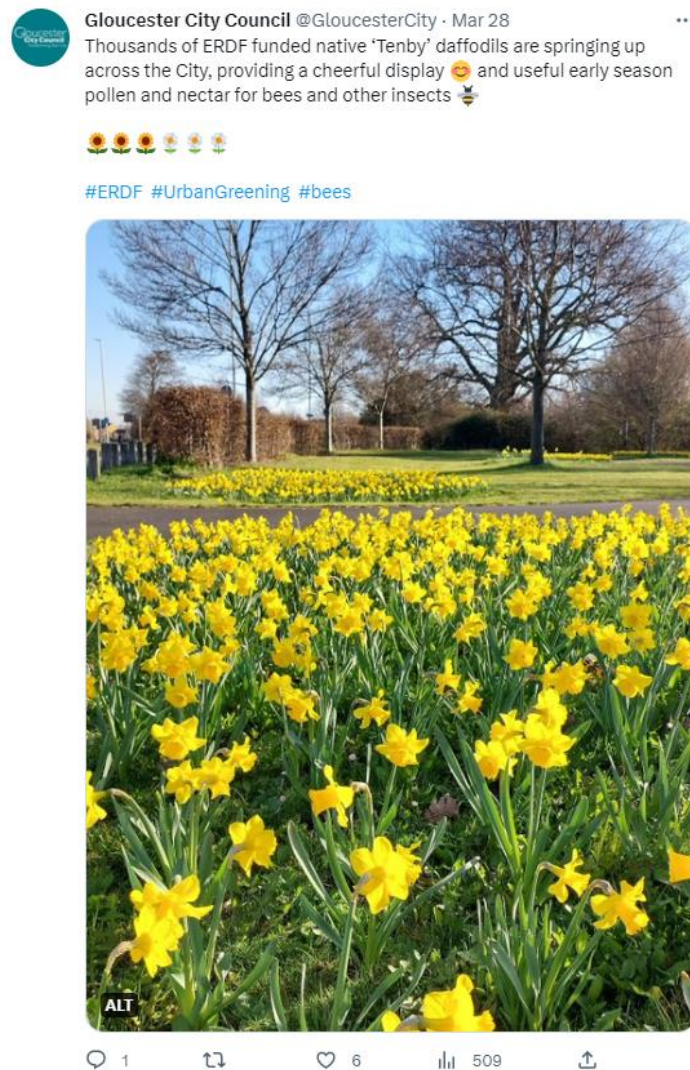
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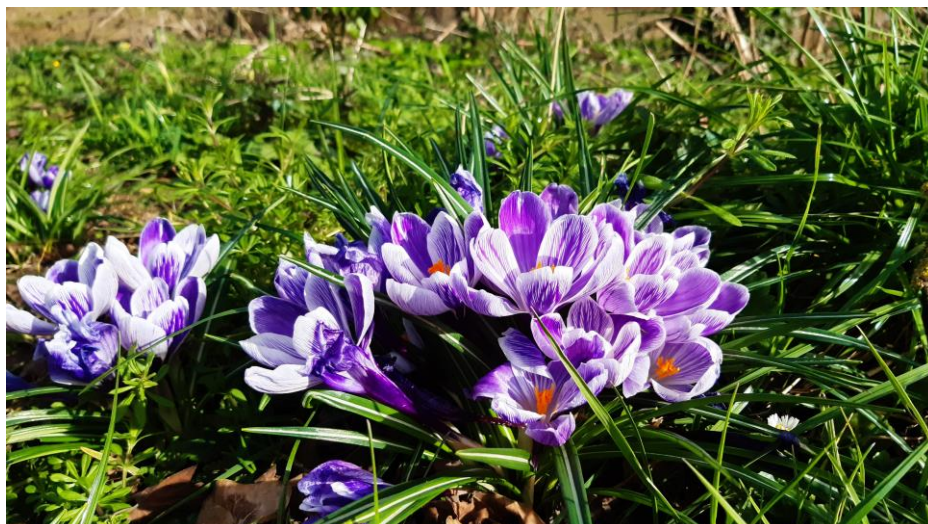


Lacy Close

Spring Bulbs



Kingsway - Manor Farm – Native daffodils



Sudbrook – crocus

Tree Planting & Woodland Enrichment



GloucesterCityCncl
@GloucesterCity



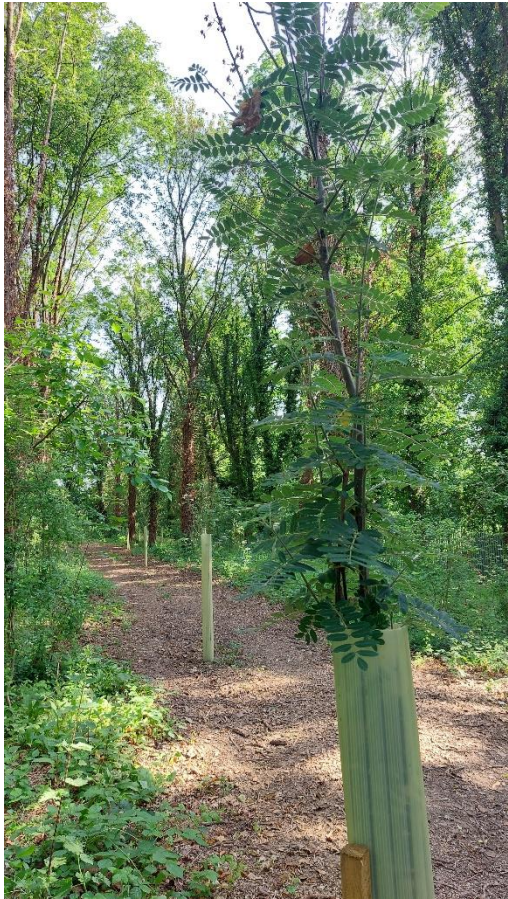
Our fantastic volunteers planted over two hundred #ERDF funded trees on the #GloucesterHorsbere mound. That makes over 1,500 planted already, with another 1,000 to go! If you fancy getting involved find out more orlo.uk/VCb22 #greenergloucestershire



8:01 AM · Mar 1, 2022 · Orlo



Hempsted Meadows woodland planting
Page 49



Goosebay Drive woodland thinning & enrichment planting



Lacy Close tree planting

Ponds And Wetlands



Matson Park SuDS (sustainable urban drainage) Pond



Streamside SuDS (sustainable urban drainage) Pond



Archdeacon Wetland



Barnwood Park Wetland

Sudbrook - Watercourse Re-Naturalisation Scheme



Prior to work - a barren concrete channel, with very little biodiversity



Completed works – natural, sinuous, 2-stage channel, with riparian wildflower meadow

Holmleigh Park – Whaddon Brook Watercourse Re-Naturalisation



Prior to work - a barren concrete channel, with very little biodiversity



During works - removal of concrete channel



Completed works – natural, sinuous, 2-stage channel, with riparian wildflower meadow

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Gloucester City Council

Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	10 January 2024
Subject:	Council Tax Discount for Care Leavers		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	Yes	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
Contact Officer:	Karen Haile – Service Delivery Manager		
	Email: Karen.Haile@gloucester.gov.uk	Tel:	396476
Appendices:	1. Care Leavers Strategy – Keep on Caring 2. Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 gives the Council discretion to reduce the amount of council tax payable. This can be for individual cases or by determining a class of case.

This report proposes a change to the Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers approved by Cabinet on 6 February 2019. It is proposed to amend the definition of a care leaver to a young person between the ages of 18 and 24, residing in Gloucester.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

- (1) the definition of a care leaver, for the purpose of the policy, be changed to the following:

a young person aged 18–24 who was formerly a child in the care of Gloucestershire County Council or other local authority in England and then became a ‘Former Relevant Child’ as defined by The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. The Care Leaver must be resident and liable for council tax on a property in the Gloucester City Council area

- (2) eligibility criteria be changed to the following:

A Care Leaver must be aged 18–24 years old to qualify for a reduction under the Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers. A Care Leaver will cease to qualify for the discount from the date of their 25th birthday

- (3) the changes approved at 2.1 (1) and 2.1 (2) above be implemented from 1 April 2024.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 gives the Council discretionary powers to reduce the amount of council tax payable in individual cases or for classes of case. This includes reducing the amount payable to nil.
- 3.2 The government made recommendations in its care leavers strategy “Keep on Caring; Supporting Young People from Care to Independence” published in July 2016 that local authorities should consider exempting care leavers from council tax, using their existing discretionary powers under Section 13A.
- 3.3 A 2016 report by The Children’s Society found that when care leavers move into independent accommodation, they begin to manage their own budget fully for the first time. The report showed that care leavers can find this extremely challenging and with no family to support them and insufficient financial education, are falling into debt and financial difficulty.
- 3.4 In 2019 the six local authorities and Gloucestershire County Council worked together to provide a common council tax discount scheme for care leavers providing a consistent approach across Gloucestershire. On the 6 February 2019 Cabinet resolved that Care Leavers are determined as a class for the purpose of Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, effective from 1 April 2019.
- 3.5 In May 2023 the Department of Education completed a review of Gloucestershire’s Care Leaver offer and following feedback the six local authorities and Gloucestershire County Council are working together on changes to the council tax discount scheme for care leavers which provides a consistent approach and better offer across the county. Cabinet is asked to approve a change to the definition of a care leaver and a change to eligibility criteria that will exempt care leavers in Gloucester City from council tax that were formerly a child in the care of Gloucestershire County Council or other local authority in England and are 18yrs to 24 yrs.
- 3.6 Any reduction awarded using this power must be funded by the billing authority. However, by agreement Gloucestershire County Council will fund its share of the cost of any care leaver discounts awarded
- 3.7 Under the Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers in 2022/23 the council awarded a discount to 37 care leavers aged between 18 and 21 years, a cost to the council of £5,400.

4.0 PROGRESS

- 4.1 On 13 July 2023 Council resolved to consider the viability of extending the council tax exemption for care leavers from age 21-24 from the 2024-25 budget onwards.
- 4.2 The Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers detailed at Appendix 2 proposes discounts for Care Leavers between the ages of 18 and 24 residing in the

Gloucester City Council area, who were formerly in the care of Gloucestershire County Council or other local authority in England

- 4.3 The scheme will provide for a full exemption from council tax to be awarded where care leavers live alone and a 50% discount where they live with others
- 4.4 Some care leavers will already have their council tax liability reduced. The Care Leaver discount will be awarded after all other discounts, exemptions, and council tax support.
- 4.5 The full eligibility criteria and arrangements for administering the scheme are detailed in Appendix 2.
- 4.6 The relevant team at Gloucestershire County Council liaises with the Revenues team to ensure the necessary information is available to enable the Care Leaver discounts to be awarded.

5.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1 The Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers provides for an exemption or discount from council tax for care leavers up to 21yrs. A change to the Scheme would see care leavers between the age of 22yrs to 24yrs also awarded an exemption or discount from council tax and will support them in making an effective social and financial transition from Local Authority care.
- 5.2 A change to the Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers will provide a better outcome for care leavers up to 24yrs and help to support a local offer that is consistent across the whole county.

6.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 6.1 The impact of these changes will be monitored.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The full cost of any council tax reduction awarded under Section 13A(1)(c) must be borne by the Council. However, by way of a local voluntary agreement, Gloucestershire County Council has agreed to fund its share of the cost of any Care Leaver discounts awarded. This Council will be required to fund its own and the Police share.

The cost of awarding care leaver discounts based on the above recommendations would depend both on the number of care leavers liable for Council Tax and their meeting the eligibility criteria. The cost of awarding discounts to care leavers between 22yrs and 24yrs is not known, but numbers are expected to be low.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 Billing Authorities have discretion under Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to reduce the amount of Council Tax payable for individuals, or

for classes of council taxpayers. This includes the power to reduce the amount payable to nil.

9.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

9.1 If changes to the definition and eligibility criteria for care leavers in the Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers are not approved then Care Leavers living in Gloucester will not get the same level of support as in other areas of the County and could lead to a potential reputational risk for the local authority.

10.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

10.1 This proposal is not detrimental to any groups with protected characteristics.

11.0 Other Corporate Implications

Changes to the Care Leaver Discount scheme will provide support to vulnerable young adults between 22yrs and 24yrs.

11.1 Not applicable.

Sustainability

11.2 Not applicable

Staffing & Trade Union

11.3 Not applicable

Background Documents: None

Appendix 1

[Keep On Caring – Supporting Young People from Care to Independence July 2016](#)

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Appendix B

Gloucester City Council

Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers – April 2024

Background

The Government made recommendations in its care leavers strategy “Keep on Caring” – appendix A, that local authorities should consider exempting care leavers from council tax, using their existing discretionary powers under Section 13a of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended). Many Councils have since introduced discounts for care leavers

In 2018 the 6 Gloucestershire Districts (billing authorities) and Gloucestershire County Council worked together to agree a common council tax discount scheme for Care Leavers aged 18yrs to 21yrs effective from April 2019.

It was agreed in December 2023 that the discount scheme should be extended to enable a better outcome for Care Leavers within Gloucestershire and for consistency across the county eligible care leavers up to the date of their 25th birthday may apply for a council tax discount from April 2024.

Discounts made using this power must be funded by the billing authority. However, Gloucestershire County Council, by local agreement, will fund its share of the cost of any Care Leavers discounts proportionate to its share of the council tax.

Legal Provision

Billing authorities have discretion under Section 13(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to reduce the amount of council tax payable for individuals, or for classes of council taxpayer. This includes the power to reduce the amount payable to nil.

This provision is separate to and distinct from the Council Tax support scheme which is made under Section 13A(1)(a) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. It allows the Council to reduce the amount payable after all statutory discounts and exemptions and local council tax support.

Eligibility Criteria

- A care leaver, for the purpose of this policy, is defined as a young person aged 18 – 24 who was formerly a child in the care of Gloucestershire County Council or other local authority in England and then became a ‘Former Relevant Child’ as defined by The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. The Care Leaver must be resident and liable for council tax on a property in the Gloucester City Council area

- A Care Leaver must be aged 18-24 years old to qualify for a reduction under the care leavers discount scheme. A Care Leaver will cease to qualify for the discount from the date of their 25th birthday
- The Care Leaver must be the liable person for council tax, either solely or jointly and severally with other(s), at the dwelling in respect of which the application is made. The council tax bill must be in their name
- When a Care Leaver lives in a HMO or other property where they are not the council tax payer no discount will be awarded
- The Care Leaver discount will apply to occupied properties only
- Confirmation that a claimant is a Former Relevant Child from a local authority in England must be received from Gloucestershire's 11-25 Permanency Service who will seek confirmation of care leaver status from other local authorities

Care Leaver Discount

The Care Leaver Discount is effective from 01 April 2024

Care Leavers that meet the eligibility criteria about will be eligible to apply for a discretionary council tax discount as follows:

- Where a property is solely occupied by Care Leaver(s) 100% discount will be awarded
- Where a Care Leaver is in occupation and jointly liable with others 50% discount will be awarded

The Care Leaver discretionary discount will be awarded after statutory discounts, exemptions, disabled reduction, and local council tax support.

Application Process and Administration

Gloucestershire County Council's 11-25 Permanency Service will provide information to confirm the name, address and date of birth of Care Leavers, living in the Gloucester area who will qualify for the discount.

A Care Leaver discount may also be awarded where the following information is provided and the Care Leaver status has been verified with Gloucestershire County Council's 11-25 Permanency Service

An application should provide the following information

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Current address
- Details of any other adults in the property and relationship to them
- Details of any circumstances that would be relevant to entitlement to legislative discounts, reductions or exemptions
- Contact details
- Name of Leaving Care Worker (if known)

Awards will be made directly by a discount in council tax liability and notification of the discount being awarded will be by way of the council tax bill.

The Revenues and Benefits Service will undertake periodic reviews appropriate to the individual circumstances of each case.

The Care Leaver (or his/her appointee or a recognised third party acting on his/her behalf) must advise Gloucester City Council of any changes which may affect entitlement to the discount within 21 days of the change occurring.

Any overpaid Care Leaver discount will be reclaimed through the relevant council tax account and collected and recovered under the Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992.

Review of Decision / Backdating

The Care Leaver discount scheme is administered in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and is subject to a statutory appeals process. If the applicant disagrees with the decision they must put this in writing giving their reasons. This should normally be received by Gloucester City Council within a month of the date of the decision, although more time can be given in exceptional circumstances.

If a decision is challenged a reconsideration will be made by the Head of Finance & Resources. The applicant will then be notified of the reconsideration, which will clearly state the reasons for the decision made.

If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the decision, an appeal may be made to the independent Valuation Tribunal. Further details on this process will be notified to the applicant with the outcome of any previous review of the decision.

The Council will accept applications backdated to the beginning of the financial year, or to the date the Care Leaver became responsible for the council tax so long as the date is not more than 12 months prior to the date of the application. The Care Leaver discount cannot be awarded prior to 01 April 2019 for care leavers aged 18yrs to 21yrs and cannot be awarded prior to 01 April 2024 for care leavers aged 22yrs to 24yrs.

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Appendix 2

Gloucester City Council

Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers – April 2024

Background

The Government made recommendations in its care leavers strategy “Keep on Caring” – appendix A, that local authorities should consider exempting care leavers from council tax, using their existing discretionary powers under Section 13a of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended). Many Councils have since introduced discounts for care leavers

In 2018 the 6 Gloucestershire Districts (billing authorities) and Gloucestershire County Council worked together to agree a common council tax discount scheme for Care Leavers aged 18yrs to 21yrs effective from April 2019.

It was agreed in December 2023 that the discount scheme should be extended to enable a better outcome for Care Leavers within Gloucestershire and for consistency across the county eligible care leavers up to the date of their 25th birthday may apply for a council tax discount from April 2024.

Discounts made using this power must be funded by the billing authority. However, Gloucestershire County Council, by local agreement, will fund its share of the cost of any Care Leavers discounts proportionate to its share of the council tax.

Legal Provision

Billing authorities have discretion under Section 13(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to reduce the amount of council tax payable for individuals, or for classes of council taxpayer. This includes the power to reduce the amount payable to nil.

This provision is separate to and distinct from the Council Tax support scheme which is made under Section 13A(1)(a) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. It allows the Council to reduce the amount payable after all statutory discounts and exemptions and local council tax support.

Eligibility Criteria

- A care leaver, for the purpose of this policy, is defined as a young person aged 18 – 24 who was formerly a child in the care of Gloucestershire County Council or other local authority

in England and then became a 'Former Relevant Child' as defined by The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. The Care Leaver must be resident and liable for council tax on a property in the Gloucester City Council area

- A Care Leaver must be aged 18-24 years old to qualify for a reduction under the care leavers discount scheme. A Care Leaver will cease to qualify for the discount from the date of their 25th birthday
- The Care Leaver must be the liable person for council tax, either solely or jointly and severally with other(s), at the dwelling in respect of which the application is made. The council tax bill must be in their name
- When a Care Leaver lives in a HMO or other property where they are not the council tax payer no discount will be awarded
- The Care Leaver discount will apply to occupied properties only
- Confirmation that a claimant is a Former Relevant Child from a local authority in England must be received from Gloucestershire's 11-25 Permanency Service who will seek confirmation of care leaver status from other local authorities

Care Leaver Discount

The Care Leaver Discount is effective from 01 April 2024

Care Leavers that meet the eligibility criteria about will be eligible to apply for a discretionary council tax discount as follows:

- Where a property is solely occupied by Care Leaver(s) 100% discount will be awarded
- Where a Care Leaver is in occupation and jointly liable with others 50% discount will be awarded

The Care Leaver discretionary discount will be awarded after statutory discounts, exemptions, disabled reduction, and local council tax support.

Application Process and Administration

Gloucestershire County Council's 11-25 Permanency Service will provide information to confirm the name, address and date of birth of Care Leavers, living in the Gloucester area who will qualify for the discount.

A Care Leaver discount may also be awarded where the following information is provided and the Care Leaver status has been verified with Gloucestershire County Council's 11-25 Permanency Service

An application should provide the following information

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Current address
- Details of any other adults in the property and relationship to them
- Details of any circumstances that would be relevant to entitlement to legislative discounts, reductions or exemptions
- Contact details
- Name of Leaving Care Worker (if known)

Awards will be made directly by a discount in council tax liability and notification of the discount being awarded will be by way of the council tax bill.

The Revenues and Benefits Service will undertake periodic reviews appropriate to the individual circumstances of each case.

The Care Leaver (or his/her appointee or a recognised third party acting on his/her behalf) must advise Gloucester City Council of any changes which may affect entitlement to the discount within 21 days of the change occurring.

Any overpaid Care Leaver discount will be reclaimed through the relevant council tax account and collected and recovered under the Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992.

Review of Decision / Backdating

The Care Leaver discount scheme is administered in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and is subject to a statutory appeals process. If the applicant disagrees with the decision they must put this in writing giving their reasons. This should normally be received by Gloucester City Council within a month of the date of the decision, although more time can be given in exceptional circumstances.

If a decision is challenged a reconsideration will be made by the Head of Finance & Resources. The applicant will then be notified of the reconsideration, which will clearly state the reasons for the decision made.

If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the decision, an appeal may be made to the independent Valuation Tribunal. Further details on this process will be notified to the applicant with the outcome of any previous review of the decision.

The Council will accept applications backdated to the beginning of the financial year, or to the date the Care Leaver became responsible for the council tax so long as the date is not more than 12 months prior to the date of the application. The Care Leaver discount cannot be awarded prior to 01 April 2019 for care leavers aged 18yrs to 21yrs and cannot be awarded prior to 01 April 2024 for care leavers aged 22yrs to 24yrs.



Report to:	Cabinet Council	Date:	10 January 2024 25 January 2024
Subject:	Council Tax – Second Homes Premium and Amendments to the Empty Homes Premium		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	Yes	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
Contact Officer:	Greg Maw, Head of Finance & Resources		
	Email: greg.maw@gloucester.gov.uk	Tel:	01452 396422
Appendices:	1. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 2. Council Tax Empty Homes Premium Briefing Document 3. The Local Government Finance Act 1992		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 In May 2022, the Government’s ‘The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill’ put forward proposals to charge discretionary Council Tax premium options on second homes. The Bill received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023 and gives Local Authorities the option to include a council tax premium on properties which are occupied periodically (second homes) and a reduction from two years to one year before an empty home premium is applied.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RECOMMEND** that:

- (1) council tax be increased for all properties which are occupied periodically by 100% from 1 April 2025 subject to any exemptions set out in subsequent Regulations and for implementation to be in accordance with those Regulations and guidance and
- (2) the council tax empty homes premium be increased to 100% for properties empty for between one and five years (currently between two and five years), from 1 April 2025 subject to any exemptions set out in subsequent Regulations and guidance.

2.2 Council is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

- (1) council tax be increased for all properties which are occupied periodically by 100% from 1 April 2025 subject to any exemptions set out in subsequent Regulations and for implementation to be in accordance with those Regulations and guidance and
- (2) the council tax empty homes premium be increased to 100% for properties empty for between one and five years (currently between two and five years), from 1 April 2025 subject to any exemptions set out in subsequent Regulations and guidance.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

3.1 For Council Tax purposes second homes are properties that are furnished but where no-one lives as their main residence. Council Tax is charged at the standard 100% charge, in line with the property council tax band. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 enables Billing Authorities to determine a higher amount for properties occupied periodically (second homes) of up to an additional 100%. The conditions are:

- There is no resident of the property and
- The property is substantially furnished.

3.2 There is no legal definition for what constitutes substantially furnished. In any disputed cases we will always visit and make an assessment.

3.3 With increased pressure to find housing for people in need the Council wants to encourage homeowners to bring homes into use to the benefit of all residents. The premium supports the council's strategy to bring empty homes back in to use more quickly and generate additional income.

3.4 Long-term empty homes within Gloucester City, are currently subject to an Empty Homes Premium, introduced in April 2019 and which allows additional council tax premium charges as follows:

- 100% additional Empty Homes Premium on properties which are empty for more than two years but less than five years.
- 200% additional Empty Homes Premium on properties which are empty for more than five years but less than ten years.
- 300% additional Empty Homes Premium on properties which are empty for more than 10 years.

The Act amends the definition of a long-term empty dwelling, reducing the period from two years to one. Changes to the definition of a long-term empty dwelling allows an empty home premium of an additional 100% on properties which are empty for more than one year but less than five years.

- 3.5 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 received Royal Assent on the 26 October 2023. A billing authority's decision to charge a premium for a second home must be made at least one year before the beginning of the financial year to which it relates and will become available from 1 April 2025. A change to the Empty Home Premium can be implemented from 1 April 2024 providing the decision is taken before the start of the financial year.
- 3.6 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) section 11C subsection (3) legislates that any Billing Authority wishing to implement the discretionary second home premium charge must make a Council resolution confirming its requirements at least one year before the beginning of the financial year to which it relates, hence the request for the approval to increase council tax on second homes at this early stage. A billing authority that wishes to vary a determination relating to the Empty Homes Premium must do so before the beginning of the financial year under Section 11B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) subsection (5).
- 3.7 Approval is sought to allow the Council to make timely decisions once detailed guidance is available and regulations made for the premium on properties that are occupied periodically.
- 3.8 The Government encourages billing authorities to adopt Council Tax premiums on long-term empty properties with the purpose of incentivising property owners to bring those empty properties back into use.
- 3.9 The Act addresses the issue of empty furnished properties by proposing a 100% increase in Council Tax to be applied to second homes and closes the loophole where furnishing an empty property negates the Empty Home Premium.

4.0 PROGRESS

- 4.1 As of 2 October 2023, Gloucester City Council records show that 153 properties throughout the city are recorded as Second Homes. The breakdown is as follows:

Number of Band A Properties	Number of Band B Properties	Number of Band C properties	Number of Band D properties	Number of Band E properties	Number of Band F Properties	Number of Band G Properties	Number of Band H Properties
67	35	28	15	7	0	1	0

- 4.2 Based on Council Tax charges for 2023-24 financial year, if an additional 100% second home premium were to be introduced, additional charges of approximately £249k could be billed, generating £27k a year for Gloucester City Council.
- 4.3 Empty homes tend to have a more fluid position than second homes. As of 2 October 2023 records show that 54 properties, detailed in the table below, are subject to the 100% empty homes premium as they have been empty and unoccupied for over two years.

Number of Band A Properties	Number of Band B Properties	Number of Band C Properties	Number of Band D Properties	Number of Band E Properties	Number of Band G Properties
27	16	6	3	1	1

An additional £85k is billed for council tax empty homes premium on these properties recorded as empty for in excess of two years. It cannot be assumed that a change in timescales from two years to one year will result in similar additional premiums being levied, however the figures should provide context. It should also be noted that there will be an element of fluidity around the figures for empty homes and an amount should be considered for non-collection.

- 4.4 Any additional income generated would be shared across the City Council's main preceptors, Gloucestershire County Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

5.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1 The purpose of the Empty Homes Premium change is to encourage property owners of long-term empty properties to bring those properties back into use. There are negative effects on the community associated through long term empty properties which are likely to fall into disrepair and be subject to anti-social behaviour such as squatting or vandalism.
- 5.2 The rationale behind changing the 100% Empty Homes Premium for long-term empty properties, currently empty for more than two years but less than five years, to empty for more than one year but less than five years is to provide owners with a further incentive to bring empty homes back into use, thus supporting the aims of the Council's Long Term Empty Property Strategy as well as generating additional Council Tax income. A working group across service areas is currently reviewing the council's approach to empty homes, engaging with owners to understand their behaviours and what the council can do to incentivise getting empty properties back into use.
- 5.3 The purpose of the Second Home Premium is to close the loophole where furnishing an empty property negates the Empty Home Premium charge as well as generating additional Council Tax income.

6.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet and then Council resolve to increase council tax for all properties which are occupied periodically by 100% from 1 April 2025.
- 6.2 It is recommended that the Cabinet and then Council resolve to increase the council tax empty home premium to 100% for properties empty for between one and five years from 1 April 2025.
- 6.3 A notice will be published in at least one local newspaper within 21 days of determination.

- 6.4 Subsequent regulations and detailed guidance will be tracked and a work plan put in place including a communication strategy to ensure that council taxpayers are notified of the introduction of a Second Home Premium and changes to the Empty Home Premium in advance of 1 April 2025. The work plan will factor in a key task to identify properties that are excluded from the premium and records updated accordingly in advance of 1 April 2025.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications associated with the recommendation. The Council have the software to enable the billing amendments to take place.
- 7.2 There are positive financial impacts, based on data as of 2 October 2023 and the current year council tax charges, additional council tax of £334k could be charged.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 amends the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The effect being that for financial years beginning on or after 1 April 2025 a billing authority may by determination increase council tax by 100% where there is no resident of a dwelling, and the dwelling is substantially furnished. A determination must be made at least one year before the beginning of the financial year to which it relates.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 amends the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The effect being that for financial years beginning on or after 1 April 2024 a “long term empty dwelling” can be a property that (a) has been unoccupied, and (b) it has been substantially unfurnished for a period of one year rather than the current 2 years.

9.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 9.1 There is a risk that the introduction of a second home premium may encourage Council Tax ‘avoidance’ whereby owners of second homes may transfer the property to Business Rates. Currently only properties that are available to let for more than 20 weeks (140 days) in a calendar year should be rated for business rates by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). From April 2023, the rules surrounding this are still applicable, however, in addition, the owner must evidence to the VOA that the property was actually let for short periods totalling at least 70 days in the previous year. This amendment for the second homeowner to evidence that the property has been let should ensure that any properties transferring from the Council Tax register to Business Rates are only those where the property is genuinely being utilised for business purposes. There may be some properties currently on the Business Rates list which will need to be transferred to the Council Tax register.

10.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

- 10.1 None

11.0 Other Corporate Implications

11.1 Not applicable.

Sustainability

11.2 Not applicable

Staffing & Trade Union

11.3 Not applicable

Background Documents:

Appendix 1 – The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 – Chapter 2 Section 79 and 80
[Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023](#)

Appendix 2 – Report to Cabinet 9 January 2019 – Council Tax Empty Homes Premium -
[Gloucester City Council - Empty Homes Premium](#)

Appendix 3 – [The Local Government Finance Act 1992 Chapter 1 Section 11B](#)

Appendix A

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 – Chapter 2 Section 79 and 80
[Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023](#)

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Report to:	Cabinet Council	Date:	9 January 2019 24 January 2019
Subject:	Council Tax – Empty Homes Premium		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Performances and Resources		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	Yes	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
Contact Officer:	Alison Bell – Intelligent Client Officer		
	Email: Alison.bell@gloucester.gov.uk	Tel: 396014	
Appendices:	1. Council Tax – Empty Homes Premium – DCLG		
	2. Section 12 Local Government Finance Act 2012 – as amended		
	3. Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to recommend the introduction of a Council Tax Empty Homes Premium be applied to all homes which meet the criteria at the following rates;

- From 01 April 2019 – empty homes premium of 50% (total Council Tax charge of 150%) to apply to all homes which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than two years
- From 01 April 2020 – empty homes premium of 100% (total Council Tax charge of 200%) to apply to all homes which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than two years but less than five years
- From 01 April 2020 – empty homes premium of 200% (total Council Tax charge of 300%) to apply to all homes which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than five years
- From 01 April 2021 – empty homes premium of 100% (total Council Tax charge of 200%) to apply to all homes which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than two years but less than five years
- From 01 April 2021 – empty homes premium of 200% (total Council Tax charge of 300%) to apply to all homes which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than five years but less than ten years
- From 01 April 2021 – empty homes premium of 300% (total Council Tax charge of 400%) to apply to all homes which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than ten years

2.0 Recommendations

CABINET is asked to **RECOMMEND** that a Council Tax Empty Homes Premium of 50% is implemented from 01 April 2019 in respect of properties that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than two years, increasing to 100% from 01 April 2020. Cabinet is further asked to recommend that the empty homes premium be implemented from 01 April 2020 at 200% on properties which have been empty for more than five years and from 01 April 2021 at 300% on properties which have been empty for more than ten years

COUNCIL is asked to **RESOLVE** that a Council Tax Empty Homes Premium of 50% is implemented from 01 April 2019 in respect of properties that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than two years, increasing to 100% from April 2020. Council is further asked to resolve that the empty homes premium be implemented from 01 April 2020 at 200% on properties which have been empty for more than five years and from 01 April 2021 at 300% on properties which have been empty for more than ten years

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 Council Tax charges are the means by which local residents make a contribution towards the cost of local services, for example, the police, fire services, education and housing.
- 3.2 Local authorities have the discretion to charge between 0% and 100% Council Tax on properties which are 'unoccupied and substantially unfurnished' for a period of up to six months
- 3.3 Currently empty properties in Gloucester City receive a discount of 25% for the first six months of being unoccupied, which then reverts to 100% of the Council Tax charge after that initial six month period expires.
- 3.4 Prior to April 2013 Local Authorities could charge up to a maximum of 100% council tax on domestic dwellings which had been empty for more than two years. From 01 April 2013 Section 12 of the Local Government Finance Act 2012 amended Section 11B, which allows Local Authorities in England to set Council Tax on long term empty properties at 150% of the normal liability.

From 01 April 2019 Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 increases this further in a 'stepped' approach which allows:

- From 01 April 2019, an additional empty homes premium of 100% on properties which are empty for more than two years
- From 01 April 2020, an additional empty homes premium of 100% on properties which are empty for more than two years and less than five years
- From 01 April 2020, an additional empty homes premium of 200% on properties which are empty for more than five years
- From 01 April 2021, an additional empty homes premium of 100% on properties that are empty for more than two years but less than five years
- From 01 April 2021, an additional empty homes premium of 200% on properties that are empty for more than five years but less than ten years

- From 01 April 2021, an additional empty homes premium of 300% on properties which are empty for more than ten years

3.5 The purpose of the Empty Homes Premium is to encourage property owners of long term empty properties to bring those properties back into use.

3.6 A long term empty property must have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for at least two years. This legislation has become known as the 'Empty Homes Premium'.

3.7 The premium may be applied when the property has been empty for two years irrespective of how long the current owner has owned the property. If the property is occupied for a period of six weeks or less it is regarded as not having been occupied for the purposes of the two year period.

3.8 There are two classes of dwellings which are exempt from the empty homes premium. These are:

- A dwelling which would normally be the sole or main residence of a member of the armed services, who is absent from the property as a result of such service
- a dwelling [annexe] which forms part of a single property that is being treated by a resident of that property as part of the main dwelling.

3.9 Gloucester City has 57,256 domestic dwellings*. There are currently approximately 353 empty homes in Gloucester, which have been empty for more than two years and are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished. This represents 0.61% of properties in Gloucester. If those homeowners took no action to bring their properties back into use, then it is estimated that introducing an Empty Homes Premium of 50% will generate additional Council Tax income of approximately £225,791.78.

3.10 Gloucester City Council would retain approximately £26,756.23 of this with Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucestershire Police Crime Commissioner benefitting from the remainder.

3.11 In addition, if long term empty properties can be brought back into use then a further beneficial impact will be from the New Homes Bonus for which the City Council retains a payment per property, which is based on a national average council tax band D charge

4.0 Reasons for Recommendations

4.1 The Government encourages local authorities to tailor council tax policy and discounts towards local situations and priorities. Locally in Gloucester we have seen homelessness increase year on year, and some housing is in short supply. The purpose of the Empty Homes Premium is to encourage property owners of long term empty properties to bring those properties back into use. In Gloucester there are currently approximately 160 households in temporary accommodation, so even if the policy were to bring a small number of empty properties back to the market then this would be beneficial to the local housing supply.

- 4.2 From April 2019, legislation does allow Gloucester City Council to impose a 100% levy on Council Tax to those owners of long term empty properties. However, by imposing a 50% premium initially, it is considered that this is a more moderate approach and will give those long term empty owners time to consider their options prior to a more significant increase in April 2020.
- 4.3 At the same time the policy would help address some negative community effects associated through long term empty properties which are more likely to fall into disrepair and be subject to anti-social behaviour, such as squatting or vandalism.
- 4.4 Some long term properties can be a source of complaint before the new proposed council tax measures can be implemented (properties empty for less than two years) and where a property is found to be causing a statutory nuisance, poses a risk to health and safety or is deemed an 'eyesore', the Council can take enforcement action through its regulatory functions including environmental health, planning enforcement and building control
- 4.5 In Gloucestershire, Stroud District Council, Cotswold District Council, Tewkesbury Borough Council and Cheltenham Borough Council all charge the Empty Homes Premium – it is not yet known how many of these will choose to apply the new premium level being introduced from April 2019
- 4.6 Nationally 291 out of 326 local authorities applied an Empty Homes Premium in the 2017/18 year. It is not yet known how many will choose to apply the new premium level being introduced from April 2019

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 5.1 The alternative is to do nothing, however, the Council is being proactive in attempting to incentivise Empty Home owners to bring the empty dwellings back into use, whilst also having a positive effect on reducing the anti-social behaviour associated with long term empty properties.

6.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 6.1 By setting out the policy now, for introduction over the next three financial years, Gloucester City Council would be using the most recent legislation and encouraging those owners of long term empty properties to bring those properties back into use. Gloucester City Council has also recently launched a private landlord incentive scheme to encourage landlords to bring properties back into use.
- 6.2 All potentially affected council tax payers would be written to and the letter would include details of the private landlord incentive scheme

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are currently approximately 353 empty homes in Gloucester, which have been empty for more than two years and are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished. If these homeowners took no action to bring their properties back into use, then it is estimated that introducing the lower 50% Empty Homes Premium will generate additional Council Tax income of approximately £225,791.78, of which

Gloucester City Council would retain around £26,000. However, the additional income is likely to be less than this in practice as it is expected that the new premium will have the desired effect to encourage those homeowners to bring their properties back into use instead.

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 Section 11B Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended).
Section 67(2) of the Act provides that the power to decide to introduce a premium can only be exercised by full Council

The Rating (Property in Common occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 provides for the premium to be increased as detailed in 3.4 of this report

There is a legal requirement for the Council to publish any decision using these powers in a local newspaper with 21 days of the decision

Contact Officer: peter.lewis@teWKesbury.gov.uk 01684 272012

9.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

9.1 It may be difficult to collect the increased Council Tax due, but all available options will be explored to mitigate this risk

9.2 The premium may be viewed as unnecessarily punitive to empty home owners however this is mitigated by the positive social benefits that would accrue if more empty homes are brought back into use as a result of this policy

10.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

10.1 A PIA screening assessment has been undertaken and the assessment is neutral. A full PIA is not required

11.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

11.1 The Empty Homes Premium should have a positive effect on reducing anti-social behaviour associated with long term empty properties

Sustainability

11.2 Not applicable

Staffing & Trade Union

11.3 Not applicable

Background Documents: None

*data as at 01.12.2018

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Appendix C

[The Local Government Finance Act 1992 Chapter 1 Section 11B](#)

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Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	10 January 2024
Subject:	Proposed Disposal of Land for Blackbridge Sports Hub		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Policy and Resources		
Wards Affected:	Podsmead		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
Contact Officer:	Melloney Smith Asset Management Officer		
	Email: Melloney.smith@gloucester.gov.uk	Tel:	396849
Appendices:	1. Objection 2. Officer's Comments on Objection		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

To consider a public objection to the disposal of Public Open Space at Laburnum Road Podsmead for the proposed Blackbridge Sports Hub.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is asked **RESOLVE** that:

- (1) the objection received in response to the S123 Public Notices for the disposal of open space be noted;
- (2) following the consideration of the objection, that authority be given for the grant of a 125-year lease to Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society (CCBS) on terms to be determined by the Head of Finance and Resources in consultation with the Asset Management Team.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

3.1 A Cabinet Decision was made on 12 July 2023 to agree to accept the Transfer of public open space land from Gloucestershire County Council and then for the land to be leased by way of 125-year lease to Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society (CCBS). Both transactions to limit the use of the land or the purpose of Community Sports and Community Use only.

3.2 Blackbridge CCBS obtained planning permission for the proposed Sports hub in June 2023.

- 3.3 Gloucestershire County Council transferred the land to the City Council on 22 November 2023.
- 3.4 The public notices were published on 23 and 30 November 2023. One objection has been received. See appendix one.
- 3.5 The points raised by the objector have been considered and comments are to be found in appendix two.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

- 4.1 The Sports Hub supports an asset-based community development approach to making the best community use of this much loved public open space asset. The plans have been developed by a passionate group who want to improve local facilities for local people and involve other residents, community groups and sports clubs in the process. The Council has supported this approach from the beginning of the project. The project supports the Council's Sports and Physical Activity Strategy 2023-2028.

5.0 Environmental Implications

- 5.1 Part of the proposed land to be disposed of will be built on. Blackbridge CCBS are committed to improving the local environment and constructing a sustainable building

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 Not to go ahead with this project - This would mean the loss of the opportunity to support the provision of a community sports hub
- 6.2 The Council undertakes the project itself. The Council does not have the resources to undertake this project. The Council would not be able to access same wide sources of grant funding that Blackbridge CCBS have accessed to meaning the project would not be financially viable.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 It is recommended that the site is disposed of to permit the provision of a new community sports hub facility.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 8.1 If the disposal is agreed, then the lease to Blackbridge CCBS is to be agreed and completed.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 The cost of the project is still subject to confirmation once construction contracts have been tendered and awarded, the estimated cost is £5,000,000.

Funding of £5,167,000 is available via grant funding (Youth Investment Fund, Football Foundation and UK Shared Prosperity) and s106 allocations.

- 9.2 If procurement exercise exceeds funding available, BCCBS could not go ahead with the project unless more funds were raised. There is not an obligation or expectation that the Council has to meet any shortfall in funding.

(Finance were consulted in the preparation of this report)

10.0 Legal Implications

The disposal of land, whether by freehold or the grant of a lease, that does not also entail the supply of goods or provision of services or works is not subject to procurement law governed by the Public Contract Regulations 2015

The Council is not letting a services contract for the management or operation of the new facility and will not be responsible for its construction. Therefore, there was no requirement for a procurement process.

S123 of the Local Government Act 1972 permits a local authority to dispose of land as it sees fit. However, it cannot dispose of land at less than the best consideration reasonably obtainable without the consent of the Secretary of State (which may be specific or general to all local authorities in particular circumstances).

An independent valuation has been obtained and due to the existing restrictions on the land, it has been assessed as having a nominal value only. It is therefore considered that the land is being disposed of at the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained. Secretary of State consent will not therefore be required for this transaction.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 11.1 There is a risk that Blackbridge CCBS do not complete the lease on the land and the Council are left with the land to manage and maintain. The Council do have the expertise to manage playing fields together with their partners Ubico. There is demand for pitches.
- 11.3 There is a risk that Blackbridge CCBS do not complete the building or fail in the running of the facility. If the building is part built a decision will have to be made whether the Council wish to take over the project or whether another body can be found. If they fail in the management of the building, there would be the option of adding it to the Council's leisure property contract or leasing it directly to another community group or sports club.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

- 12.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact; therefore, a full PIA was not required.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

13.1 None

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

14.1 None

Background Documents: None

**To GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL
Property Commissioning Manager (acting). (Ref: Blackbridge)**

**Local Government Act 1972, Section 123 (2A)
The Land at Laburnum Road, Podsmead Gloucester**

I wish to object to the disposal by way of a lease of the land at Laburnum Road, Podsmead Gloucester which forms part of public open space, (comprising approximately 6.6 hectares/16.2 acres).

1. The Role of Gloucester City Council

Presumably there is some arrangement between Gloucestershire County Council and BCCBS in respect of the land held as a public open space at/off Laburnum Road, Gloucester. What role Gloucester City Council has in this arrangement is unclear.

It is essential that the City Council shows that it is acting with all due propriety for the community benefit in its dealings and disposal of the land at/off Laburnum Road. It is unknown whether the City Council was already involved with BCCBS when it granted controversial planning consent to BCCBS to develop the land at/off Laburnum Road. Land in public ownership that the City Council now plans to dispose of to BCCBS for a nominal rent. There is a lack of transparency as to how the City Council and BCCBS are acting at arms length in regard to the disposal of the land at/off Laburnum Road.

2. There has been no procurement process for this disposal.

Section 123(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 gives a local authority power to dispose of land held by it. A local authority exercising that power is subject to a duty under section 123(2) to obtain the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained. That is commercial, economic or monetary value only. Gloucester City Council has not complied with this duty.

The City Council has not gone to the market with a competitive bidding process to show that it has achieved the best consideration reasonably obtainable. It is not stated whether an independent valuation of the land has been undertaken. The City Council has clearly not secured a price which is equivalent to the market value shown in that valuation if it is disposing of the land at "nominal" value. It is not stated what sum BCCBS is providing.

There is no fixed financial benefit to the taxpayer of this disposal. BCCBS is in principle being “gifted” a valuable asset by the City Council. In disposing of the public land at/off Laburnum Road, the City Council appears to be providing a subsidy to BCCBS. A search on the BEIS website did not return any results for the City Council publishing details of the subsidy amount. Although the market value of the transaction is not stated, common sense says it will exceed £100,000.

3. Disposal of Public Open Space at an Undervalue

Gloucester City Council is well aware of the strong community opposition to the proposed sports facility complex though its approval of planning permission. BBC Gloucestershire <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-gloucestershire-65831119> reported that 600 residents signed a petition opposing the sports facility hub plans plus 48 letters of objection. Members agreed it was a "difficult and contentious application". The BBC reports that cries of "it's absolutely scandalous" could be heard coming from the packed public gallery as the plans were approved.

By granting planning permission for the land at/off Laburnum Road, the City Council has turned it from an open public space into development land. Obviously this will have hugely increased its hope value. It is incredulous that the City Council now intends to “give away” this hope value to a developer. BCCBS appears to have access to significant amounts of central government funding. If it wants the land at/off Laburnum Road it should be paying full market value rather than being subsidised by the City Council.

The community benefit of the sports facility at Blackbridge is acknowledged by the City Council to be “contentious”. There is strong community dissent to the development. There are already two underperforming sports hub facilities in Gloucester. In September 2023 it was reported that Gloucester's GL1 leisure centre and Oxstalls Sports Park had closed down suddenly with more than 150 job losses.

It is noted that the views of groups outside the City administrative area were taken into account in the planning decision. Those and other groups supporting the proposed development will not be burdened with the high financial risks that failure of the scheme or of the tenant bring to the City Council and taxpayer.

4. The Proposed Leaseholder/Tenant

It is unclear upon what fair and impartial criteria BCCBS was chosen by Gloucester City Council to exclusively benefit from the disposal of the public open space at/off Laburnum Road given the lack of a procurement process.

BCCBS appears to have been recently formed with a principal activity of operating a (non-existent) sports hub facility. From its published financial information on its website, it seems to have little by way of capital or assets. It is unclear as to its trading experience and track record to deliver on the proposed complex development and operation of a large sports hub facility.

BCCBS's "aspirational" principal activity of developing and operating a sports hub facility seems to rely on taxpayer funding, grants and receipt of a "free gift" of public open space to build upon. If BCCBS brings no money of its own to the table, the financial risks born by BCCBS appear minimal if the sports hub facility does not go ahead or subsequently fails - yet it will have acquired for nominal value a valuable long leasehold of a tract of publicly owned "development" land.

The inherent risks arising from the proposed disposal of the public open space for development by a 3rd party appear to sit with the residents of Gloucester and the taxpayer generally.

5. Financial Risk to City Council from Tenant Failure

The City Council has publicly stated in July 23 that "There is the risk that the lease may not complete or the tenant may fail, leaving the Council with the financial responsibility for the maintenance and outgoings of the property."

This risk appears to be significant given-

- There have been two notable failures of tenants at sports hub facilities in Gloucester City in recent months,
- The proposed leaseholder, BCCBS, is a recently formed, small company with no apparent track record of developing or operating a large sports hub facility.

At its July 2023 Cabinet Meeting, the City Council reported that BCCBS Board members "have experience of delivering community building projects and of running them". The material to support this statement is not detailed. There is a paucity of information on the BCCBS website. BCCBS has just six employees of which four are also its Directors.

BCCBS seems to run a drop in centre and hold pop up activities in Podsmead. Its 2023 financial records, its first year of reporting, detail a turnover of only £66,799 of which just £18,136 came from services it provided. BCCBS seems to have reported a year end operating loss.

BCCBS ability to deliver what it proposes is unknown. There is clearly a significant risk of failure. The City Council has already acknowledged that it will bear the financial responsibility for such failure if BCCBS cannot deliver its aspirational plans or operates at a loss.

6. Enforceability of County Council Restriction and Liability for Leaseholder Breach

Gloucester City Council details it has entered into a restriction with Gloucestershire County Council as to the permitted use of the land at/off Laburnum Road.

It is proposed that BCCBS be granted a 125-year lease at a nominal rent. It is unclear how the restriction upon the City Council will be enforceable against the leaseholder. How will the leaseholder be restricted from selling on/disposing of the leasehold to a 3rd party or subletting for purposes other than a sports hub facility?

There are already two under performing sports hub facilities in Gloucester. There is an inherent risk upon disposal of the land at/off Laburnum Road that other development options such as housing become more commercially attractive to the leaseholder. If the sports hub facility is abandoned, the City Council will presumably remain liable to the County Council for the financial consequences of any breach of the usage restriction by the leaseholder or its successors in title. It is unclear whether the City Council is prepared for such an occurrence.

In conclusion, for the above reasons, I wish to object to the disposal by the Gloucester City Council by way of a 125 year lease of the land at/off Laburnum Road, Podsmead Gloucester which forms part of public open space, (comprising approximately 6.6 hectares/16.2 acres).

13th December 2023

(4 pages)

Appendix two – Officer’s comments on objection

Please find below Officer’s comments on the points raised by the Objection letter.

1. The Role of Gloucester City Council

Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucester City Council and Active Gloucestershire have been working together for a number of years to facilitate the provision of a Sports Hub in the Podsmead area. At the start of 2017 Active Gloucestershire were commissioned by the City Council to bring together interested parties who could deliver the Sports Hub. Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society (CCBS) was set up with experienced Directors from the voluntary, charitable and sports sectors. Public meetings and consultations have taken place. The Sports Hub is in the City Plan and the Health and Strategy.

The County Council did own the land but this has now transferred to the City Council.

The City Council as the potential landowner have been in discussion with Blackbridge CCBS prior to the planning application. The Council as landowner has no influence on the planning system.

2. There has been no procurement process for this disposal

An independent valuation of the land has been undertaken and the value was stated as being nominal due to the restrictions on the use of the land. The land was transferred by the County Council for £1 and it is proposed that the lease is at a rent of £1pa. This information is in the Cabinet Report dated 12 July 2023.

As the value of the land is £1, there is no disposal at less than best consideration and therefore no subsidy is being given.

3. Disposal of Public Open Space at an Undervalue

An independent valuation has been obtained stating the value of the land given the restriction on its use is a nominal amount. There is not considered to be a disposal at an undervalue.

The issues with GL1 and Oxstalls Tennis Centre were specific to that operator. A new interim provider was identified quickly and a procurement process is underway to find a long term operator.

4. The Proposed Leaseholder/Tenant

Blackbridge CCBS was set up for the purpose of providing and running the sports hub facility. It has been successful in acquiring funding from Government and other sources to be able to build the facility. The Directors have experience of fund raising, delivering and running projects and sports facilities. The risk and responsibility for the project will be taken by Blackbridge CCBS.

The land is only permitted to be used as a community sports hub.

5. Financial Risk to The City Council from tenant failure

With everything there are risks involved. If the tenant were to fail then the Council would look for another tenant to take on the property. The existing or future operator for GL1 and Oxstalls Tennis Centre could be approached to take on the operation of the facility if another tenant could not be found.

The six directors of Blackbridge CCBS are experienced in applying for funds/grants, delivering community projects and running community sports facilities.

6. Enforceability of County Council Restriction and Liability for Leaseholder Breach

The lease will contain provisions that will restrict the use of the land and the assigning and subletting of the premises. Blackbridge CCBS will only be permitted to use the land as a community sports hub and will only be able to assign the lease to a not for profit community group for community sports use. The 125 year lease for the sports hub will protect the land for community sports use and prevent disposal for residential development.



Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	10 January 2024
Subject:	Review of Gloucester Cemetery Rules and Regulations		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	Yes	Budget/Policy Framework:	Yes
Contact Officer:	Carly Locke, Bereavement Service Manager		
	Email:	carly.hughes@gloucester.gov.uk	Tel: 396087
Appendices:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Current Rules and Regulations (2014) 2. Proposed Reviewed Rules (2023 – 2024) 3. Summary Table of Rules and Regulations 4. Westerleigh Cemetery Rules and Regulations 5. Cheltenham Cemetery Rules and Regulations 6. Forest of Dean Rules and Regulations 7. Tewkesbury Rules and Regulations 		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 This report outlines the changes that are going to be proposed to the rules and regulations for Gloucester Cemeteries following a decision by Council to review the 2014 rules. A public consultation is proposed, open to all but specifically inviting responses from families who use the cemeteries.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

- (1) the proposed changes to the rules and regulations of Coney Hill and Tredworth Cemeteries in Appendix 2 be noted;
- (2) authority be delegated to the Head of Finance and Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Performance & Resources to undertake a public consultation on the proposed changes;
- (3) on conclusion of the consultation, a report will be brought to Cabinet on the outcome of the consultation with recommendations, where appropriate, to change the rules and regulations for Coney Hill and Tredworth Cemeteries.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

3.1 Rules and regulations are set in all cemeteries and church yards, this helps to keep the grounds accessible for burials and allowing the grounds staff to maintain a cemetery to a high standard. Gloucester rules and regulations are signed up to by families at the time of the burial, and they also receive another copy when they receive their deed of grant in the post a short while afterwards.

3.2 The Council agreed at its meeting in November 2023 to review the current 2014 Cemetery rules and regulations (shown in Appendix 1) to ensure they remain in line with industry best practice. The review included comparisons with cemeteries and church yards in our surroundings areas to ensure that the Councils rules and regulations are in keeping with industry best practice. The review concluded the rules and regulations are similar to other local providers, as seen in the summary table at appendix 3. Copies of other providers rules and regulations are available at appendices 4, 5, 6 & 7. Officers have conducted this review and the following amendments are proposed to allow us to manage the site to a high standard whilst also ensuring the health and safety of staff and public visitors are protected.

- The 3ft (91.44cm) wide x 2ft (61.00cm) depth soil border in front of the headstone currently in place will remain but families will be offered the option to have a concrete stone border that will not exceed the 3ft (91.44cm) x 2ft (61.00cm) border the stone border will not exceed 6 inches (15.24cm) in height. Allowing a concrete border in addition to the currently allowed soil or granite borders will help address affordability concerns over the cost of granite.
- The 3ft (91.44cm) x 2ft (61.00cm) border can only be of a granite or concrete material no other materials will be accepted. All stone borders placed on the grave are placed at the deed holders own risk.
- No glass of any kind to be placed on a grave
- Every grave will be grass seeded when the Council observes that the grave has reached its final settlement (approx. 12 months)
- The cemeteries are working cemeteries and machinery will be operating daily there will be occasions where we need to remove the concrete stone borders to allow us to get into excavate and prepare nearby graves. In those circumstances, we will carefully place the borders back on the grave once the preparations have finished.
- All floral tributes including plastic placed 14 days following the burial service need to be held within the 3ft (91.44cm) x 2ft (61.00cm) border. All tributes outside of the boundary will be removed 14 days following the burial service.
- Should a deed holder place anything on a grave that is not within the rules and regulations that are set they will be sent a letter with 14 days' notice to remove items. Should removal not take place they will be removed by cemetery staff and held for collection.

3.3 The responses to the consultation will be brought back to Cabinet to consider and approve any proposed changes. Changes will come into place on 1st April 2024

3.4 The rules and regulations at time of purchase apply to the deed holder unless the deed holder wishes to utilise the subsequent rules and regulation changes following this review. As a result, there will be differing rules and regulations in operation which are initially dependent on when a deed was purchased but which may be subsequently changed if the deed holder requests to follow the latest current set.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

4.1 The review of cemetery rules and regulations will ensure the Council rules and regulations are in line with industry best practice. The Council will ensure the rules and regulations are consistently applied to all families and individuals.

5.0 Environmental Implications

5.1 N/A.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

6.1 The Council could continue with the current rules and regulations.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

7.1 The Council decided to review the current rules and regulations. The recommendations propose that public consultation on proposed changes to the current rules and regulations is undertaken to ensure everybody has the option to have their say on the changes.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

8.1 Changes to the current rules and regulations will need to go out to public consultation. Following consultation, Cabinet will be asked to consider any responses to the public consultation and approve any changes.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 This report seeks to review the rules and regulations of the cemeteries. There are no direct financial implications for the Council associated with this report, however future financial implications maybe noted during the follow up report once the consultation has completed

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.)

10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 The statutory requirements in relation to local authority (“a burial authority”) maintained burial grounds are primarily contained within the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (“the Regulations”).

Under the Regulations a burial authority may do all such things as they consider necessary or desirable for the proper management, regulation and control of a cemetery. A burial authority may also enclose, lay out and embellish a cemetery in such manner as they think fit, and from time to time improve it, and shall keep the cemetery in good order and repair.

All local authority managed cemeteries are subject to standards and conditions known as "Cemetery Rules and Regulations". These are designed to inform all cemetery users about the management of the cemeteries and the reasonable requirements applicable to them. A burial authority may grant to a person, burial rights to a grave space or grave, on such terms and subject to such conditions as they think proper.

There are no specific statutory provisions that require a local authority/burial authority to follow a certain procedure when amending their Cemetery Rules and Regulations. It is however good practice to undertake a public consultation before deciding whether to implement any changes.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation of this report.)

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

11.1 Council agreed to review the rules and regulations at the cemeteries. Failure to undertake the review would have negative reputational consequences on the Council.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

12.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

13.1 None

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

14.1 None

Background Documents: None

CUSTOMER COPY
GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL
Gloucester Cemeteries
Rules and Regulations 1st August 2014

Memorials, blocks and vases of quarried material shall have the number of the grave space cut into the base of the headstone, in a position approved by the Manager.

Trade inscriptions other than the supplier's name and district will not be permitted.

1. Memorials, blocks any vases and bases associated with them must be of best natural quarried material only and all dowels shall be of galvanised iron. Memorials may not be of metal, concrete or synthetic material.
2. Grave spaces will be turfed at ground level as soon as possible after an interment.
3. Headstones shall not exceed 3 feet in height above ground level, 2 feet 6 inches in width and 5 inches in thickness.
 - a. Erection of headstone on stone bases not exceeding 2 feet 6 inches in length, 1 foot 6 inches in width and 5 inches in thickness is permitted.
 - b. All memorials without bases are to be fixed into a hardstone or precast foundation slab not less than 3 feet by 1 foot 6 inches size and not less than 3 inches below ground level. All memorials with bases to be fixed on a
 - c. Hardstone or precast foundation slab of the same dimensions. Ground anchor-fixing system to be used only.
 - d. Plants /flowers /shrubs/bulbs may be planted in a border 3 foot in width and 2 feet in depth which may be provided on the graveside of and adjoining the place in which any such headstone would normally be erected.
 - e. TREES ARE NOT ALLOWED. Gardens which are not maintained will be removed by the Cemetery Staff and replaced with turf.
4. Vases must not be larger than 12 inches by 10 inches. A memorial tablet must not exceed 18 inches by 12 inches by 4 inches.
5. Memorials will be admitted into the cemeteries during normal working hours providing arrangements have been made for the payment of the prescribed fees. Twenty-four hours prior notice must be given to the Manager before fixing any memorial.
6. Ornaments of any description including solar lights must be placed within the planting boundary 3ft x 2ft and are left entirely at the grave owners risk
7. Any planting exceeding 3ft x 2ft will be removed.

8. Kerb sets/Cover slabs and chippings are permitted. No chippings shall be placed on the grave without being enclosed within a kerb set. These must be installed by one of the City Councils Registered Monumental Masons and must be of natural quarried material. No homemade kerb sets, plastic/wooden fencing or metal memorials will be allowed. Any placed on the graves will be removed.
9. No hewing or dressing of memorials will be permitted within the cemeteries and all materials shall be conveyed in such a manner as will avoid annoyance to persons or damage to the grounds and walks. Monumental Masons must remove to a place directed by the Manager, all surplus earth, refuse and materials after fixing a memorial, leaving everything in a
 - a. clean and tidy condition.
10. All memorials shall be kept in repair by the owner and if not so kept, may be repaired or removed by the Council at its discretion and, where possible, at the expense of the owner.
11. The Council will exercise proper care during maintenance operations, but will not accept responsibility for any damage that these operations may cause.
12. The permission of the Manager must be obtained before photographing a funeral procession or graveside proceedings in a cemetery. No photography for commercial purposes may be carried out.

PLEASE NOTE

On occasions your family grave may be covered by a board in order that soil from a newly excavated grave can be collected but will be removed as soon as is practicable after the burial has taken place. Any flowers on the grave will be carefully placed to one side and replaced after the service.

Grave Owners Signature

Date.....

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CUSTOMER COPY

GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL

Gloucester Cemeteries

Rules and Regulations 2023

Memorials, blocks and vases of quarried material shall have the number of the grave space cut into the base of the headstone, in a position approved by the Manager.

Trade inscriptions other than the supplier's name and district will not be permitted.

1. Memorials, blocks any vases and bases associated with them must be of best natural quarried material only and all dowels shall be of galvanised iron. Memorials may not be of metal, concrete or synthetic material.
2. Grave spaces will be grass seeded once the grave space has settled at ground level approximately 12 months after interment.
3. Headstones shall not exceed 3 feet in height above ground level, 2 feet 6 inches in width and 5 inches in thickness.
 - a. Erection of headstone on stone bases not exceeding 2 feet 6 inches in length, 1 foot 6 inches in width and 5 inches in thickness is permitted.
 - b. All memorials without bases are to be fixed into a hardstone or precast foundation slab not less than 3 feet by 1 foot 6 inches size and not less than 3 inches below ground level. All memorials with bases to be fixed on a
 - c. Hardstone or precast foundation slab of the same dimensions. Ground anchor-fixing system to be used only.
 - d. Plants /flowers / bulbs may be planted in a border 3 foot (91.44 cm) in width and 2 feet (60.96cm) in depth in front if the headstone may be provided on the graveside of and adjoining the place in which any such headstone would normally be erected.
 - e. TREES AND SHRUBS ARE NOT ALLOWED. Gardens which are not maintained will be removed by the Cemetery Staff and replaced with turf.
4. Vases must not be larger than 12 inches by 10 inches. A memorial tablet must not exceed 18 inches by 12 inches by 4 inches.
5. Memorials will be admitted into the cemeteries during working hours 9:00AM – 4:30 PM Monday - Friday providing arrangements have been made for the approval and payment of the prescribed fees. Twenty-four hours prior notice must be given to the Manager before fixing any memorial.
6. Ornaments of any description including solar lights must be placed within the planting boundary 3ft x 2ft and are left entirely at the grave owners risk
7. Any planting or ornaments exceeding 3ft (91.44 cm) x 2ft(60.96cm) will be removed.
8. Kerb sets/Cover slabs and chippings are permitted. No chippings shall be placed on the grave without being enclosed within a stone mason approved kerb set. These must be installed by one of the City Councils Registered Monumental Masons and must be of natural quarried material. A 3ft (91.44 cm) by 2ft (60.96cm) concrete edge will be permitted not exceeding 6 inches in height but No homemade kerb sets of any other materials will not be allowed, Any edging placed on the graves that does not comply with the rules and regulations will be removed.
9. No hewing or dressing of memorials will be permitted within the cemeteries and all materials shall be conveyed in such a manner as will avoid annoyance to persons or damage to the grounds and walks. Monumental Masons must remove to a place directed by the Manager, all surplus earth, refuse and materials after fixing a memorial, leaving everything in a
 - a. clean and tidy condition.
10. All memorials shall be kept in repair by the owner and if not so kept, may be repaired or removed by the Council at its discretion and, where possible, at the expense of the owner.

CUSTOMER COPY

GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL

Gloucester Cemeteries

Rules and Regulations 2023

11. The Council will exercise proper care during maintenance operations but will not accept responsibility for any damage that these operations may cause.
12. The permission of the Manager must be obtained before photographing a funeral procession or graveside proceedings in a cemetery. No photography for commercial purposes may be carried out.
13. All floral tributes including plastic will remain in place for two weeks following the burial and then will be removed.

PLEASE NOTE

On occasions your family grave may be covered by a board in order that soil from a newly excavated grave can be collected but will be removed as soon as is practicable after the burial has taken place. Any flowers on the grave will be carefully placed to one side and replaced after the service. **We will need to access graves in all areas of the cemetery, on occasions we will need to manoeuvre machinery over the graves, and we will place protected boarding where possible.**

Please read through the rules and regulations of the cemetery and grave owner/owners please sign below

Grave Owners Signature

Date.....

Appendix 3

Rules and Regulations comparison for Gloucester cemeteries and local Cemeteries

Below is a summary table outlining the rules and regulations of Gloucester Cemeteries and the cemeteries within the local area, the table gives information of the rules and regulations that are in place within a lawn cemetery to allow operation and maintenance to take place as efficiently as possible

Summary Table	TC	FOD	CBC	WC	GCC
Surface will be turfed/seeded	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Stone mason approved kerbs sets only	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Size of section to allow for vases and ornaments	1.5ft x 1.5ft		1ft x 1.5ft	0	3ft x 2ft
Do you allow families to place their own Stone borders	N	N	N	N	N

Rules and regulations extract

Below is an extract from each of the cemeteries that are named above and supports the information in the table, you can find the full rules and regulations for all the above in appendices to the report

Gloucester Cemeteries (appendix 1)

Plants /flowers /shrubs/bulbs may be planted in a border 3 foot in width and 2 feet in depth which may be provided on the graveside of and adjoining the place in which any such headstone would normally be erected.

TREES ARE NOT ALLOWED. Gardens which are not maintained will be removed by the Cemetery Staff and replaced with turf. Ornaments of any description including solar lights must be placed within the planting boundary 3ft x 2ft and are left entirely at the grave owners risk

Any planting exceeding 3ft x 2ft will be removed.

Kerb sets/Cover slabs and chippings are permitted. No chippings shall be placed on the grave without being enclosed within a kerb set. These must be installed by one of the City Councils Registered Monumental Masons and must be of natural quarried material. No homemade kerb sets, plastic/wooden fencing or metal memorials will be allowed. Any placed on the graves will be removed.

Tewkesbury Cemetery (appendix 7)

The following conditions apply to a Lawn style cemetery:-

1. THE SURFACE OF THE GRAVE WILL BE TURFED OVER and mown by the cemetery staff, after the grave has been allowed to settle. You may put flowers or plants on the grave so long as they are contained within 450mm (1.5ft) of the memorial stone. The cemetery staff reserve the right to clear and turf over areas that become untidy.

2. MEMORIALS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IN THE AREA DESIGNATED AT THE TOP OF THE GRAVE. No memorials, planting, ornaments or kerbing will be permitted on the grassed surface and the cemetery staff will remove any items not within the area permitted in front of the headstone (see above).

Forest of Dean Cemetery (appendix 6)

The cemetery at Mile End and sections C, E and M at Yew Tree Brake are laid as a lawn and the graves should be left as flat grass. Grave mounds, grave edging, footstones, kerbs or flat stones are not allowed in these sections. Similarly the planting of trees, shrubs plants and bushes is prohibited although relatives may apply to plant these memorial items elsewhere in the cemetery. The Cemetery Manager without notice will remove any items, materials or plants contravening these regulations.

Cheltenham Borough Council (appendix 5)

Memorials must be of natural quarried stone, granite or marble. Please note, glass, metal, pottery, earthenware, artificial or reconstructed stone memorials of any kind is not allowed and a wooden headstone can be no more than 24"/61cm in height due to the greater risk of the material perishing over time and becoming unsafe. No Memorials can be erected without the Right to Erect a Memorial permit including refixing a headstone or installing a new mini kerb set. Permits are available through the Cheltenham Cemetery Office and application must be made by a NAMM/BRAMM approved Memorial Mason. All Memorials exceeding 18inches/46cm tall must be installed with a National Association of Memorial Masons approved ground anchor, without exception, by a professional Memorial Mason. This is essential for us as a Local Burial Authority as we have a legal obligation to ensure regulatory compliance and manage instances of unstable and dangerous memorials

Westerleigh Cemetery (appendix 4)

The placing of stone paving slabs, timber, etc around and leading to a grave space is strictly prohibited and shall be removed without prior notice on the grounds of health and safety and to satisfy the insurance underwriter of the Company.

Any plants, vases or any other item placed outside the grave space shall be removed without prior notice.

The planting and maintenance of the grave is the responsibility of the grave owner and the Company does not undertake any work other than moulding, turfing or seeding unless a separate agreement has been made with the Company and the appropriate fee paid.

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**SECTION A
GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. The following regulations have been designed and formulated for the control and use by The Company: Westerleigh Crematorium and Cemetery.
2. All correspondence should be addressed to:
Westerleigh Cemetery & Crematorium
Westerleigh Road, Westerleigh,
Bristol. BS37 8QP.

Telephone: 01179 374619

Email: westerleighcrematorium@westerleighgroup.co.uk
3. Crematorium/Cemetery opening times.

Gates - Weekdays April - Sept 0830 – 1900 hrs & Oct – March 0830 – 1630 hrs
Weekends & Bank Holidays - All year round 1000 – 1630 hrs

Office opening hours - 0900 to 1700 hrs Week days.
Closed Saturdays & Sundays
4. Children Those below 15 years of age, will not be permitted to enter the crematorium & cemetery grounds unless accompanied by a responsible adult.
5. Dogs Well behaved dogs are allowed but must be kept on a lead at all times.
6. Cycling is not permitted in the crematorium/cemetery grounds.
7. Vehicles. Cars are allowed in the crematorium/cemetery grounds, but drivers shall not exceed the speed limit of 5 mph. Cars must only be driven on the main carriageways. On no account may cars be driven on footpaths, grass areas or planted areas. All vehicles must be parked neatly to allow access to other vehicles.
8. The company shall not be held responsible for the safe keeping of any flowers, wreaths, plants or any other objects placed in the crematorium/cemetery grounds, nor any damage caused to memorials by high winds or storms, or other factors outside their control. An incident book is kept at the crematorium/cemetery office for recording thefts. The police will be informed of more serious crimes and if a high incidence of theft occurs.
9. All persons shall conduct themselves in a decent, quiet and orderly manner. The Manager is empowered to take such action as he/she may consider appropriate against any person who may:

Commit any nuisance in the crematorium/cemetery.
Wilfully create any disturbance in the crematorium/cemetery
Wilfully interfere with any interment or scatter taking place
Wilfully interfere with any grave or memorial or any plants, flowers or other such objects in the crematorium/cemetery.
Play at any game or sport in the crematorium/cemetery grounds.

10. Visitors to the crematorium/cemetery shall not unreasonably interrupt any employee at their duties or employ them to execute private works within the cemetery or extend to them any gratuity. All enquiries, complaints, and requests by members of the public must be made to the crematorium/cemetery office and not to workmen employed by the Company.
11. No person not being an officer or servant of the Company, or another person so authorised by or on behalf of the Company shall enter or remain in the crematorium/cemetery at an hour when it is closed to the public.
12. The taking of commercial photographs and filming is not permitted in the crematorium/cemetery except with the prior approval and permission of the Manager in writing and upon payment of the appropriate fee. Photographs of individual graves/plots by approval with the grave owner are allowed.
13. No person shall operate any sound equipment or play any musical instrument in the crematorium/cemetery grounds without the prior consent of the Manager. This should not discourage people from singing at the graveside or playing a favourite song quietly with the acknowledgement of the Manager.
14. The Company reserves the right to close the cemetery and crematorium grounds on any day should it be considered that circumstances so warrant.
15. The sale of goods, services, plants or other articles, the soliciting of orders or repair of memorials or for work connected with graves is strictly prohibited within the grounds of the crematorium/cemetery. All such services and requests should be met by the crematorium/cemetery office.
16. No employee of the Company is allowed to undertake privately, any work or favour of any kind nor receive any gratuity for the said work or favour.
17. The placing of stone paving slabs, timber, etc around and leading to a grave space is strictly prohibited and shall be removed without prior notice on the grounds of health and safety and to satisfy the insurance underwriter of the Company.
18. Any plants, vases or any other item placed outside the grave space shall be removed without prior notice.

Appendix 3

19. The planting and maintenance of the grave is the responsibility of the grave owner and the Company does not undertake any work other than moulding, turfing or seeding unless a separate agreement has been made with the Company and the appropriate fee paid.
20. All persons entering into the crematorium/cemetery grounds shall conform to all respects with the Company's regulations and shall be subject to the orders of the Manager and staff who have full power to exclude from the crematorium/cemetery any member of the public who may be deemed fit to exclude. Should it be necessary to use physical force to remove a subject the Police shall be summoned.
21. These rules and regulations shall be final.
22. The Company reserves the right to make any alterations and additions to the rules and regulations of the crematorium/cemetery at any time it feels fit.
23. Rubbish must be placed in the receptacles provided for this purpose. No household rubbish must be left or dumped in the crematorium/cemetery grounds.
24. The crematorium/cemetery fees are available from the office and are revised annually.

**SECTION B
REGULATIONS RELATING TO INTERMENTS**

1. Prior telephone booking is required for every interment, which must be confirmed in writing on the prescribed form/notice at least 48 hours before the appointed time of the interment. Saturday, Sunday and public holiday burials can take place by special arrangement and the payment of the appropriate fee at that time. This notice period may be reduced on the Manager's discretion.
2. The application for interment must contain full details of the deceased, the proposed interment, the grave to be used and the signature of the owner of the exclusive right of burial, if applicable, and be accompanied by the appropriate fee for interment.
3. The hours prescribed for interments are from 10.00 am to 3.00 p.m. Interments may take place outside these hours at the discretion of the Manager.
4. No grave or other place of burial in which the Exclusive Right of Burial has been granted shall be opened for interment without the written consent of the registered owner of the rights of burial. The registered owner is that person whose name appears in the register of graves held at the crematorium/cemetery office. Should this person be deceased, the next of kin, personal representative or executor must complete a statutory declaration. This must be delivered along with the interment notice not less than 48 hours before the burial is due to take place. Failure to provide all documentation may cause for the interment to be postponed until such time that the relevant documents can be produced.
5. The Registrar's Certificate of disposal or the Coroners Order for burial must be delivered to the crematorium office before the burial can legally take place. Failure to deliver this certificate will result in postponement of the burial until such time the certificate can be produced. (Section 1, Births and Deaths Registration Act 1926 and amendment)
6. In the case of a non-viable foetus a notice of interment and the Medical Practitioners or Midwife's certificate of delivery will be required.
7. All Fees relating to interments should be made payable to "Westerleigh Crematorium". Payment must be delivered before the burial takes place unless an account in the name of the Funeral Director has been agreed by the crematorium office.
8. The net outside dimensions of the coffin must be entered accurately on the interment notice or given to the crematorium/cemetery office in writing at least 48 hours before the intended burial. The Company will not be held responsible or liable for any delay or accident which may occur as a result of such dimensions being omitted from or entered incorrectly on the notice of interment.
9. Any form of religious service may be used but any other ceremony is subject to the approval of the Manager. Alternatively, the coffin may be committed without a service.

Appendix 3

10. The Manager is authorised to refuse entry into the chapel any coffin, which in their opinion may be a hazard to public health. (Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984).
11. The Funeral Director, or persons effecting the burial must provide sufficient staff to convey the coffin into the chapel and for the lowering of the coffin into the grave, unless prior warning has been given to the office and the appropriate fee paid.
12. Every deceased brought into the crematorium/cemetery for interment shall be contained in a suitable coffin. No coffin shall be accepted unless it bears adequate particulars of the identity of the deceased person therein.
13. The Company will not be held responsible for any error or consequences which may arise by reason of any inaccuracy in or late receipt of a notice of interment and will accept orders and instructions by telephone only at the risk of the sender.
14. All graves without exception will be dug by persons employed or contracted by the Company.
15. All telephone bookings must be confirmed in writing immediately.
16. All requests for witnessed backfills must be made at the time of booking the burial or at least 48 hours before the interment is to take place. It cannot be guaranteed that the backfill will be witnessed due to adverse weather conditions or in areas where a breach of Health and Safety law will occur if a backfill was to take place.
17. Areas of particular environmental value will be developed as suitable burial grounds. This includes existing woodland areas in the cemetery as well as creating new specific woodland burial plots in the future.

Exhumations

1. No human remains will be removed from any grave after committal without the proper authority from the Home Office and /or the Ecclesiastical Court.
2. In the first instance a request for exhumation should be made to the manager of the cemetery before any application for licence or faculty is made.
3. The Exhumation will be carried out in strict accordance with Statutory provisions and any conditions imposed by the Secretary of State for the Home Office or the Ecclesiastical Court and any restrictions added by the Local Area Health Officer. Nothing in these regulations should be construed as authorising the disturbance of human remains without the appropriate authority. Human remains within these regulations is deemed to include cremated remains.

Cremated Remains

1. The interment of cremated remains will only be permitted (and recorded in the burial registers) when carried out in the presence of the manager or their authorised staff and only after the necessary documentation has been completed. The scattering or interment of cremated remains is only permitted in certain areas within the grounds and the above procedure needs to be adhered to also.
2. The certificate for Disposal of Cremated Remains issued by the Crematorium where the cremation took place must be delivered to the office before the interment can take place. Failure to deliver such Certificate will result in postponement of the interment until such time as the certificate can be produced
3. Regulation B, 3 of these regulations includes cremated remains.

Section C
The Purchase of New Graves

1. The Exclusive Right of Burial in a private grave is 50 or 75 years from the date of purchase. Grantees (grave owners) should inform the crematorium/cemetery office immediately of a change of address.
2. The Exclusive Right of Burial entitles the deed holder to determine who is buried in the grave and whether a memorial can be erected on the grave (subject to the permission of the Manager).
3. New graves will be available for selection subject to the approval of the Manager and payment of the appropriate fee.
4. Plans showing the grave spaces are kept by the crematorium/cemetery office and may be viewed during normal office hours.
5. A private grave can be reserved on payment of the appropriate fee. This fee will not include the interment costs which will be charged at the time of burial.
6. Any transfer of ownership of exclusive right of burial will be subject to the production of satisfactory evidence of title and the approval of the Manager. Such transfer must be registered in the records of the Cemetery and the deed of right of burial must be produced for endorsement by the Manager and the appropriate transfer fee paid.
7. A memorial may be erected on the reserved grave before any interments have taken place, however a removal and replacement cost will be levied at the time of burial.
8. Exclusive Rights of Burial will not be granted to a funeral director or monumental mason or any employee, director or partner in such a firm unless satisfactory evidence is provided to the Manager that the grave is required for the individual use only and not for the purposes of business.
9. The Company reserves the right of access over all grave spaces and the right to temporarily remove without notice any memorial, potted plants or frame from any grave to facilitate the digging of another grave for the purposes of interment or exhumations.
10. The size of graves are 76cm x 1.98m.
11. No planting of flowers, erection of frames or other markers is permitted outside these maximum dimensions. The Company reserves the right to remove any items placed outside the dimensions of the grave space without notice.

Section D
Regulations concerning Cremations

1. A cremation can only legally take place when the crematorium office has the Registrars Certificate for Disposal or a Coroners Order for Cremation, Forms A & B and the Medical Referee has signed Form 10 to allow the cremation to take place. Without these forms in no circumstances will a cremation be carried out. (Cremation Regulations 1930 Regulations 6,7,8)
2. The above forms must be received by the Crematorium Office at least 48 hours prior to the service taking place. Failure to provide these forms will cause the cremation to be postponed until such time that these can be produced.
3. The forms will be submitted on those provided by the crematorium and the appropriate fee paid before the cremation takes place, unless an account arrangement has been made with the Manager.
4. The maximum dimensions of a coffin to be loaded into the cremator can be confirmed by ringing the Crematorium office.
5. The number of mourners permitted to enter the crematory for a witnessed cremation is six persons. This can only take place with the prior consent of the Manager and at his or her discretion.
6. The Funeral Director, or persons effecting the burial must provide sufficient staff to convey the coffin into the chapel, unless prior warning has been given to the office and the appropriate fee paid.
7. Every deceased brought to the crematorium must be contained in a suitable coffin. No coffin will be accepted unless it bears adequate particulars of the identity of the deceased therein.
8. The Crematorium will not be held responsible for any error or consequences which may arise by reason of any inaccuracy in or late receipt of a notice of interment and will accept orders or instructions by telephone only at the risk of the sender.
9. The crematorium will store the resulting cremated remains for a short period of time before they are scattered, unless instructions to the contrary are given at the time of applying for the cremation.
10. If no instructions are given regarding the use of floral tributes, they will remain in the floral tribute area at the side of the chapel for 2 nights after the cremation. After this period the flowers will then be disposed of.
11. Any music requirements must be communicated to the crematorium office at least 24 hours in advance. If pre-recorded music is to be played, each piece of music must be clearly marked. The crematorium accepts no responsibility for copied or poor quality recordings or damage to worn out CDs or mistakes due to the inadequate labelling of pieces of music.
12. The cremation of body parts is permitted on the completion of the appropriate forms and the payment of the appropriate fee.
13. The cremation of a non-viable foetus is permitted with the production of the Medical Practitioners or Midwife's certificate of delivery.

Section E
Regulations relating to Memorials

1. All memorials must be supplied and fixed by the crematorium/cemetery company or by the original funeral director by prior agreement with the crematorium/cemetery company. No external stone masons will be permitted to carry out work in the cemetery.
2. No memorial may be fixed in the cemetery without the approval of the Manager. Unauthorised memorials will be removed out of the cemetery at the grave owners expense. All suitable styles and materials will be provided for your choice.
3. Memorials will only be erected over graves in which the Exclusive Right of Burial has been purchased.
4. Inscriptions can contain relaxed expressions such as “Mum” and “Dad”, nicknames etc. The only regulation to this policy is that no inscription should contain words or sentiments which may be offensive to another visitor in the opinion of the Manager.
5. Should the registered owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial be deceased, a transfer of ownership must be arranged before any approval for works to any memorial can be given.
6. All memorials erected are maintained at the expense of the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial of that particular grave. Where memorials split, crack or become dangerous, the grave owner shall be required to have that memorial repaired, refixed or relevelled so that it shall be safe at all times.
7. The company reserves the right without notice to:
 - a) Remove or make safe any memorial which in their opinion is a danger or could become a danger to any person in the cemetery or crematorium grounds.
 - b) To remove temporarily any memorial or part of the memorial if such a course of action appears to the Manager to be desirable.
 - c) To recover all reasonable costs in making any memorial safe from the grantee or their representative
8. No memorial should be erected until at least 12 months after an interment has taken place, unless that interment took place in a vault space or mini grave. The company will not be responsible for levelling memorials where the grantee has decided to erect a memorial before 12 months.
9. During the first 12 months after the interment the grave will be mounded and topped up regularly to deal with the settlement of the backfill. Potted plants and cut flowers only should be placed on the grave during the first 12 months so that they can be removed temporarily to allow additional earth to be placed upon the grave space.
10. Every memorial design or idea for commemoration will be considered by the company and that choice will be provided if it is reasonable for the company to do so.
11. Memorial benches are permitted only if a grave space is purchased for it to be placed on.

Date of Operation

These regulations shall come into force from 1 November 2006.

MEMORIAL REGULATIONS FOR CHELTENHAM AND CHARLTON KINGS CEMETERIES

A temporary wooden marker bearing only the name, date of death and age of the deceased is permitted on burial plots for a **maximum period of twelve months** following an interment. As the burial authority, Cheltenham Borough Council retains the right to remove any temporary markers after the twelve months have ended and the right to refuse the installation of any memorial or temporary marker that is deemed unsuitable.

A permit application must be submitted for any memorial, including mini/child kerb sets, erected on a grave, whether this is a first memorial, additional inscription, renovation or replacement memorial, for which a fee may be payable. When a headstone is refixed after a renovation or additional inscription, an anchor system must be fitted regardless if it did not originally have one.

Stonemasons recommend waiting 12 months before headstones are erected, because we do not tamp our graves and headstones that are fitted after 6 months are more likely to move even with the anchor systems. Therefore allowing the grave to sit through all four seasons should allow the ground to settle and help prevent movement.

Following a burial the surface of the grave will be levelled but giving allowance for the ground to settle in the future, grass seed spread and, once established, the grass will be cut by the Grounds Maintenance staff. Please contact the office should the grave require a top up or removal of soil.

The planting of small trees, shrubs or roses is not permitted.

MATERIALS

All memorials must be of natural quarried stone, granite or marble. Please note, glass, metal, pottery, earthenware, artificial or reconstructed stone memorials of any kind is **not** allowed and a wooden headstone can be no more than 24"/61cm in height due to the greater risk of the material perishing over time and becoming unsafe.

No Memorials can be erected without the Right to Erect a Memorial permit including refixing a headstone or installing a new mini kerb set. Permits are available through the Cheltenham Cemetery Office and application must be made by a Namm/BRamm approved Memorial Mason. All Memorials exceeding 18inches/46cm tall must be installed with a National Association of Memorial Masons approved ground anchor, without exception, by a professional Memorial Mason. This is essential for us as a Local Burial Authority as we have a legal obligation to ensure regulatory compliance and manage instances of unstable and dangerous memorials.

ALL STONEMASONS MUST BE COVERED BY PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

Before a permit can be issued, a copy of Memorial Mason's current Public Liability Insurance Certificate must be submitted to Cheltenham Bereavement Services with updated certificates forwarded as appropriate. When onsite, the stonemason must be able to present the issued permit to a member of Cheltenham Bereavement Services if requested. The tear-off slip at the bottom of the permit must be returned to the Cemetery office, preferably within 5 days of erecting the memorial.

A permit will not be issued for an application for any memorial not meeting the above criteria.

All fees are required prior to the issue of a permit and the erection of the memorial or the cutting of an inscription cannot take place until a permit has been issued to the stonemason. As the Burial Authority, we aim to process this application within three weeks of receipt, providing the application is complete and correct.

If you have any questions regarding the above or the fees payable, please contact Cheltenham Bereavement Services at Cheltenham Cemetery on 01242 244 245.

SIZES

Overall size of Memorial MUST NOT EXCEED and includes the foundation and kerb set if appropriate

- ❑ **LAWN GARDEN GRAVE** available at Cheltenham Cemetery
Headstone Height 3ft 6ins/107cm Mini Kerb Set Height 6ins/15cm*
Maximum Total Length front to back 3ft 6ins/107cm Width 3ft/91cm
- ❑ **TRADITIONAL GRAVE** available at Charlton Kings and Cheltenham Cemeteries
*Headstone Height 5ft/152cm**
Length front to back 2ft 6ins/76cm Width 3ft/91cm
Kerb set or ledger stone must not exceed
Maximum Total Length including that of the Headstone and Kerb Set 7ft/213cm Width 3ft/91cm
Height 12ins/30cm
- ❑ **CHILD'S GRAVE** available at Cheltenham Cemetery
*Headstone Height 3ft/91cm**
Width 2ft/61cm Length front to back 2ft 6ins/76cm
Kerb set must not exceed
Maximum Total Length including that of the Headstone and Kerb Set 4ft/122cm
Width 2ft/61cm Height 6ins/15cm
- ❑ **CREMATED REMAINS GRAVE**
 available at Cheltenham Beech Walk, Y(A), Y(B) and Charlton Kings 10A, 10B, 10C, 10D
TABLET
Length front to back 18ins/46cm Width 18ins/46cm Tablet Height 6ins/15cm
VASE
Width 12ins/30cm square Vase Height 12ins/30cm
- ❑ **CREMATED REMAINS PLOT** available at Cheltenham Cemetery A1 and B1 only
HEADSTONE *Height 2ft/61cm Width 18ins/46cm Length front to back 18ins/46cm*
TABLET *Height 6ins/15cm Width/Length 18ins/46cm square*
VASE *Height 12ins/30cm Width/Length 12ins/30cm square*
- ❑ **CREMATED REMAINS PLOT** available at Charlton Kings Garden of Remembrance only
TABLET *Height 6ins/15cm Length/Width 18ins/46cm square*
VASE *Height 12ins/30cm Length/Width 12ins/30cm square*

*** if a wooden headstone is being erected the maximum permitted height is 24"/61cm due to the greater risk of the material perishing and becoming unsafe**

VERY IMPORTANT GRAVE INFORMATION

On occasion, to maintain staff safety and ensure service delivery, the authority reserves the right to alter the position of graves, purchased in reserve or not, prior to the initial interment taking place. This would be due to unstable, non-cohesive, ground conditions becoming unworkable during periods of adverse weather.

The sometimes necessary reselection is done to ensure the service does not breach The Local Authority Cemetery Order 1977 (LACO 77), and the Charter For The Bereaved (Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management), while carrying out the grave digging process, and to ensure staff welfare is maintained at all times. The grave owner(s) will be made aware of any alterations made and offered options with regards the reselection process. Every effort will be made to accommodate the wishes of the grave owner(s).

Grave owners should be made aware that, on occasion, spoil from neighbouring excavations may be placed upon their grave, to facilitate the grave digging process. This is unavoidable and essential. Every effort will be made to ensure that disruption to any grave is kept to a minimum. In certain weather conditions there may be unavoidable footprints or tyre tracks left, although we will endeavour to make this right. Any objects placed on a grave are done so at the owners own risk, and the authority accepts no liability for loss of items. The authority recommends that the grave owner(s) takes out insurance on Cemetery approved grave memorials. Insurance information can be found by contacting approved memorial masons. The authority will investigate any damage caused to memorials, but if the cause of damage cannot be ascertained, and blame apportioned, the authority will not cover any repair costs to said memorial.



TERMS & CONDITIONS AND GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF MILE END AND YEW TREE BRAKE CEMETERIES

CEMETERY MANAGER: Robert Gittings Tel. 01594 832848
E-mail: rob.gittings@fdean.gov.uk

CEMETERY OPENING HOURS: Summer: 9.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. (BST)
Winter: 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. (GMT)

ESTABLISHED

The cemeteries were established under the Public Health (Interments) Act 1879 by the former West and East Dean Rural Councils and are now under the management and control of the Burial Authority, the Forest of Dean District Council.

BURIALS

Portions of ground have been consecrated for burials according to the rites of Church of England, Roman Catholic Church and Non-Conformist Churches.

NOTICE OF INTERMENT

The Notice of Interment form **must** be submitted by the Undertaker with **three clear working days** of notice before the proposed interment. The form should be sent to the Burial Records and Administrative Officer, Land Legal and Property Department, Forest of Dean District Council, High Street, Coleford, Gloucestershire GL16 8HG.

The Undertakers should contact the Cemetery Manager directly at the Cemetery to book date and time of funeral. For multiple burials, the Exclusive Right must be purchased at the first interment, and produced to the Cemetery Manager when arranging subsequent re-openings. The burial section and size of grave required shall be confirmed in writing giving three clear working days' notice prior to the proposed interment.

FEES, DATES AND HOURS OF INTERMENT

Invoices for fees and charges are issued as soon as possible after the funeral. For current rates see applicable table of charges which are available from the Cemetery Manager or Land Legal and Property Department. No interment can take place on Sundays, Christmas Day or Good Friday, **or on any statutory Bank Holidays**.

During British Summer Time no burial will be allowed before **10.00 a.m.** or after **1.00 p.m.** on weekdays, nor after **11.00 a.m.** on Saturdays. There will be an additional charge for burials taking place on a Saturday.

During Greenwich Mean Time no burial will be allowed before **10.00 a.m.** or after **1.00 p.m.** on weekdays, nor after **11.00 a.m.** on Saturdays. There will be an additional charge for burials taking place on a Saturday.

Due to working arrangements, interments resulting in the Cemetery Manager's staff working beyond

their normal working hours may result in additional payments at overtime rates

SITE OF GRAVE

The Burial Authority, the Forest of Dean District Council, must approve the selection of grave space. Enquiries should be made to the Cemetery Manager regarding such allocations.

DISPOSAL CERTIFICATE

The Registrar's Certificate for Disposal or the Coroner's Order for Burial must be given to the Burial Authority, the Forest of Dean District Council, or handed to the Cemetery Manager or Cemetery Attendant before interment takes place.

EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF BURIAL

Application forms are obtainable from the Cemetery Manager, Undertakers and Council Offices. All applicants are advised to visit the Cemetery and liaise with the Cemetery Manager when selecting a plot, and he will allocate them a grave/ashes space number.

A purchaser or owner for the time being of the Exclusive Right of Burial in a grave space shall not dispose of such Right without consent of the Burial Authority, the Forest of Dean District Council, and every transfer of such Right shall be prepared by the Burial Authority, the Forest of Dean District Council, at the expense of the applicant.

Where a double depth grave is requested, Exclusive Right of Burial must be obtained.

(Note: It is not the grave space, which is purchased, but the Exclusive Right to Burial in that space)

UNPURCHASED GRAVES OPEN TO PURCHASE

No un-purchased grave shall be re-opened for another interment within two years of the burial of a person therein unless to bury another member of the family. Where the Exclusive Right of Burial in such earthen grave space has not been granted, such Right may be purchased at any time during two years from the date of the first interment.

A single depth grave cannot be re-opened except for the interment of cremated remains. The Exclusive Right of Burial **must** have been purchased.

CERTIFICATE OF GRANT

At every opening of a grave where an Exclusive Right of Burial has been purchased, either the Grant Certificate of such Exclusive Right or the written consent of the owner or his or her legal representative **must** be produced to the Burial Authority, the Forest of Dean District Council, when giving notice of interment to the Cemetery Manager when booking the funeral.

Where the Grant Certificate has been mislaid, a fee may be charged for searching office records to prove Exclusive Rights of Burial. Copies of lost certificates can be purchased by contacting the Bereavement Officer.

NON-RESIDENTS

Prescribed extra charges shall be payable where a person to be interred was not a resident of the Forest of Dean District Council administrative area, in accordance with fees and charges approved and published from time to time by the Burial Authority. A table of charges is available on request from the Cemetery Manager or the Bereavement Officer and is also available on our web site, www.fdean.gov.uk.

GRAVES

The size of the graves is 1950 mm x 675 mm (6'6" x 2') approx. and is dug by a person appointed by the Authority. No grave shall be excavated beyond a depth of 2400 mm (8 feet), and no coffin buried within 900 mm (3 feet) of ground level. If more than one body is interred in the same grave, then a minimum depth of 150 mm (6") of earth shall be left between coffins. When a re-opening of a grave is requested, the Grant Certificate of the Exclusive Right must be produced to the Cemetery Manager, prior to the event.

An additional charge will be made for graves exceeding the sizes given above.

It will sometimes be necessary to use a grave space for the placing of a box to hold soil removed when an adjacent grave is being prepared. This is common practice within grave excavation procedures. Any disruption should be kept to a minimum and the grave fully reinstated following the interment.

The cemetery at Mile End and sections C, E and M at Yew Tree Brake are laid as a lawn and the graves should be left as flat grass. Grave mounds, grave edging, footstones, kerbs or flat stones are not allowed in these sections. Similarly the planting of trees, shrubs plants and bushes is prohibited although relatives may apply to plant these memorial items elsewhere in the cemetery. The Cemetery Manager without notice will remove any items, materials or plants contravening these regulations.

The maintenance of the graves in the lawn sections is carried out by the Burial Authority, the Forest of Dean District Council, and this consists in the main of grass cutting, 'topping up' subsiding graves, removing dead flowers and generally keeping them neat and tidy.

Note: Following an interment the Burial Authority will carry out any 'topping up' of a grave that has settled (up to a period of six months after the interment). Further requests to 'top up' will be carried out on payment of a fee.

COFFINS

Wooden or biodegradable coffins only shall be used when the Exclusive Right of Burial in the grave space is not purchased.

APPLICATION TO ERECT A MEMORIAL, PLAQUE, VASE OR ADD AN INSCRIPTION TO A MEMORIAL etc.

The Exclusive Right of Burial **must** be purchased before a Memorial can be erected. The applicable form, giving correct attention to size, including the proposed wording, and sketch of Headstone, has to be submitted to the Burial Authority, the Forest of Dean District Council, for approval. Headstone sizes are as follows – maximum **762 mm** high, **610 mm** wide, (2'6" high, 2'0" wide), minimum **660 mm** high, **533 mm** wide (2'2" high, 1'9" wide) and can be **76 mm** or **102 mm** (3" or 4") thick. The Headstone base must be **762 mm x 305 mm x 102 mm** (2'6" x 12" x 4") thick. **All work must comply with the recommendations and Code of Practice of the British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons**

No Memorial can be erected without the formal application and written approval from the Burial Authority and Monumental Masons and others must advise the Cemetery Manager of their intention to erect the memorial in accordance with the Council's approval. **The installer of a memorial erected without permission and prior notification will be asked to remove such memorial immediately and carry out all reinstatement.** Forms stating the permissible types of Memorial can be obtained from the Cemetery Manager, or the Forest of Dean District Council offices.

No Memorial shall be constructed of brick, plaster, wood, Bath stone, Caen stone or other soft stone or artificial stone, zinc, iron or metal. **All headstones must be granite and marble only and have the section and grave no** Hand cut or Sandblasted and painted on rear of headstone in Arial font in 15mm high letters 20mm from base of stone and 20mm from left hand edge. The name of the sculptor may not be placed.

Memorials are to be kept in repair by the owner. There must be no identification marks or names of the mason. **Photo plaques are allowed at the discretion of the Burial Authority.**

Memorials can only be erected, repaired or removed during the working hours of the Cemetery Manager and his permission to carry out memorial work must be obtained prior to entering the cemetery.

STONE VASE OR TABLET

The Exclusive Right **must** be purchased, and the application form to erect or place a Memorial must be approved. Stone vases shall not exceed 200 mm (8") in height, lettering must be of a high standard, and they may only be placed at the base of the Headstone and are not allowed anywhere else on the grave. All flowers shall be placed in vases. Bell glasses, shells, glass and wire work of any kind is **not** allowed and will be removed by the Cemetery Manager.

Personal items such as teddy bears, ornaments, toy windmills and the like are placed entirely at the owners risk on memorials and the Burial Authority will not be responsible for any damage to or loss of such items. The Cemetery Manager will remove any of these items placed on the lawn or grave area.

All work must be by a contractor approved by the Forest of Dean District Council and to the recommendations and Code of Practice of the British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons

GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE

Mile End Cemetery

This is the area where cremated remains are interred or scattered. There are two sections available for this purpose. The older of the two sections allow for the erection of tablets and vases and application to erect is through a stone mason approved by the Burial Authority.

The new section, E, is designated to Desk Vase Tablets and family 'rose' plots where application to supply and fix is made directly through the Forest of Dean District Council and also for the erection of tablets and vases with application made through a registered mason.

A family 'rose' plot allows up to six interments (dependent on form of interment). All other plots in the Garden of Remembrance allow a maximum of two interments.

Yew Tree Brake Cemetery

This is the area where cremated remains are either interred or scattered.

Memorial bronze plaques are used for commemorative purpose in the kerbed section of the Garden of Remembrance and desk vase tablets in the un-kerbed section. Application to supply and fix bronze memorial plaques and desk vase tablets is made directly through the Forest of Dean District Council.

If provision needs to be made to reserve a plaque space for a relative in the future, the adjacent space has to be reserved at the present time and reservation fee paid (which will include the Exclusive Right).

Note: The Exclusive Right of Burial must be purchased before pot based memorials can be erected.

GARDEN OF MEMORIES – GRANITE PLAQUES

This is an area in each cemetery reserved for the pouring of ashes in unmarked plots. No record will be kept of the exact location. There is no Exclusive Right of Burial in this section. The Woodland Garden of Memories at Yew Tree Brake is planted with wild flowers and grasses. Grass cutting of this area will therefore be limited.

Granite plaques may be erected in memory of the bereaved. Plaques may be either circular or rectangular in shape. It is not a requirement that the deceased remains are interred or strewn in this section when purchasing a granite plaque. Granite plaques are set into Forest stone and are supplied and fixed directly through the Forest of Dean District Council.

CREMATED REMAINS

The strewing/scattering of cremated remains is restricted to designated areas within the cemetery and may only take place with the approval of the Burial Authority.

CONDUCT OF VISITORS

Visitors are requested to keep to the footpaths at all times except when visiting a grave and to refrain from touching shrubs, plants and flowers. No smoking or alcohol is allowed in the cemetery.

ENTRY

No person shall be permitted to enter or leave the Cemetery except by the proper entrance gates.

CHILDREN

Children under 12 years of age will not be allowed within the Cemetery except under the care and supervision of a responsible person.

MOTOR VEHICLES/BICYCLES

All vehicles must park in the car park, unless in funeral processions, or to enable an invalid to visit the grave. All parking is at owner's risk. Bicycles must be left in a space near the gates at the owner's risk.

PERAMBULATORS, PUSHCHAIRS

Perambulators and pushchairs should whenever practicable be left on the footpaths.

DOGS

No dogs are allowed except guide dogs.

LITTER

Dead flowers, paper and other refuse must be deposited in the receptacle provided.

GRATUITIES

No person employed by the Burial Authority, the Forest of Dean District Council, is allowed to receive any gratuity.

WILDLIFE

The cemeteries are set in rural surroundings with squirrels, rabbits and other wildlife being occasional visitors. Floral tributes are placed at owner's risk.

WREATHS

Cemetery staff will remove funeral wreaths two weeks after date of interment.

Wreaths in the Garden of Memories should be placed in the space provided and not on the area where pouring has taken place.

Christmas wreaths will be removed during the last week of January. All Christmas items, which family/friends wish to keep, should be removed by this date.

REGULATIONS

The Regulations of Her Majesty's Secretary of State under the Burial Acts shall be deemed to be incorporated herewith. The Burial Authority, the Forest of Dean District Council, reserves the right from time to time to make alterations in the foregoing Rules, consistent with the Burial Acts.

April 2021

Cemetery: Tewkesbury/Bishops Cleeve (delete as appropriate)
Enquiries to Cemetery and Asset Management Support Officer - Tel (01684) 272184

LAWN CEMETERY

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING SECTION CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING

The following conditions apply to a Lawn style cemetery:-

1. THE SURFACE OF THE GRAVE WILL BE TURFED OVER and mown by the cemetery staff, after the grave has been allowed to settle. You may put flowers or plants on the grave so long as they are contained within 450mm (1.5ft) of the memorial stone. The cemetery staff reserve the right to clear and turf over areas that become untidy.

2. MEMORIALS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IN THE AREA DESIGNATED AT THE TOP OF THE GRAVE. No memorials, planting, ornaments or kerbing will be permitted on the grassed surface and the cemetery staff will remove any items not within the area permitted in front of the headstone (see above).

3. THE CHOICE OF MEMORIAL IS LIMITED TO A HEADSTONE AND/OR VASE in marble, granite or other natural stone. The size of the memorial shall not exceed the following dimensions:-

a. Headstone	Height	900mm
	Width	800mm
	Thickness	100mm
b. Vases		300 x 250 x 230mm

I (name in full) _____

of (address) _____

have read and understood the special conditions detailed above which apply to the Lawn Cemetery. I also understand that all Rights granted in respect of any memorial will expire on the same date as the Right of Burial (ie. 100 years) and that there is no obligation on my part to erect either form of memorial.

Name of Deceased _____ Grave Number _____

Signed _____ (signature of applicant)

Dated _____

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	10 January 2024
Subject:	Events and Festivals Report on 2023 & Plan for 2024-25		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	Yes
Contact Officer:	Philip Walker, Head of Culture and Leisure Services		
	Email:	Philip.walker@gloucester.gov.uk	Tel: 39-6355
Appendices:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of Festivals and Events activity 2023 2. Proposed Civic and Cultural Events & Festivals 2024-25 3. Funding Processes – Festivals & Events 4. Outdoor Events Fund – Recommendations for Funding 2024 		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide a Review of Festivals and Events activity 2023.
- 1.2 To agree the Proposed Civic and Cultural Events & Festivals events and budget 2024-25.
- 1.3 To set out the approach taken to funding festivals and events activities.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that the:
 - (1) review of festivals and events activity 2023 be noted;
 - (2) proposed events for 2024 subject to full Council approval of budget for 2024-25 be approved;
 - (3) approach taken to funding festivals and events be noted;
 - (4) funding allocation of the Outdoor Events Fund for 2024-25 be approved, subject to full Council approval of budget for 2024-25.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

3.1 Overview of 2023 festivals activity

The programme of outdoor festivals and events that took place in 2023 was bolstered by civic celebrations for the Coronation of King Charles III and a return of the Men's Tour of Britain stage which had been cancelled in 2022. The prestigious Three Choirs

Festival came to Gloucester in June and opened with civic parades and a lunch event in Blackfriars Priory. After two years of planning the Hi! Street Fest event took place in July encompassing a significant number of community participants and workshops which resulted in giant puppets parading through Kings Square and the gate streets alongside small performances throughout the city. Regular annual events such as Gloucester Goes Retro and Gloucester Day had developed creative content featuring new areas with animations in Kings Square. The Bright Nights programme has also seen developments incorporating three community led events into one day to maximise on the offer and consolidate resources for the events and partners. A further programme of Bright Nights activities is in the pipeline but is yet to be announced for February 2024. (A full review of events is detailed in Appendix 1).

3.2 Civic Events 2023

A successful programme of Civic Events took place with the addition of a presentation of the Lamprey pie for the Coronation as well as Union Jacks flown across the gate streets, which were both funded and supported by the council. Civic dignitaries from the three counties were invited to the opening of the Three Choirs Festival where they paraded from the Guildhall to the Cathedral and back to Blackfriars where a lunch was provided.

3.3 Support of other activity in 2023

The council supported a range of other festivals through funding and financial contributions and other means in 2023 including: Jamaican Independence Day, City Voices, Gloucester Day, Gloucester History Festival, Pride In Gloucestershire, Three Choirs Festival and Strike a Light. The New Projects and Commissions fund distributed £25,820 to support new activities that without the support of the city council would not have been delivered.

3.4 Festivals and Events budget for 2024-25

The anticipated revenue budget for the delivery of the 2024-25 city events programme is £215,000 (subject to full council approval of 2024-25 budget). The costs of the programme are higher than this budget, however, with a mixed-model of public investment and private sponsorship, careful business-planning, strategic commissioning, exploiting commercial opportunities and working collaboratively across the city and beyond means that an ambitious city events programme is still achievable.

Specifically, part of this budget (£150,000 per year, for 3 years) has been identified as crucial match funding for an application to Arts Council England (ACE) Project Grants – Place Partnership strand. As an ACE Priority Place Gloucester is in a strong position to be successful in this application. The bid is being submitted by Gloucester Culture Trust, and if successful, would lever an additional £500k of funding over three years into the city. The council will administer and retain the match funding amount, with the activity the events' team delivers becoming part of a wider programme of work with partners across the city. See 3.7.

The Festivals and Events budget is managed by the council's Cultural Development team and includes an income target to help off-set costs. It includes funds allocated to the city's flagship events – Tall Ships Festival, Gloucester Goes Retro and Bright Nights. The breakdown of allocation of the funds is shown in Appendix 2.

3.5 Civic Events 2024-25

There is a Civic Events budget of £5,000 allocated to support the annual programme of civic events in 2024. This will include a Flag Raising event for Armed Forces Day & lighting the beacon for D-Day Commemorations, Gloucester Day, Remembrance Sunday, Mayor's Christmas Party, and the Mayor's Annual service

3.6 Proposed calendar of civic events for 2024-25 (where dates are known)

Date	Event
6 th June	D-Day Commemorations
29 th June	Armed Forces Day
7 th September	Gloucester Day
10 th November	Remembrance Sunday
16 th November	Christmas Lights Switch on
December	Mayor's Christmas Party

3.7 Together Gloucester (Place Partnership Bid)

As mentioned in 3.4, £150,000 of the annual Festivals and Events budget for the next three financial years has been identified in a funding application to Arts Council England Project Grants – Place Partnership strand. This application is led by Gloucester Culture Trust with GCC named as key strategic partner and is our main fundraising activity for 2023-24. The application is for a three-year city-wide programme called Together Gloucester.

Together Gloucester aims to put citizens at the centre of cultural decision making, so that local people have a say in what happens in their city and ensure cultural events reflect Gloucester's identity. The programme is formed through a partnership between cross-sector organisations including Gloucester Community Building Collective, Active Gloucestershire, Gloucester BID, Gloucestershire Gateway Trust, University of Gloucestershire, The Music Works, Gloucester Voices and Young Gloucestershire.

Co-creation will underpin the delivery of three interconnected strands of activity designed to:

- Develop a year-round programme of activity
- Establish city wide hubs
- Invest in community talent development

The overall aim of the project is to transform the city's approach to collaboration and create a lasting impact by fostering partnerships with communities and cross-sector organisations, implementing open, accessible processes, build community confidence and contribute to city placemaking.

For Festivals and Events, this means grants programmes and major events which align with the ethos of Together Gloucester will become part of this programme. We will develop our grant funding process to involve a Citizen's Panel and involve more members of the community in shaping and contributing to the Festivals and Events activity, creating more opportunities for local talent.

3.8 Global Streets

We have committed to be a partner, alongside Strike a Light, in a national touring programme that brings international outdoor work to different cities and towns in England, led by Festival.org. We have funded the previous iterations of this initiative on a project-by-project basis, but moving into this phase will work alongside Strike a Light in selecting work and being a partner in the programme, to ensure maximum benefit to the city and residents, improved knowledge of national touring networks and better opportunities for staff development. We will make an annual contribution of £10,000 towards this programme in 2024-25 and 2025-26.

3.9 Tall Ships Festival 2024

For 2024, the Festivals and Events Team will be producing the event in-house by engaging a team of freelance contractors to cover the creative content, tall ship programming, production and infrastructure roles. Marketing and PR will be done by an external company, but the event will use the new in-house ticketing system, Ticketsolve, recently installed for the Cultural Service. The Festivals and Events Team will manage the budget, contracting, contractors, services, stakeholder & partner liaison, business and resident communications and liaise on additional entertainment and site activation across city venues and spaces. The aim is to have tickets on sale by in early 2024 and for the event to take place from 25-27 May 2024.

3.10 Outdoor Events Fund

The Outdoor Events fund was open for festivals and events organisations to apply for activity taking place in 2024-25. For 2024-25 there is a sum of £47,000 available for applicants, part of which has been identified as match funding for the Place Partnership application for Together Gloucester (see 3.7). The applications were scored against funding criteria and were assessed by a panel of staff from the council and Gloucester Culture Trust based on criteria that supported the city's Cultural Strategy. The eligibility criteria were expanded to allow for organisations in the South West with a demonstrable partnership agreement with a Gloucester-based organisation to apply.

The fund opened for applications on 18th September and closed on 30th October 2023. 14 applications were received. Those recommended for funding are shown in Appendix 4.

3.11 New Projects and Commissions Fund

5 projects were successfully funded in 2023 with grants of approx. £5,000 each. Applicants were able to request between £5,000 - £10,000 and were required to demonstrate that any funding provided by the council would be matched, so the council's contribution is not more than 50% of the total project cost. There are two opportunities in the year to apply (Jan-Mar / Aug-Oct) The first round received more

applications than the second round and very few projects requested more than £5,000.

There is £25,000 available for new commissions in 2024-25. This has been used as match funding for the Place Partnership application for Together Gloucester (see 3.7).

3.12 Community Events Fund

Designed to support smaller events in Gloucester we propose to set up a funding scheme for organisations to apply for grants of up to £1,000. The application process will be a simplified version of the Outdoor Events Fund process. Applicants will need to identify how their event meets one of the cultural strategy objectives but overall, the application will involve fewer questions and less requirement for match funding from other sources. The intention is to support smaller events to become more sustainable and better resourced while aligning with the Cultural Strategy for the city.

3.13 Gloucester Goes Retro

Following on from the success of the 2023 event we are looking to develop the programme for Gloucester Goes Retro in 2024. We have identified that our key focuses will be to streamline planning by using the new Ticketsolve system for car registrations. We will continue to evolve the event space in Kings Square, with a desire to increase the amount of entertainment across the whole event and expand the offer to attract diverse audiences.

3.14 Bright Nights Festival

Bright Nights programme started with a combined Lantern Procession & Christmas lights switch-on. There will be a further programme of events in February 2024. The Bright Nights budget of £40,000 is used to leverage additional funds with the Place Partnership bid in 2024-25. Gloucester BID also support the programme financially.

3.15 Kings Square Programme

Kings Square has been regularly featured across a number of the city events and projects who were awarded funding in 2023 and planning continues for 2024. Maintaining a budget of £25,000 in 2024-25 will allow for more site-specific events & installations to be fostered alongside the city events programme. The budget is used to leverage additional funds with the Place Partnership application.(see 3.7).

3.16 City-wide co-ordination

The city-wide strategic events and marketing group continues to meet quarterly – this group consists of the main events and festival producers and organisations. The aim of the group is to agree the overall direction of programme and explore opportunities to collaborate to maximise the offer and where relevant and beneficial, pool funds and resources to create greater impact from city events. This consists of representatives of Gloucester Quays, the Gloucester Business Improvement District (BID), Gloucester Cathedral, Gloucester Culture Trust and the University of Gloucestershire among others and is convened by Gloucester City Council.

City Events meetings take place every two weeks with representatives from departments across the Gloucester City Council including Environmental Health,

Licensing, City Centre Management and Parks to review plans for upcoming events in parks and open spaces.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

- 4.1 Applicants for funding need to demonstrate how their festival or event delivers the Cultural Strategy, including the Social Value considerations. Local businesses are used as contractors and suppliers for events where possible, bringing in external companies if local companies are unavailable or unable to deliver the quality or ambition required.
- 4.2 The ambition for bringing Tall Ships Festival back into the management of the council's Festivals and Events team is to ensure that more local people, entertainers, contractors, services can be involved.

5.0 Environmental Implications

- 5.1 The environmental impact of festivals and events will become a key consideration of decision-making of which events and festivals to support in the city. There is an aspiration for the city to be net carbon neutral and so the Festivals and Events that take place in the city will need to work towards this common goal. The producer for Bright Nights is particularly interested in creating a sustainable light festival. This will include reusing and recreating assets owned by the city and targeting partners and funding with sustainable objectives.
- 5.2 In order to hold other third-party festivals and events accountable to these environmental sustainability targets, organisers will be expected to demonstrate clear policies and procedures and commitment towards sustainability. This will be a condition of funding issued by the City Council to any festival or event organiser and the Evaluation Criteria for funding from the City Council for events currently asks how the event considers the impact on the environment.
- 5.3 Internally steps are being taken to reduce the impact of events on the environment, everything from replacing plastic cable ties for signs with reusable string, assessing catering cartons and cutlery before contracting, to reducing the need for petrol or diesel-powered generators where practicable. Site litter clearance and recycling and the use of low-carbon materials will be encouraged in all third-party events.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 None.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 This approach builds on the strengths of the festivals and programme in the city, whilst introducing new opportunities for the city to strengthen partnerships and continue to raise its profile in line with the ambitions of the Cultural Strategy.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 8.1 The programme of events will be reviewed on an annual basis to review the 2024 programme.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 The main events programme detailed above is financed from the Council's Festivals and Events budget allocation of £215,000 of which £5,000 is allocated for Civic Events supplemented by external fundraising as outlined in Appendix 2.
- 9.2 Any shortfall in the external fundraising would lead to a budget pressure that would need to be managed by the Festivals & Events team.
- 9.3 Budget allocated within 2024-25 will be used to demonstrate match funding for bids to external funding sources.

10.0 Legal Implications

- 10.1 One Legal is assisting with the council's contractual requirements for the Tall Ships Festivals. The engagement of third parties for any services, goods or works need to be procured in accordance with the Council's contract rules.

Legal advice should be sought on the terms and conditions of any external funding awarded. Any funding given by the Council should be subject to appropriate terms and conditions and be compliant with the Subsidy Control Act 2022 (the Act). One Legal can assist with the preparation of the terms and advise on the applicability of the Act to the grants.

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 11.1 Risk 1 – financial support of festivals from third parties – e.g. sponsorship is reduced which may put some festivals viability in question. Mitigation: business plans for all festivals and events requiring funds will be scrutinised to ensure that there are adequate contingency plans in place.
- 11.2 Risk 2 – failure to meet income targets for events. Mitigation: reduce scale and consider reduction in programme in second half of the year.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

- 12.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact therefore a full PIA was not required.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

- 13.1 Events and Festivals follow a robust process via the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) meetings and following advice and permitted activity agreed at the point of issuing site permissions. SAG meetings are co-ordinated by the city council and are multi-agency meetings that challenge the organisers to produce effective plans that mitigate risks and ensure safety measures are considered, planned for and implemented.

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

- 14.1 None arising directly from this report.

15.0 Background Documents: [Gloucester's Cultural Vision and Strategy 2021-2026](#) [gloucester-cultural-vision-and-strategy-gct-gcc-min.pdf](#)

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Appendix A - Review of Festivals and Events Activity 2023

Review of Festivals and Events Activity 2023

Author: Poppy Handy, Senior Officer Festivals and Events, Gloucester City Council

Date: 10 November 2023

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1. Context

The Festivals and Events Team have had a busy year organising, funding and delivering 13 events, overseeing permissions for 41 external events, 7 filming and 6 civic events. The extent of the work of the team includes – issuing funding programmes (Outdoor Events Fund & New Projects and Commissions Fund), monitoring progress in relation to the delivery of these 3rd party events, assessing applications and establishing funding agreements. Income is also generated and managed through the events that are produced in-house, via applications for event permissions and from film hires.

Appendix A - Review of Festivals and Events Activity 2023

2. Presentation of a Lamprey Pie - 27th April

The Coronation was marked with the traditional presentation of a Lamprey Pie to the monarch's representative, the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire. This year the presentation had a real community feel. Partners involved were:

The Civic Trust – who provided the venue, the Folk of Gloucester.

The National Star – whose students served and presented the pie as well as making the pastry decorations to adorn the crust.

Cinderhill Farm who provided the pork and created and displayed the pie.

Gloucestershire Gateway Trust – who provided the vegetables for the pie.

Gloucester Feed the Hungry – who served the pie to people experiencing food poverty in the city.

In previous years Lampreys have been flown in from Canada, as they are now an endangered species in the UK. However, as this is not sustainable, we now bake a pork and vegetable pie based on an old Gloucestershire Pie recipe.

The 'lamprey' pie was presented to the Lord Lieutenant by the Mayor at the Folk of Gloucester, with an introduction from the Town Crier. The Lord Lieutenant was happy to be able to present the pie to Hash Norat from Gloucester Feed the Hungry who served pie to people in the city experiencing food poverty.

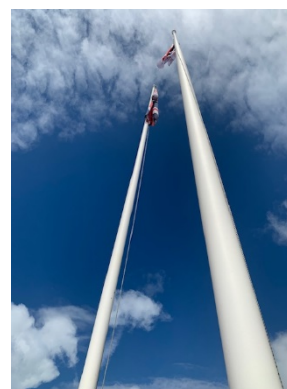


3. The Coronation of Charles III

The F&E team also arranged for coronation flags that were bought and hung from the catenary wires across the gate streets for 3 months, bringing colour and civic dressing to the city centre streets over the spring/summer.

4. Armed Forces Day - 24th June

The Armed Forces Day flag was raised at the North Warehouse in the presence of the Mayor, Lord Lieutenant, High Sheriff, Ceremonial Officers and Councillors. The Mayor's Chaplain, Rev Rachel Forrest read a prayer and the Mayor spoke to confirm the city's continuing support for our armed services. The Royal British Legion standard bearers and our City Marshall then led the dignitaries to the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum for the annual Armed Forces Day event.



5. Hi! Street Fest - Sat 1st July

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This was a new event for the city and involved a collaboration between the City Council, Emergency Exit Arts, High Street Action Zone and funding from Historic England. It was part of a national touring event taking place across 6 towns or cities – of which Gloucester was the 2nd place on the tour.

There were 280 community participants in the parades, 474 participants in the workshops, 142 volunteers involved with a 2year planning lead. The event took place across the Gate streets and Kings Square featuring performances outside St Mary De Crypt, The Cross, Shire Hall steps and Gloucester Cathedral grounds. There were two processions featuring giant puppets which paraded, creating moments across the city and saw an audience of 5000 attending.

6. PUBLIC - Ockham's Razor - 17th July

Following the success of the [2022 Kings Square Avant Garde](#) Project, Gloucester City Council commissioned Strike A Light to deliver a project to engage local people and animate Kings square. Incorporating acrobatics, parkour and dance they move through the architecture of the streets, lifting each other over and around walls, stairs, obstacles - dancing with the fabric of the world. Okham Razor worked across 8 weeks with 8 different schools and groups to create a bespoke piece performed by local Gloucester people that sat within the professional piece; a total of 201 people worked with the, 90 of them performing in the final piece in Kings Square. Approximately 800 people watched the piece.

Film of PUBLIC here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ax3RN6NtNPg>

7. 3 Choirs Festival Lunch - 22nd July

Despite some appalling weather, the civic parades from Gloucester Guildhall to the Cathedral and later, from Gloucester Cathedral to Blackfriars went very well. Unfortunately, the outdoor performances had to be cancelled due to the poor weather but the Cathedral service was a great start to the event.



The Civic Lunch in Blackfriars Priory was well attended by the Mayors, Sheriffs, Consorts and ceremonial officers of the 3 host cities and our near neighbours. The mayor welcomed them to a Gloucester reminiscent of Dr Fosters' Day and everyone enjoyed the stunning backdrop of Blackfriars Priory. Local catering company, *Hey Pesto* provided a delicious lunch.

8. Gloucester Goes Retro – 27th August

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Gloucester Goes Retro (www.gloucestergoesretro.com) was another success in 2023 with over 38,000 visitors identified in the City Centre, Kings Square and Gloucester Docks. Over 350 classic and vintage vehicles came along to provide the backbone of the event.

8 performers provided fun on the streets with hippies, break dancers, a wandering mechanic and some fabulous flapper girls interacting with visitors. 13 Stormtroopers also wandered the streets providing many photo opportunities.



Bringing in a Creative Producer to animate the Kings Square zone has allowed the area to develop into a thriving 80s/90s zone, providing lots of family fun. The Ghostbusters and ECTO-1, their fabulous car, were popular. Lots of fun activities, including hula hoops, badge making; a vintage fashion stall and music provided by Music Works ensured a fun family-friendly atmosphere all day.

Lots of opportunities to dress up kept everyone entertained and provided some great photo opportunities.



A live music stage with dancing and fabulous costumes added atmosphere to the Docks. Gloster Swing Dance kept everyone moving, not even the summer showers stopped the fun. The Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum had a successful event which saw their military village attract a lot of attention. Additional support from the military proving that Gloucester Goes Retro is a destination of choice.

Retro on the Water, on the water space and on North Quay saw boat trips and vintage vessels for visitors to enjoy. This was a successful volunteer-led activity, supported by the Canal and River Trust, another partnership adding value to the event.

The event was equally funded by Gloucester City Council and Gloucester Business Improvement District with additional support from Gloucester Quays. It was project managed and delivered by the council Festival and Events team.

9. Tour of Britain – 9th September

The Tour of Britain's (men's) race returned to Gloucester and was a great success after its cancellation in 2022. Crowds gathered on Southgate Street for the finish in their 1000s. The Festivals and Events team worked with Gloucestershire County Council, Docks Management company and Gloucester Quays to programme a wide range of activities and music across The Docks where the official fan village was based – and the City Centre to create a vibrant atmosphere for visitors to the city.

10. Gloucester Day - 2nd September

Appendix A - Review of Festivals and Events Activity 2023

The Gloucester Day event this year was jointly organised by the town crier Alan Myatt and the Festivals and Events team at GCC. The Gloucester Day Parades were re-routed through Kings Square which allowed the event to expand and provided a great backdrop for the entertainment. The Mock Mayor ceremony welcomed Jon Eeles into the role.

Stalls lined the gate streets, and many community organisations took advantage of the opportunity to deliver their message to the many visitors on the day.

The 2 parades and stalls attracted an audience estimated at 2,000 over the day. The 'Costume for Gloucester' featured in the parade in its first public outing and was a very popular addition.

There has been interest shown in curating a multi-cultural programme of entertainment for Kings Square which would more accurately reflect Gloucester's current demographics.

11. Remembrance Sunday - 12th November

This annual civic event will incorporate the following elements:

- Morning memorial services at the 'old' and 'new' Gloucester Cemeteries
- Service of Remembrance at the Gloucester Park War memorial including wreath laying the 2-minute silence at 11am
- Military Parade through the City gate streets
- Memorial service for Royal Gloucestershire Hussars on Cathedral Green
- Afternoon Cathedral Service of Remembrance

12. Bright Nights Programme 2023

a) Gloucester Lantern Procession & Christmas Lights Switch On – Saturday 18 November

The annual Lantern Procession & Christmas Lights Switch On takes place this year on Saturday 18 November with some changes to the procession route and an incorporation of three community-led events. This year's theme is 'The 12 Days of Christmas', chosen by Meadowside Primary School. The Bright Nights programme is funded by Gloucester City Council and Gloucester BID.

Appendix A - Review of Festivals and Events Activity 2023



The lantern parade is a long running and popular event which attracts thousands of spectators to launch the Christmas season in the city. Working closely with our partners on this event; Gloucester BID, The Rotary Club, Gloucester Cathedral, Gloucestershire Music and the shopping centres, we are confident this will be a spectacular year to remember.

This year three community-led events have been incorporated into the programme including Bright Nights Lantern Parade, Tree of Light Ceremony and Gloucester Cathedral's illuminated Carol Concert, in addition to a free family programme in Kings Square throughout the afternoon.

The lantern procession features pupils from six Gloucester schools; Meadowside Primary School, The Altus School, Coney Hill Community Primary School, Field Court C of E Infant Academy, Dinglewell Junior School, and Kingsway Primary School, with around 30 children per school selected to take part.

Six Southwest-based artists have been engaged to run lantern-making workshops with the schools before the event and making six giant lanterns for the parade. Some of these workshops will be attended by the Mayor and Sheriff.

Three marching bands will appear in the parade: Gloster Gladiators Scout Band, a primary school brass band funded by Brass for England, and the Cheltenham Pipe Band representing the pipers piping.

The Gloucester community will be encouraged to take part by bringing lanterns made in a lantern workshop earlier that day in Eastgate Shopping Centre (funded by Gloucester BID).

Throughout the day, youth buskers will appear around town organised by Gloucestershire Music, to add vibrancy to the city centre with their festive music.



For the first time since its reopening, the parade route will include Kings Square. Happenings along the parade route include walkabout entertainment living snow globes and LED hula hooping, the Rotary's Tree of Light switch on, an aerialist display inside a huge inflated heart in Kings' Square, a Carol Concert at Gloucester Cathedral, as well as RSVP Bhangra band performing and food



and drink traders in Kings Square serving festive treats throughout the day.

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At the Rotary's Tree of Light switch-on ceremony there will be guests Father Christmas, the City's Mayor, Councillor Kathy Williams, the President of the Rotary Club of Gloucester, Chris Rawlins, and others, all hosted by BBC Radio Gloucestershire. First launched in 2011, the huge tree adorned with thousands of lights has raised £86,000 for the local people of Gloucester and for local charities alike.

b) Windows through time 16-26 October

High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) in Westgate Street have approached Bright Nights for the second year running to reinstall the commissioned windows by local artist Jack Wimperis.



Each window represents a different era and are colour-coordinated with the real windows on buildings highlighted in the same colour along the street. It was estimated that roughly 10,000 people visited in 2022 – figures are not yet known for 2023. The windows will be reinstated to the catenary wires with architectural features on the historic buildings illuminated each evening between 6-9pm. The timing of this was to coincide with 'Light Eternal' a light and sound installation in Gloucester Cathedral.

13. Swimming Gala at GL1 – 20-22 October 2023

During the transition period from Aspire to Freedom Leisure it was asked of the FEV team to produce an event management plan to permit a prearranged swimming gala to take place in GL1. The event was planned by Gloucester City Swim Club and the event management plan reviewed their event plan alongside the management of the building to be safely opened temporarily and ensured that a complete review of the staffing and emergency procedures were enacted in order to comply with insurance and safety compliant operations and procedures in the building. The event was a success with competitors from across the region taking part to a live-streamed audience.

14. Mayor's Christmas Party – 17 December

Appendix A - Review of Festivals and Events Activity 2023

Children from across Gloucestershire Schools were invited to attend a film-screening event with the Mayor and Sheriff of Gloucester in attendance at Gloucester Guildhall.

15. New Projects and Commissions Fund

- a. This fund of £30,000 is designed to endorse projects and enable applicants to leverage in income from other sources. Grants awarded are conditional on the project securing its expected income from other sources. The aim is to encourage new ambitious work to be created in Gloucester and develop capacity and skills in event production. The criteria include bringing national and international artists to the city, supporting local artists and producers, employment and engagement with local communities and businesses and training opportunities for young people.
- b. Two rounds for applications for this fund were scheduled for 2023. 10 applications were received and 5 were granted funding. A panel of employees from GCC and GCT made the decisions. The successful applicants were:

Round One: (March)

1. Canal & River Trust – Crossings:

Grant awarded: £5,820

Led by the Canal & River Trust, the project brought the interactive art installation Crossings by Luke Jerram into the centre of Gloucester Docks for people to experience throughout August 2023. Luke Jerram is a UK based artist whose work has been displayed internationally to high acclaim. Crossings consists of nine rowing boats that play audio stories from around the world of extraordinary journeys by boat. In choosing a story and rowing out into the water for 30 minutes participants are taken on an audio journey, transported to another life and circumstance. The action of rowing and the live sounds this action creates, blends with the recorded audio, to help create a truly engaging and immersive experience.

2. The Music Works – Kings' Square Live & Kings' Square Summer Jams

Grant awarded: £5,000 from NPCF, £5,000 from Kings' Square budget

The project aims were to help establish King's Square as a vibrant, creative area that draws in local people and workers, creating an exciting, young, diverse scene that also increases city centre footfall and spend. The project comprises two inter-linked elements:

1. Kings Square Live: this ran from the start of April until the end of September every Wednesday in Kings Square 3-6 pm. This coincided with schools finishing at 3pm and then work finishing at 5pm. The event activated the space making it more vibrant for passers-by and platformed young upcoming local artists giving them paid performance opportunities. The Music Works have been running Kings Square Live since September 2022.

2. Kings Square Summer Jams: The Music Works organised and delivered three "Jams" in the square between May and August 23. They programmed local, young musicians to perform throughout the day with a high-quality professional live band to do improv background music. There were also music workshops throughout the day.

The Music Works aim to work with over 100 young artists from Gloucestershire and prioritizes YP from challenging circumstances and those from marginalized backgrounds. They also worked to

Appendix A - Review of Festivals and Events Activity 2023

include DJ Collective in the summer jams – an inclusive collective of DJs with learning disabilities helping to bring greater representation to disabled people in music.

3. Strike A Light – Aakash Odedra Project

Grant awarded: £5,000

Aakash Odedra are a South Asian dance company who use the voice of British-Asian experience to tell new stories about modern life. They create boundary pushing and award-winning dance works, partnering with organisations such as the Royal Ballet and Sadler’s Wells. The grant funded the following delivery and outreach work in Gloucester:

- Aakash Odedra to complete a 10 week residency with Widden & Tredworth Primary schools working with 60 students for the term, using South Asian Kathak dance.
- They will devise a final end of term performance building upon their reasoning, devising and creative skills.
- There will be a matinee performance of Aakash Odedra’s show Little Murmur at the Guildhall.
- A CPD practitioner training session for Gloucestershire dancers.
- An Audio described public evening show.

Round 2: (August)

1. GL4 CIC – Collaborative Touring Network (CTN) Project

Grant awarded: £5,000

GL4 CIC brings high quality, accessible and affordable cultural experiences into the heart of Matson and works tirelessly to open up new possibilities for local people to enjoy and participate in creative activities that relate directly to their lives, inspire them, enhance their wellbeing, raise their aspirations and build community.

GL4 is part of the Collaborative Touring network, (CTN) and will be working in partnership with CTN on this activity. CTN is a growing collective of organisations that believe every community in every town deserves to experience life-affirming, soul-shaking, perspective-changing live performance.. The funding will cover participation and/or performance fees for local people, workshop delivery costs, travel and/or access costs.

2. Strike A Light – Kid Carpet & The Noisy Garden Centre

Grant awarded: £5,000

Strike A Light will work with Kid Carpet to present 2 shows Epic Fail (March 24) & The Noisy Garden Centre (Feb 24) supported by a ten week co-creation project in Tredworth Primary school (Jan - March 24).

Epic Fail is described as ‘Tiswas of Ted Talks’. In a ten week co-creation project, Kid Carpet will be joined in residence by a local facilitator. Together with the children they will explore failure through the lens of art and engineering. Together they will collaborate and use art, science, engineering, music, film and storytelling to design, create and present a ‘Supercharged Assembly’ on failure that will be performed in the school to fellow pupils and their families.

Appendix A - Review of Festivals and Events Activity 2023

16. The Festival and Events team have also supported, either with time, in kind or advice and support to the following and more:

- Pride in Gloucestershire
- Gloucester Rotary Club
- Gloucester Cathedral
- Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum
- Canal and River Trust
- Gloucester Quays
- Folk of Gloucester
- Kings Walk Shopping Centre
- The Music Works
- Strike a Light
- Gloucestershire County Council – for Tour of Britain
- Gloucester Civic Trust
- Gloucester Guildhall
- Blackfriars Priory
- University of Gloucestershire

Proposed Civic and Cultural Events & Festivals 2024-25

Budget

City Events	£	115,000
Gloucester Goes Retro		15,000
Tall Ships Festival		25,000
Bright nights (inc Lanterns)		40,000
Kings Square programme		25,000
Global Streets Programme		10,000

Outdoor Events Fund	£	47,000
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New Commissions Fund	£	25,000
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Community Events Fund	£	5,000
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Civic Events	£	5,000
Remembrance Sunday		500
Mayor's Christmas Party		1,000
Gloucester Day		3,000
Dday commemorations/ Armed Forces Day		500

Marketing	£	18,000
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TOTAL		215,000
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Funding Processes – Festivals & Events

Contents

1. Festivals and Outdoor Events Fund
2. New Projects and Commissions Fund
3. Kings Square Funding
4. Community Fund

1. FESTIVALS AND OUTDOOR EVENTS FUND

- 1.1 The Festivals and Outdoor Events Fund is an annual funding pot of c. £47,000 (in 2024/25. £52k in 2022/23) which provides grants between £10,000 - £15,000 to organisations or individuals intending on holding an event in Gloucester.
- 1.2 This funding is available to support large-scale outdoor events that have an impact on the city, tourism or the cultural strategy.
- 1.3 The Festivals and Outdoor Events Fund seeks to support events of the highest quality that:
- Respond to clearly identifiable gap / evidence a general lack of this type of activity.
 - Demonstrate evidence of artistic quality
 - Have a robust framework including planning, delivery and evaluation.
 - Evidence project and budget management skills
 - Meet Gloucester City Council Cultural Strategy Objectives
 - Achieve impact through partnership working.
- 1.4 The timeline for Outdoor Events Funding

SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	APRIL
Applications open	Application Deadline (6 weeks from opening) Applications are assessed by a panel with representatives from GCC and GCT.	Applicants are informed of the decision subject to cabinet approval F&E Budget for following year is taken to SMT.	F&E Budget is taken to Cabinet	F&E budget is taken to full council	Following approval 80% of funding is released to applicants. The following 20% is released upon receipt of their evaluation.

1.5 New to the eligibility criteria for 2024 is the addition of applicants based in the Southwest with a demonstrable partnership agreement with a Gloucester based organisation.

1.6 The Criteria applications are scored on are:

- Strength of contribution to the Cultural Strategy
- Evidence of Quality (Including the nature and engagement of artists, artistic practice, partners, participants, and audiences
- Evidence of the need or demand for the project
- Evidence of partnership/ support from the cultural sector
- Value of impact to secure match funding
- Evidence of detailed budget and reasonable financial planning
- Environmental sustainability of project
- Accessibility and Inclusion

2. NEW PROJECTS AND COMMISSIONS FUND

2.1 The New Projects and Commissions fund is an annual fund of £25,000 (in 2024/25. £30k in 2022/23). Applicants can apply for grants of £5,000 to £10,000.

2.2 The aim is to encourage new ambitious work to be created or presented in Gloucester and develop capacity and skills in event production.

2.3 The funding is available to endorse projects and enable applicants to leverage in income from other sources. To be eligible applicants are required to identify a minimum of 50% match funding from other sources.

2.4 It is only available to organisations that do not receive funding from the Festivals and Events Budget

2.5 The NPCF Fund seeks to support commissions of the highest quality that:

- Demonstrate a clearly identifiable gap and/or development of an artistic practice.
- Have a robust framework including planning, delivery and evaluation.
- Meet City Council Cultural Strategy Objectives
- Seek to work in partnership to enhance the effectiveness of the project.

2.6 Timeline for NPCF Funding

Round 1	Round 2
January to March	August to October

FEBRUARY	MARCH	JUNE	JULY
<p>1ST Round Application Deadline</p>	<p>Applications are assessed by a panel with representatives from GCC and GCT and scored against the cultural Strategy Criteria</p> <p>Applicants are informed of the decision subject to Cabinet Approval</p>	<p>2nd Round Application Deadline</p> <p>Applications are assessed by a panel with representatives from GCC and GCT and scored against the cultural Strategy Criteria</p>	<p>Applicants are informed of the decision subject to Cabinet Approval.</p> <p>Applicants are informed of the decision subject to Cabinet Approval.</p> <p>Following approval 80% of funding is released to applicants.</p> <p>The final 20% is released upon receipt of the evaluation</p>

2.7 The application will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Strength of contribution to at least one of the Cultural Strategy Objectives
- Evidence of quality of proposed project - including the nature and engagement of artists/artistic practice, partners, participants, or audiences
- Artistic quality – artists involved and the artistic outcome.
- Evidence of the need or demand for the project
- Evidence of partnership/support from Cultural Sector
- The value of the impact of a Culture Fund award to securing match-funding or enabling the project to happen or not.

3. KINGS SQUARE FUNDING

Kings Square budget of £25,000 is part of the Outdoor Events Budget. This budget has been match funded by REEF £25,000 and GCC Asset Management (2023/24 only) £25,000. The budget is then distributed to a number of different projects which are designed to animate the square throughout the year. There is no formal application process for this funding but projects qualify if they are to be held in Kings Square. Projects are assessed by the Festivals and Events team in discussion with Gloucester Culture Trust, the council Head of Culture and Leisure and the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure.

4. COMMUNITY EVENTS FUND – New in 2024/25

- 4.1 Designed to support smaller events in Gloucester we propose to set up funding pot for organisations to apply for grants of up to £1,000.
- 4.2 The application process will be a simplified version of the outdoor events fund form and guidance.
- 4.3 The applicant will need to identify how their event meets one of our cultural strategy objectives but overall the application will involve fewer questions and less requirement for match funding from other sources.
- 4.4 The ambition will be to support smaller events to become more sustainable and better resourced while aligning with the cultural strategy for the city.
- 4.5 The indicative timeline for Community Events Fund is as follows.

NOVEMBER	JANUARY	MARCH	APRIL
Proposal for Community Events Fund is demonstrated within F&E Budget for following year and taken to SMT.	F&E Budget is taken to Cabinet Community Events Fund Applications Open.	Community Events Fund Applications are assessed by a panel with representatives from GCC and GCT (alongside the applications for NPCF).	Following approval 100% of funding is released to applicants.

Appendix D - Outdoor Events Fund recommended allocation 2024-25

	Applicant	Grant Awarded
1	Pride in Gloucestershire	£11,250.00
2	GAP '24	£11,250.00
3	Strike A Light	£11,250.00
4	Voices Gloucester	£7,500.00
5	Chispa CIC / School of Larks CIC	£6,000.00
	Total	0

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Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	10 January 2024
Subject:	Transfer of Sites in Podsmead to Enable the Regeneration of the Estate		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy		
Wards Affected:	Podsmead		
Key Decision:	Yes	Budget/Policy Framework:	Yes
Contact Officer:	David Evans: City Growth & Delivery Manager		
	Email: david.evans@gloucester.gov.uk		Tel: 01452 396847
Appendices:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft Heads of Terms for the Sale of Sites in Podsmead to Gloucester City Homes 2. Plans Showing the Sites in Podsmead that are the Subject of the Report 		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Council and Gloucester City Homes (GCH) have drafted heads of terms for the disposal by the Council of sites in its ownership at Podsmead. This being with the intent of enabling the regeneration of the Podsmead estate through the provision of affordable housing as well as commercial, leisure and community facilities.
- 1.2 This report seeks Cabinet’s approval of the draft Heads of Terms for the disposal of the sites within its ownership to GCH, and delegated authority to implement and/or facilitate the delivery of estate regeneration in line with those heads of terms (save for regulator matters). It is proposed that the sites will be sold at a sum that is below market consideration in order to deliver specific Council objectives. This would mean disposing of the land at an undervalue and is a key consideration for Cabinet to take into account.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that delegated authority be given to the Head of Finances and Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Performance & Resources and Planning & Housing Strategy, the Head of Communities and the Head of Place to:
 - (1) conclude and agree heads of terms with Gloucester City Homes (GCH) for the disposal of the freehold interest in the areas of sites shown edged Red on the Plan (“the sites”) whether by one or more transactions, and that a cost benefit analysis informs the final decision on disposal;
 - (2) take all necessary steps and undertake necessary procedures, including entering into any legal arrangements or other documentation as may be required

to implement or facilitate estate regeneration in line with those heads of terms (save for regulator matters).

3.0 Background

3.1 Members will recall the report to Cabinet on 7 December 2022, which summarised the history of discussions held between the Council and Gloucester City Homes with the intent of delivering a housing-led regeneration scheme in parts of Podsmead. At the time the scheme proposed by GCH comprised a mix of affordable and market housing, commercial space and new community space. The Cabinet considered the plans and proposals presented by GCH and:

RESOLVED that delegated authority is given to the Property Commissioning Manager, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Performance & Resources and Planning & Housing Strategy, the Head of Communities and the Head of Place to:

(1) negotiate heads of terms with Gloucester City Homes (GCH) for the disposal of the freehold interest in the areas of sites shown edged Red on the Plan (“the sites”) whether by one or more transactions, and that a cost benefit analysis informs the final decision on disposal

(2) negotiate heads of terms with GCH on an agreement to provide affordable homes within the regeneration of the estate

(3) if so required, to seek authority from the Secretary of State to dispose of the sites on the proposed terms

(4) negotiate terms with Gloucester United Schools Trust (GUS) for the release, relaxation or variation of the restrictive covenants affecting the sites.

3.1 Recent Revisions to the overall Masterplan

Since the consideration of the above report GCH has drafted an amended scheme for the regeneration of the estate, which is different to that seen by Cabinet in December 2022. This is as a result of the following factors:

3.2 Firstly, Homes England announced in June 2023 that grant funding provided through the Government’s Affordable Homes Programme can now be used to fund replacement homes alongside new affordable homes, as part of wider estate regeneration plans. Grant funding would alter the financial viability of the scheme, presenting opportunities for a greater proportion of affordable homes. Homes England has confirmed to GCH its support for Podsmead regeneration subject to a bid being submitted and evidence of a deliverable programme.

3.3 Secondly, and reflecting the requirement from Homes England, GCH has focused the regeneration on to a smaller, more deliverable scheme, comprising less sites within the estate.

3.4 The scheme now proposed by GCH, and which will be submitted to the Council for planning consent in spring 2024, is presented at Appendix 2. It comprises 8 residential sites and 2 areas of open space, and would involve the demolition of 64 homes and the construction of up to 177 new affordable homes as well as new retail, recreation and community facilities. The development would take place over a four year period, commencing in March 2025.

- 3.5 GCH describes the scheme as offering the following regeneration benefits:
- A clear new identity and sense of neighbourhood on arrival from Cole Avenue.
 - A renewed local centre with visual prominence on Podsmead Road providing a new retail offer.
 - A clear pedestrian priority route linking Tuffley-Bristol Road and safe walking to school and access to sports pitches and parks.
 - A new central park, giving it purpose and fronting homes.
 - The demolition and re-provision of 117 new homes, with a tenure mix to be determined to meet housing needs.
- 3.6 Three of the eight residential sites and the two areas of open space that are included within the Masterplan are in the ownership of the Council. These areas, which form the basis of this report and which are the same as those previously considered by Cabinet in December 2022, are delineated on the plan 2 at Appendix 1. The five adjacent sites are referred to as:
- Site 1 – 2.8 acres, proposed for housing
Site 2 – 1.26 acres, proposed for housing
Site 14 – 0.84 acres, proposed for housing
Site A – 1.58 acres, proposed for landscaping and recreational open space
Site B – 1.42 acres, proposed for landscaping and recreational open space
- 3.7 The development proposed by GCH on the Council's sites, which are the subject of this report, comprise the main areas of open space within the estate on Scott Avenue and Byron Avenue. GCH is proposing there the development of 107 affordable flats and houses, commercial space fronting the entrance to the estate, a new community space, and a park and play facilities. All of the development proposed is subject to securing Planning permission.
- 3.8 Draft Heads of Terms have been prepared, which are presented at Appendix 1. Members will note that the completion of the sale would be subject to a number of factors, including the securing of planning permission, the attraction of grant funding from Homes England, and the release of a restrictive covenant covering part of the scheme in favour of the Gloucester Schools Trust (see below). The types of commercial uses within the sites being transferred from the Council would be limited by a restrictive covenant, which is considered to be appropriate given the proximity of the retail units to the secondary school.
- 3.9 Members will note that the sale would be subject to a detailed phasing plan over the four year development process. GCH would pay a penalty to the Council should it fail to deliver the agreed number of affordable homes, or per home that is converted to open market. The amount of the penalty would be based upon an independent valuation of the scheme.
- 3.10 GCH has also agreed to take on the ownership from the City Council of the remaining open space within the estate, which would be enhanced with better landscaping and play facilities. On the plan at Appendix 2 this comprises the site to the east of site 2 on Byron Avenue, and the site between sites 1 and 14 on Scott Avenue. The transfer of these sites would be subject to a separate report to Council, setting out the management and maintenance implications of the transfer.

4. Title Issues

4.1 The sites that are the subject of this report are currently public open space, each landscaped and used for local recreation. In order to progress the disposal of the land the Council would need to be mindful of the following issues.

4.2 Sale of Public Open Space

The Council would need to advertise its intention to dispose (transfer) of the land in a local newspaper for two consecutive weeks, following which members of the public can write in and object to the Council's intention to dispose of the land. A Cabinet decision would be required to dispose of the land having first considered any objections received. It is recommended that this is undertaken once precise details of the scheme have been identified and we have a clearer idea of timescales, as advertising too early may result in further advertisements being required.

4.3 Best Consideration

The Council has a range of powers to dispose of the Property in question whether acquired for housing purposes or otherwise. The Council has a statutory duty to obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable. However, in certain circumstances this does not apply. Section 24 of the Local Government Act 1988 permits a local housing authority to provide financial assistance to any person for the purpose of privately let housing accommodation and this may include the transfer of land at an undervalue. S25 of the Local Government Act 1988 states that Secretary of State consent is required to any such disposal.

4.4 The Council would need to ensure that public assets are not sold at an undervalue, save, if at all, with the consent of the Secretary of State. Once full details of the regeneration scheme are obtained the Council will instruct an independent valuer to value the land based on the whole project.

4.5 Restrictive Covenants

A portion of the sites included in the development proposal are covered by a restrictive covenant for which the beneficiary is the Gloucester United Schools Trust (GUS). The covenant restricts:

- The number of homes that can be developed to 8 houses per acre;
- Shops or business premises cannot be erected; and
- All buildings erected shall front certain roads.

Any breach of that covenant may result in a financial consideration being due to the trust on the uplift in the value of the land covered by the covenant. Given that both the Council and GCH are partners in the Masterplan and in the regeneration area, both could become liable for that consideration, should GUS enforce the covenant's provisions.

4.6 The Council and GCH jointly approached GUS in October 2021 to secure its consent in principle to allow the covenants to be lifted on the affected land to enable the regeneration to proceed. Following an independent valuation GUS has written to the Council agreeing in principle to allowing the covenants to be lifted or altered to allow development, subject to the payment of a minimum consideration and protection for the charity to secure any long term uplift in values achieved through the development. Within the Heads of Terms GCH proposes to reimburse all reasonable GUS costs including the Council's costs in dealing with the release of the covenants.

5.0 Social Value Considerations

- 5.1 The economic and social benefits will be set out in the Economic and Social Plan accompanying any planning application. The regeneration of the estate would expect to deliver significant social value, improving the quality of life of residents and the built and natural environment within the estate. Officers will discuss with GCH how it and its development partners/contractors can deliver social value pursuant to the Council's Social Value Policy and maximise the social value benefits of the project.

6.0 Environmental Implications

- 6.1 The development proposed would lead to a reduction in open space within the estate. It would, however, likely be a requirement of the scheme that the public open space that remains will be enhanced through better landscaping.
- 6.2 During the masterplanning and planning application stages, the development will fully explore the opportunities to enhance the environment, addressing green infrastructure as well as steps to tackle climate change. The Council will seek to minimise energy usage both in the construction methods used and the lifecycle of the properties developed.
- 6.3 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) will be used across the site and the policy requirement of the draft City Plan will be expected to be fully adopted.
- 6.4 In addition, GCH will develop the site in accordance with the Registered Housing Association Living Homes Standard which sets out the minimum requirements for all new homes. The Standard is a significant improvement on current building regulations as it ensures better environmental credentials for new homes by focussing on 6 categories which cover the core functions of a home and how it interacts with the wider environment for the benefit of the end user; Energy, water, carbon, comfort, space and place.
- 6.5 GCH is currently implementing a programme to improve the environmental performance of its property stock within the city. Within the Heads of Terms GCH commits to ensuring that all the properties within its ownership will achieve EPC C rating on completion of the scheme.

7.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 7.1 The report to Cabinet in December 2022 considered alternative options that the Council might pursue in order to deliver the regeneration.

8.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 8.1 To authorise officers to proceed towards completion of the sale of the sites. The agreement of the Heads of Terms by the Council would give confidence to both GCH and to Homes England that the scheme is deliverable.

9.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 9.1 Should Cabinet support the recommendations, the next steps would be as follows:
- Land valuation of the Council's sites
 - Submission by GCH of a planning application

- Submission by GCH of a grant funding bid to Homes England
- Secure release of the restrictive covenant on part of the sites held by Gloucester Schools Trust
- Consent of the Secretary of State to be sought if required
- Drafting followed by completion of a contract of sale, to be agreed by the Council in line with the recommendation

10.0 Financial Implications

- 10.1 As noted within the body of the report, the proposal will see the Council provide land below market value. Assurances should be sought to ensure the land is only used as per the agreement and that the Council is entitled to a refund if the land is used to generate alternative profits.

As the land is to be sold below market value, necessary legal advice should be sought.

11.0 Legal Implications

- 11.1 As the land was originally acquired as part of housing land, the land is held for housing purposes under the provisions of the Housing Act 1985. Section 32 of the Housing Act 1985 gives a local authority power to dispose of land held for such purposes with the Consent of the Secretary of State. The Secretary of state has given a General Consent for the disposal of vacant land held for housing purposes at any price.

- 11.2 It has been noted above that under s24 of the Local Government Act 1988, by transferring the land at an undervalue, the Council will be deemed to be providing financial assistance and that this is permitted with Secretary of State Consent. The Secretary of State has given a General Consent which permits all local authorities in England to disposal of land to registered providers of social housing at an undervalue for the purposes of s24 of the Housing Act 1988 for development as housing accommodation or development as housing accommodation and other facilities which are intended to benefit mainly the occupiers of the housing accommodation. The General Consent is conditional on:

- (a) the Transfer containing an obligation for the development to be completed within 3 years of the date of completion of the Transfer (which can be dealt with by means of a phased transfer and development);
- (b) a requirement for the housing accommodation to be let as social housing or a shared ownership lease (or some other defined uses which will not apply to this matter);
- (c) The aggregate value of financial assistance given under s24 (to all such providers) not exceeding £10 million in any one financial year.

- 11.3 This General Consent will apply to this disposal provided that the above conditions are met and that any commercial/retail properties forming part of the development are intended mainly to benefit the occupiers of the housing accommodation. If these conditions cannot be met then specific consent will be required from the Secretary of State.

- 11.4 Where the disposal is of public open space, prior to disposal a notice of the intention to dispose must be placed in the local press for 2 consecutive weeks, and any objections considered.
- 11.5 There are restrictive covenants which could affect the development. Steps will need to be taken for the negotiation of the release, relaxation or variation of those covenants. See the comments at 4.5 and 4.6.
- 11.6 The Council will also need to consider, because the land is being disposed of at less than best consideration, that it is providing a subsidy to the purchaser and must therefore comply with the obligations in the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

12.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

Risk	Mitigation
Following the transfer of the property GCH does not implement the regeneration in whole or in part.	<p>The Heads of Terms includes reference to a phasing plan, which would set out a clear timetable for the development of all aspects of the scheme.</p> <p>The Heads of Terms includes a penalty clause requiring GCH to pay a fixed sum per home not delivered or per home converted to open market.</p> <p>Covenants can be included in the Transfer(s) to require GCH to carry out the proposed development, which would give some comfort and would enable the Council to take action against GCH in the event of the development not being completed.</p>
There is significant opposition to the redevelopment proposed amongst local residents.	GCH has and will continue to consult with local residents over the scheme, and public consultation will be a requirement of the planning application. The messaging needs to emphasise the estate-wide benefits that will accrue to all residents from the regeneration, including the improvements to community facilities and the remaining open space, and the provision of employment opportunities within the commercial units.
The scheme proposed by GCH fails to secure planning permission	The sale of the Council's sites is dependent upon GCH securing planning permission.

13.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

- 13.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and identified potential negative impacts as a result of this recommendation. This includes the impact on homeowners within the estate, particularly those whose homes would be replaced, and the users of

recreational facilities. A full PIA will be prepared to assess the negative impacts that the development could have on residents.

- 13.2 The impact on residents within the estate will be identified in an assessment of housing needs to be carried out alongside GCH prior to the implementation of the scheme.

14.0 Community Safety Implications

- 14.1 The scheme will be delivered in accordance with one of the 13 key principles of the City Plan, namely "*Deliver development that achieves high quality design and layouts that integrates new and existing communities, reduces crime and the fear of crime, builds positively on local distinctiveness and contributes to the creation of an active, connected and sustainable city.*"
- 14.2 Should the regeneration of the estate proceed it is expected that it would lead to improved civic pride, characterised by lower levels of crime and antisocial behaviour than currently witnessed within the estate.

15.0 Staffing and Trade Union Implications

- 15.1 There are no staffing and trade union implications.

Background Documents: None

Appendix 1

Draft Heads of Terms for the sale of the three sites in Podsmead

HEADS OF TERMS

Regeneration at Podsmead Estate, Podsmead, Gloucester

("the Regeneration")

1 Parties

Gloucester City Council ("Land Owner")
Gloucester City Homes ("Developer")

2 Agreement between the Land Owner and the Developer

2.1 The Land Owner and the Developer agree to enter into an agreement by 31st March 2024 to transfer the land shown edged red on the attached plan to the Developer for £1 in consideration of the Developer agreeing to deliver 177 affordable units, new retail space, new parks and related public realm as part of the wider regeneration of the Podsmead Estate as outlined in the Master Plan. The agreement will be conditional on the following:

- (a) the Developer obtaining satisfactory outline planning permission covering the whole estate;
- (b) planning application to include detailed phasing plan of residential development, open space, retail and community hub, a delivery timetable, number of homes & tenure in each phase and decant programme based upon local housing need in line with the approved housing need assessment & rehousing strategy.
- (c) the Land Owner obtaining a release of a restrictive covenant registered in favour of Gloucester Schools Trust, Gloucester City Homes to reimburse all GUS & Gloucester City Homes reasonable costs;
- (d) restricted covenant to be agreed to restrict inappropriate commercial use of land released by Gloucester City Council such as, bookmakers, fast food outlet.
- (e) grant funding being made available to the Developer by Homes England; and
- (f) the Land Owner giving vacant possession of the land.
- (g) Gloucester City Homes to reimburse all Gloucester City Council reasonable legal costs

2.2 Subject to the planning strategy being agreed by the Land Owner and the Developer by 31 January 2024 the Developer shall submit an application for planning with the local planning authority on or before 31 March 2024.

2.3 The Land Owner and the Developer agree that the Developer shall bring forward new affordable homes on land transferred to GCH and that the Regeneration will not create a net loss position of affordable homes throughout the delivery of the Master Plan

2.4 The Developer agrees with the Land Owner to use all reasonable endeavours to deliver the units as referred to at paragraph 2.1 above within [5] years of the date of the implementation of the planning permission.

2.5 Save for reductions in numbers brought about by the planning process, The Developer will agree to a penalty provision of a lump sum payment per home not delivered or per home

converted to Open Market. The amount of the lump sum to be agreed subject to obtaining independent valuation advice.

- 2.6 The Developer agrees to take on the ownership and management of all new public open space as outlined in the Master Plan in perpetuity.
- 2.7 The Developer will use all reasonable endeavours to invest in its remaining stock in Podsmead to ensure all Developer owned units achieve an 'EPC C rating' on completion of the scheme.
- 2.8 The parties agree to act reasonably and in good faith when negotiating the full land and development agreement.

Signed:
For and on behalf of Gloucester City Council

Signed:
For and on behalf of Gloucester City Homes Limited

Appendix 2 - Plans showing proposed development sites edged in red in Podsmead

Plan 1 –sites proposed for redevelopment by Gloucester City Homes

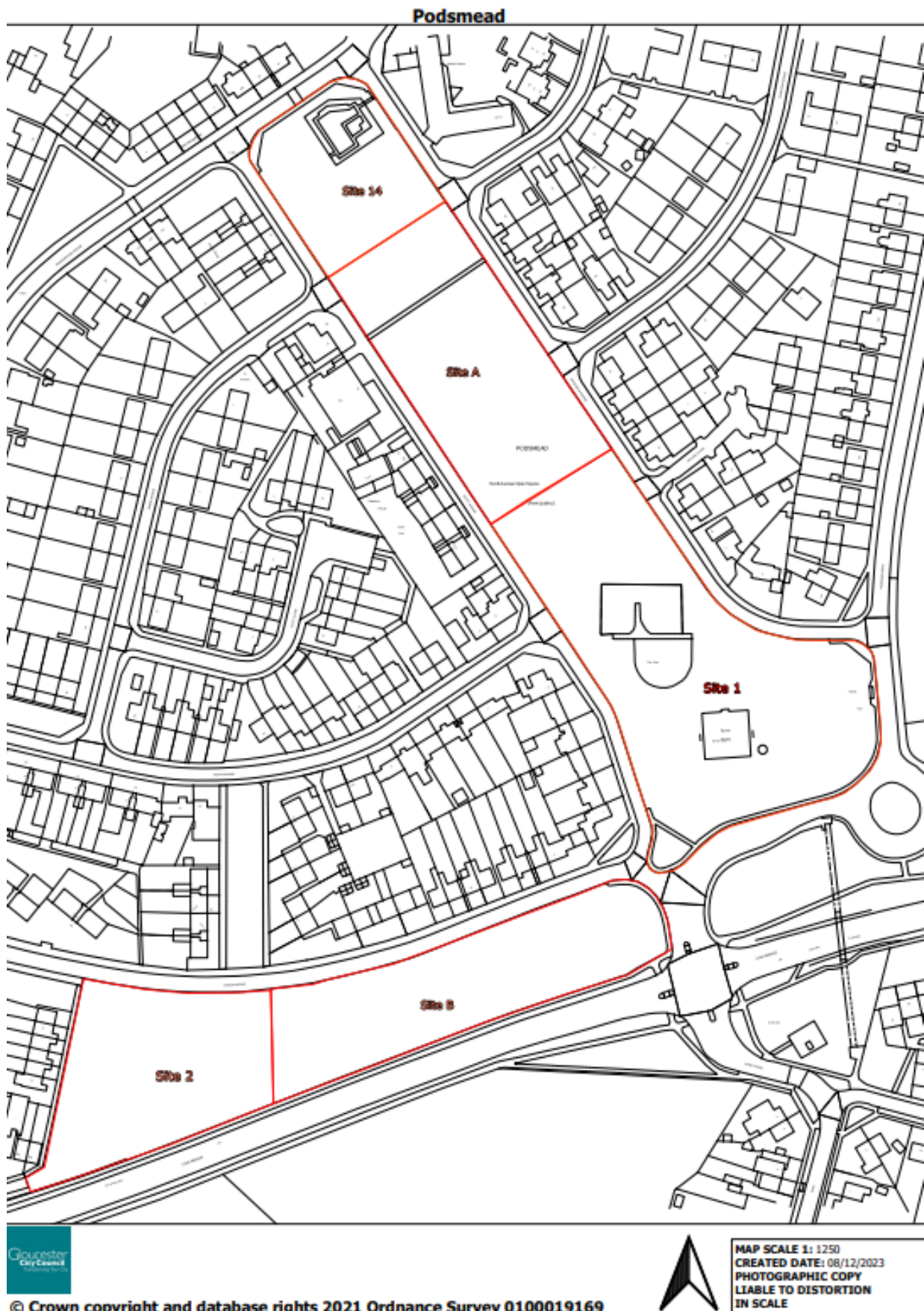
Plan 2 – the sites in the Council's ownership that are proposed to be transferred to GCH

Plan 1

Proposed Estate Regeneration Plan, identifying sites proposed by GCH to be developed for housing



Plan 2 Sites to be included in the transfer to GCH



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