



## CABINET

**MEETING** : Wednesday, 8th December 2021

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

**Others in Attendance**

Cllrs. Hilton and Pullen

Managing Director

Head of Place

Head of Communities

Head of Policy and Resources

Head of Culture

Regeneration Consultant

Democratic and Electoral Services Officer

**APOLOGIES** : None

### 56. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 57. MINUTES

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

### 58. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

Concerning the Council's stations for monitoring air quality in the City, a member of the public asked where, how frequently and for what gasses measurements are taken. The Cabinet Member for Environment replied that traffic emissions are monitored using static diffusion tubes which are changed monthly and reports made on the annual average levels of nitrous oxides. He directed the member of the public to the detailed reports published on the City Council website where a list of monitoring sites may be found, the link for which had already been supplied (<https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/environment-waste-recycling/pollution/air-quality/>).

The Cabinet Member for Environment expressed his own pleasure in this year's detected emissions being lower than the last and that they had been below the recognised level for concern for some years.

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

There were no petitions or deputations.

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

**RESOLVED** that the written questions submitted and corresponding responses are noted.

In respect of question 1, Councillor Hilton referred to the 1,665 planning applications processed and stated that he had been informed that no planning officer had made a physical site visit since March 2020. He enquired if the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy shared his concern that applications appeared to be assessed only on documents and data. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy invited the Head of Place to respond. The Head of Place advised that the information was incorrect. He stated that site visits undertaken with COVID-19 risk assessments had in fact been made, including for the most recent application processed (Kingsway Local Centre Planning Committee 7<sup>th</sup> July 2021). The Head of Place sought clarification on which applications the information received by Councillor Hilton related to. Councillor Hilton replied that he would pass on the details.

In respect of question 2, Councillor Hilton noted that the 29 planning applications determined by the elected committee represented 2.7% of the total whereas the Cheltenham Borough Council Planning Committee had determined 179 over the same period. He asked if Gloucester's process was as democratic as it could be. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy responded that the current process had been adopted by full Council. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources reminded Councillor Hilton that Ward Members have the right to refer applications to committee if they so wish. The Head of Place advised Members that the current procedures were well regarded in the industry and that increasing committee determinations could cause delays for applicants. The Cabinet Member for Environment commented that delegation to officers was often the most efficient and timely means of determination.

In respect of question 3, Councillor Pullen sought clarification on why a public consultation was not carried out in the period between July 2021 and the submission of the Lord Mayor status bid in addition to an apology for not having done so. The Leader of the Council gave reassurance that resident's views would usually be sought in such matters but that in this case there was so much work to do for officers in preparing the bid within the timescale that it had not been possible. He reiterated that he had not committed to a public consultation and had stated that it would be made, if it were possible (Council 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021 minute 19.5).

In respect of question 4, Councillor Hilton expressed surprise at some recent determinations not taken to the Planning Committee. He asked if the policies needed review to make them as democratic as possible. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy indicated that he would be satisfied in principle to instigate a review and sought guidance from the officers present on how it might be achieved. The Managing Director confirmed that the policies were a constitutional matter for which the General Purposes Committee had to make recommendations

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to Council. He reassured Members that the Head of Place could be directed to investigate a review.

In respect of question 5, Councillor Hilton asked if the Council Member to be appointed to the Board of the Kings Quarter Estate Management Company (Agenda item 12) had to be a Cabinet Member or a member of the administration. The Leader of the Council answered that the person would be very carefully selected based on their ability, experience and qualifications alone to ensure that the best choice is made.

**61. DRAFT MONEY PLAN 2022-27 & BUDGET PROPOSALS 2022/23**

Cabinet considered the report of the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that sought Members to review the Council's Draft Money Plan and budget proposals.

The Leader of the Council highlighted the key features of the report. He thanked the Finance Team and Section 151 Officer for their work. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources emphasised that this draft represented a best assessment of the Council's financial position prior to the Local Government Settlement expected to be announced later in the month. She further advised that the budget had been set with median estimates but that an impact from possible COVID-19 restrictions should be anticipated. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources expressed her own gratitude to the Section 151 Officer, Financial Services, and Accountancy Managers.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) that the assumptions contained in the Council's Draft Money Plan from 2022/23 to 2026/27 and revisions to the draft revenue budget are approved
- (2) the Draft Money Plan and attached appendices, to be updated when there is more certainty regarding Local Government financing, is noted.

**62. TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE - MID YEAR REPORT 2021/22**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that updated Members on treasury management activities for the six month period of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 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 stated that the Council had not entered into any new long term borrowing and had continued to operate within the limits outlined in the strategy in an under borrowed position.

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

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**63. FINANCIAL MONITORING - QUARTER 2, 2021/22**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that sought Members to note year-end forecasts and the financial pressures on the Council during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter ended 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources introduced the report and advised that the increase in the General Fund (2.1(1)) represented the best estimate of the year end position. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure commented that although COVID-19 had negatively impacted his portfolio this year, officers had been working hard to be well prepared for the next. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy drew Members' attention to the favourable position regarding the budget for homelessness (5.16) for which he thanked the Head of Communities. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy reminded Members that the actions underlying the figures impacted people's lives and could be transformational for them. The Cabinet Member for Environment contrasted the favourable forecast on the waste contract of £184K (15.18) with the negative position of previous years. He commented that this was a magnificent achievement and attributed it to improved recycling processes.

**RESOLVED** it is noted that:

- (1) the forecast year-end position for the financial year is currently an increase to the General Fund balance of £173k against a budgeted increase of £123k
- (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 2 of the report
- (4) the financial implications of COVID-19 and the level of economic recovery from the effects of the pandemic will continue to be monitored and reported alongside any grant funding provided to mitigate the spend or lost income.

**64. PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 2 - 2021/22**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that informed Members of the Council's performance against key measures in Quarter 2 of 2021/22.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources outlined the key trends of the report. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure commented that the Museum of Gloucester performance indications (CD & VE-1) did not adequately represent the hard work by officers behind the scenes including with online initiatives that had been recognised within the sector on a national level. The Cabinet Member for Environment noted the improving long term trend, and therefore income, for the percentage of total waste recycled (WR-31) which he ascribed to the good work of officers and the contractors Urbaser.

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**RESOLVED** that the Quarter 2 Performance Report 2021/22 at Appendix 1 of the report is noted.

**65. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2022/23**

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 2022/23.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources apprised members of the background to the scheme which is no longer funded by central government. She stated that it is recognised as one of the most generous in the region but warned that it may have be reviewed in future.

**RECOMMENDED** that:

- (1) the current Local Council Tax Support scheme, as the approved scheme for Gloucester City in 2021/22, be adopted for 2022/23
- (2) the scheme approved at 2.1(1) in the report be updated to align with any legislation changes in January 2022 and to be implemented from 01 April 2022
- (3) any urgent amendments to the scheme approved at 2.1(1) in the report, in the event of a national emergency and authorised by the government, be adopted and implemented immediately.

**66. ESTATE MANAGEMENT COMPANY FOR KINGS QUARTER**

Cabinet considered the report of the Leader of the Council that sought to secure approval to authorise officers to create a Management Company with the aim to oversee estate services to perform the obligations to tenants in accordance with the underleases and deliver on the overall strategy for the Kings Quarter estate including Kings Square and the new development known as The Forum.

The Leader of the Council reminded Members that construction had already begun with Phase 2 expected to commence in March 2022 and that considerable private sector interest had been generated. He commented that the project had sustainability and social values embedded within it and its completion will see many of the Council's aspirations realised. The Leader of the Council stressed the importance of maintaining the good quality of the estate and noted that the proposed company would operate along the same lines as the Gloucester Docks Estate Company Limited which had proved highly successful. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods remarked that it was important for the Kings Quarter and Docks management companies to be kept separate. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure underlined the value of the site as a gateway to the City.

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**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) authority is delegated to the Head of Place or the Head of Policy & Resources in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Environment to prepare and complete associated documentation for the creation of a Management Company to manage the Kings Quarter Estate
- (2) progress on the regeneration and refurbishment of Kings Square is noted
- (3) the progress with The Forum phase 1, plot 3b presently under construction with archaeology and enabling works on plot 4, is noted.

**67. FUTURE PLANS FOR GROUNDS MAINTENANCE PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Environment that outlined options and sought to make recommendations for the delivery of grounds maintenance services effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.

The Cabinet Member for Environment elucidated each option in detail and highlighted the potential benefits to the Council and residents in each. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources informed Members of her own support for Option B (4.2) which would provide clarity for residents when raising issues. She urged officers to be robust in their negotiations with Gloucester City Homes and Gloucestershire County Council should Members pursue that option. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure commented on the usefulness and monumental scale of the exercise to map land ownership, community assets and maintenance specifications for which he thanked the Head of Communities, the Transformation and Commercialisation Manager and their team.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the options set out in the report are received and noted;
- (2) Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucester City Homes are thanked for their co-operation and support in the review of these options
- (3) arrangements are made to progress with option B in the report
- (4) the licensing and gating order elements will be considered under a separate report, brought forward to Cabinet at a later date
- (5) delegated authority is given to the Head of Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead for the Environment, to finalise negotiations and implement these recommendations
- (6) should the recommended option not be possible, and negotiations fail with one or both partners, option A will be considered, with the possibility of a short term arrangement to avoid any break in service.

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**68. INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT (IFS) 2020/21 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 an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) relating to the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and the Annual CIL Rate Summary Statement by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 as required by legislation.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy acknowledged that the report was necessarily highly technical but stressed its importance given the large sums of money involved.

**RESOLVED** that the publication of the Infrastructure Funding Statement and the Annual Community Infrastructure Levy Rate Summary Statement relating to the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 is approved.

**69. REVIEW OF OFFICE ACCOMMODATION**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that provided proposals as to viable options for ongoing office accommodation for City Council staff.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources gave the background to the report and advised that this was the right time to review the office accommodation arrangements. She summarised each of the options and the particular benefits of the Eastgate Shopping Centre, an opportunity that had not been available when the accommodation was last reviewed. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources reassured Members that a briefing and visit to the Eastgate site would be arranged for all Council Members. The Cabinet Member for Environment highlighted the savings to be made with the Eastgate option and the additional custom it would bring to local retail businesses. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure pointed out that increased footfall would also benefit the markets.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) negotiations are commenced immediately with Gloucestershire County Council on current rental levels
- (2) the option to relocate to the Eastgate Shopping Centre in Summer 2022 is approved.

**70. PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF BARBICAN HOUSE, 31 COMMERCIAL ROAD, TO GLOUCESTERSHIRE ACADEMY OF MUSIC**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that proposed the disposal of Barbican House, 31 Commercial Road Gloucester, to Gloucestershire Academy of Music (GAM).

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources reminded Members that now Phase 2 of the Barbican redevelopment was successfully underway the property in

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question had already served its purpose for the Council. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure expressed support for GAM to be given the opportunity to purchase the building as he believed the security it offered would be good for both them and the development of music in the City.

**RESOLVED** that the Property Commissioning Manager is delegated authority in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Performance & Resources and the Head of Policy and Resources to dispose of the freehold interest in Barbican House to Gloucestershire Academy of Music (GAM) within the next 18 months at best consideration (disregarding tenant's improvements if appropriate) and upon such other terms as the Property Commissioning Manager in consultation with the Council Solicitor considers reasonable and appropriate.

**71. KINGS QUARTER THE FORUM PHASE 2 APPROVAL**

Cabinet considered the report of the Leader of the Council that sought to secure approval to authorise Officers to enter into a legally binding contract with the successfully tendered construction company to deliver Phase 2 for the Kings Quarter The Forum mixed use development in its entirety, in accordance with the Development Funding Agreement and approval by Council on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

The Leader of the Council informed Members that he was pleased that the delivery of The Forum was ready to progress to Phase 2 and on course to realise the high-quality regeneration aspirations of the Council. He confirmed that there had already been considerable interest from potential occupiers demonstrating confidence in the project even at this stage. The Leader of the Council advised that although risks remain, due diligence had been exercised in selecting the successful tender. He further reassured Members that the contractor had embedded social value within their tender.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure commented that the confidence expressed by potential contractors and occupiers demonstrated that the private sector wanted to be associated with Gloucester as a place to be. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources reminded Members that the regeneration would generate more than physical change bringing investment, jobs and social value to transform people's lives in the long-term. She drew Members' attention to the successful application to the government's Levelling Up Fund (3.10) which she believed would help mitigate the risks. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy expressed his own pleasure that the Council's bold foresight was now being progressed to produce such a transformative legacy showing how seriously it takes regeneration. The Leader of the Council stated that the support received from across all groups of the Council should be recognised.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the Head of Place or the Head of Policy and Resources in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment and the Council Solicitor is authorised in accordance with the Development Funding Agreement to complete a JCT Building Contract with the successfully tendered construction company to implement Phase 2 of

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Kings Quarter The Forum in its entirety as set out in Appendix 4 of the report.

- (2) authority is delegated to the Head of Place or the Head of Policy and Resources in consultation with the Council Solicitor to 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 Phase 2 for the Kings Quarter The Forum in accordance with the Council decision taken on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021 to proceed with the entire redevelopment scheme within the total capital cost of £107m.

**72. THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND HOUSING STRATEGY AND THE HEAD OF PLACE**

The Leader of the Council reminded Members that this would be the last meeting to be attended by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy and the Head of Place. He took the opportunity to thank them on behalf of Cabinet for their service. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy added his own gratitude to both the Leader of the Council and Head of Place for their support.

**Time of commencement: 6.00 pm**

**Time of conclusion: 7.00 pm**

**Chair**