



## **CABINET**

**MEETING** : Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2023

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

**Others in Attendance**

Cllr. A. Chambers

Managing Director

Director of Policy and Resources

Monitoring Officer

Head of Place

Head of Culture

Democratic and Electoral Services Officer

**APOLOGIES** : None

**60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**61. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022 are confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

There were no public questions.

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

There were no petitions or deputations.

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

In respect of question 1 Councillor A. Chambers asked what the new city brand logo represented and whether it would appear on the Visit Gloucester website. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure stated that the logo was an abstract representation of the diversity and multicultural ethos of the city and that the branding would evolve over time as more people use it and its profile rises. He

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confirmed that the Visit Gloucester website would be updated with new branding and that organisations such as Aspire were already using it.

In respect of question 2 Councillor A. Chambers affirmed his belief that a 1 hour charge had been removed before 2012 and queried whether increasing parking tariffs would be a nail in the coffin of the city centre. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources confirmed that she was confident this would not be the case and that the single hour charge had been in place since at least 2007. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources further reflected on the value for money represented by the proposed 2 hour charge for 2023 being less than it was in 2007.

In respect of question 3 Councillor A. Chambers informed Members that he had only seen a handful of officers in the Eastgate offices and questioned how so much money can have been spent seemingly without data on current usage and carbon emissions. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources relayed her own observations of many people working in the Eastgate offices. She reiterated the benefits of agile facilitated by this venue and that its use would naturally vary from day to day as well as person to person. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources noted that feedback had been positive from both the Senior Leadership Team and staff. She reminded Members that the move to the Eastgate offices represented a saving for the Council.

In respect of question 4 Councillor A. Chambers apprised Members that, contrary to the written response, he had received information that trees had died due to quality grading issues and were to be replaced by the Forestry Commission. He requested that this information be assessed to prevent mistakes being made in future. The Cabinet Member for Environment stated that a significant number did die because of drought in the unprecedented weather conditions of the last year. He advised that the County Council, rather than the Forestry Commission, would replace many of those which had died a natural death. The Cabinet Member for Environment asked that the information referred to be shared with officers and Councillor A. Chambers agreed to do so.

In respect of question 5 Councillor A. Chambers expressed concern at the rise in voluntary turnover rate and that 20% of interviewed leavers were unsatisfied. He sought clarification on when the Tree Officer position would be filled and what steps were being taken to address staff wellbeing. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources advised that the new Tree Officer had been post for 3 months. She referred to the responses given to written questions at Council (17 November 2022 questions 15, 18) on this subject and commented that year on year the annual staff survey was increasingly positive for both engagement and satisfaction levels. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources acknowledged that whereas the Council might only offer limited internal career progression, time and again it proved itself successful in providing a solid foundation to individuals from which they often progressed their careers elsewhere.

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**65. GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL PLAN 2022-2024 UPDATE**

Cabinet considered the report of the Leader of the Council that provided an update on the delivery of the activities as outlined in the Council Plan 2022-2024 intended to build a greener, fairer, better Gloucester.

The Leader of the Council summarised the report emphasising the three priorities for achieving the Council's vision (3.2). He drew Members' attention to some of the most significant achievements of 2022 such as the completion of the Kings Square regeneration project and Forum Learning Hub (3.5) which he believed should be celebrated. The Cabinet Member for Policy and Resources noted the clarity of the Progress Report (Appendix 1) and how many actions were still on track despite the cyber incident. She advised that the officers concerned should be thanked for what was a positive report.

**RESOLVED** that progress on delivery of the Council Plan 2022-2024 is noted.

**66. RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP ON ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods that presented the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group on the Council's engagement with young people, and sought a formal response from Members to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods highlighted the key features of the report. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy commented on the great work already being done in her own portfolio to engage young people in the planning process and the forthcoming Statement of Community Involvement. She reminded Members of the importance of acting as advocates for inclusion. The Cabinet Member for Environment reiterated how vital it was to engage young people and help them understand issues and challenges, especially given the long-term impact of Council undertakings such as the Joint Core Strategy.

**RESOLVED** that the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group, as set out in Appendices 1 and 3 to the report, are addressed and implemented at the earliest opportunity, and that those recommendations requiring more detailed consideration be the subject of a further report to Cabinet as necessary.

**67. GLOUCESTER GUILDHALL NATIONAL PORTFOLIO ORGANISATIONS (NPO) FUNDING DECISION**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure that informed Members of the outcome of a funding bid submitted for Gloucester Guildhall and sought approval to accept the award and proceed with a plan of implementation.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure stated that the award would be a great boost to the Guildhall for the next 3 years enabling it to further promote

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diversity and culture for all. He thanked everyone involved in the bid and especially the Head of Culture.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the successful application and offer of multi-year funding by Arts Council England to the City Council for Gloucester Guildhall is noted
- (2) the increase in the number of National Portfolio Organisations (NPO) in the city is noted as an indicator of the success of the Cultural Strategy
- (3) the Head of Culture, in consultation with the Director of Policy and Resources and the Director: One Legal is given delegated authority to accept the award on behalf of the council and to enter the 3-year agreement
- (4) the Head of Culture is given delegated authority to establish an independent Steering Board for Gloucester Guildhall.

**68. EVENTS AND FESTIVALS REPORT ON 2022 AND PLAN FOR 2023-24**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure that provided a review of festivals and events activity during 2022 and proposed a Civic and Cultural Events & Festivals Budget for 2023-24.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure noted the range and success of the events that took place in 2022. He looked forward to what he anticipated would be an exciting programme for 2023 with highlights such as the Three Choirs Festival and coronation celebrations. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure urged everyone to consult the Visit Gloucester website for the latest information. The Cabinet Member for Environment commented on the importance of doing whatever possible to benefit residents and businesses. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy informed Members how much her family had enjoyed recent events and reminded them of the hard work by officers to deliver them. The Cabinet Member for Environment asked the Head of Culture to express Cabinet's gratitude to the Cultural Services Team. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure particularly thanked the Festivals and Events Manager and Officer.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the Review of Festivals and Events Activity 2022 (appendix 1 to the report) is noted
- (2) the proposed events for 2023 (appendix 2 to the report) are endorsed
- (3) the budgets for Bright Nights and Kings Square are used as financial match to support future funding bids.

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**69. TOURIST INFORMATION PROVISION**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure that sought to detail the current offer of Gloucester's tourist information provision and what the future of that provision may look like.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure outlined some of the benefits of the proposal including the availability of information for visitors out of office hours. The Cabinet Member for Environment advised that he believed it would be a sensible response to the changing way people access information about the city as demonstrated in the trend of visitors to the Tourist Information Centre (3.2). The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources noted the increase in footfall at the Museum of Gloucester (3.3) and commented that it represented an endorsement of the 'Together Gloucester' restructure that had brought the staff of the Council's cultural venues together.

**RESOLVED** that the City Council supports the provision of all visitor information points across the city including visitor attractions, accommodation providers, transport hubs and digital information instead of one single Tourist Information Centre.

**70. CAR PARKING - TARIFF INCREASE**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that sought to review and update the current car park tariffs and car park zoning across the City to ensure that they appropriately reflect changing local demand brought about by the regeneration of the city centre and the Council's carbon neutral aims.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources advised Members that the recommendations (2.2) would be for them to consider as they were no longer intended to be presented to Council as indicated in the published report. She emphasised the importance that the administration attached to facilities for residents and visitors and reminded Members of the more than £2m invested in them since 2012. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources noted that maintenance costs had increased since the last review in 2017 and that the proposed tariff increase would still be low in comparison to other authorities and substantially lower than the National Car Parks (NCP) facilities (Appendix 2). She stated that she had accepted the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (9 January 2023 minute 80.18) for an additional narrative be added to future quarterly financial monitoring reports on car parking usage should the tariff be increased.

The Cabinet Member for Environment noted that there had been five years of inflationary pressures since the last review and that the proposed biennial re-evaluation would allow the Council to be more responsive to changing costs. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure commented that although this review had been held off for 5 years, now was the right time for it to take place. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources reminded Members that the COVID-19 lockdown would have made an earlier review inappropriate and that the general rate of inflation was beyond the control of the Council. She reiterated that the

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proposed tariff change was a measured response that would keep it one of the cheapest in the region.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the car parking tariffs are increased to reflect inflationary pressures, encourage people to consider other alternative modes of transport and better reflect current parking trends
- (2) the number of parking zones is reduced from 3 to 2 zones through the combination of the current zones 1 & 2 into a single zone to reflect the changes being brought about by the redevelopment of the City Centre and bring regularity across our City Centre car parks
- (3) the tariff options are regularised for purchasing tickets for users of the car parks, by removing the 1-hour option, in line with other comparable car parks and to encourage a longer visit to support our city centre businesses
- (4) the Director of Policy and Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Policy and Resources is authorised to undertake the necessary statutory procedures to implement these changes as outlined in the report and in appendix 1 to the report
- (5) a review of car parking charges is undertaken biennially

**71. ANNUAL REPORT FOR ENERGY COSTS AND ENERGY REDUCTION PROJECTS**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Environment that informed Members of the Council's energy costs and projects to reduce energy usage.

The Cabinet Member for Environment outlined the key elements of the report including achievements, such as the installation of heat pumps and LED lighting, as well as the impact of COVID-19. He advised that the proposed revision to future reporting (2.1(2)) would be a better mechanism to demonstrate progress against the Council's strategies. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources commented that it would be appropriate to change the reporting method as recommended given the complexity of the issues involved and changes to the Council's property portfolio.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) energy usage and consumption in the year April 2021-22 is noted
- (2) future reporting focuses on energy saving initiatives and projects led by the Climate Change Manager and annual benchmarking reporting ceases as the portfolio has evolved and habits significantly changed since 2012.

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**Time of commencement: 6.00 pm  
Time of conclusion: 6.35 pm**

**Chair**