



## CABINET

**MEETING** : Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023

**PRESENT** : Cllrs. Cook (Chair), Norman (Vice-Chair), S. Chambers (present for items 1-5), Lewis and Padilla

**Others in Attendance**

Cllrs. Field, Hilton and Wilson

Managing Director

Director of Communities

Monitoring Officer

Head of Place

Head of Culture

Democratic and Electoral Services Officer

**APOLOGIES** : None

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023 are confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

A member of the public representing Gloucestershire Catch the Bus Campaign referred to the written questions submitted as below. The Leader of the Council advised him that the answers would appear in the minutes as below.

Regarding question 1 the Leader of the Council emphasised that to avoid a breach of contract, the existing lease had to expire before a new arrangement could be made. In relation to question 5 the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods advised that the public should report issues to the City Protection Officers during usual office hours or the police at other times.

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- (1) What progress is being made on reopening the Gloucester Transport Hub café and kiosk since the issue was addressed at Cabinet on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022 (Minute 108)?

**Leader of the Council's Response:** Both the Transport Hub café and kiosk are leased to operators. As neither are trading at present, officers are in discussions with both leaseholders with a view to ensuring these facilities are reopened at the earliest opportunity.

- (2) What progress is being made to put back combined bus, railway and National Express coach departure displays at Gloucester Transport Hub?

**Leader of the Council's Response:** Whilst the Council has provided facilities to enable the display of information to Transport Hub users, it is for the operators (not the Council) to provide the relevant information. Gloucestershire County Council have overall responsibility for display content.

- (3) The roof is leaking in the Transport Hub near the National Express coach bay, what progress is being made to repair the leaks?

**Leader of the Council's Response:** The Transport Hub gutters were blocked causing overflow into the Hub itself. Work has been instructed to clear the gutters which should prevent further leaks, as well as an enhanced maintenance schedule being put in place to prevent this happening again.

- (4) Concerning the Transport Hub toilets, whilst disabled passengers have radar keys it appears that we need extra emergency keys to held in the bus and station?

**Leader of the Council's Response:** I understand that additional keys are held at the bus station for emergencies.

- (5) What work is going on to make sure more patrols in the evening are carried out by the city marshals and Gloucestershire police to deal with anti-social behaviour issues and graffiti around the city bus shelters and infrastructure?

**Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods' Response:** Gloucester operates the partnership Street Aware model which incorporates the Council, Solace, Police, CitySafe/CPOs as well as other partners as needed.

The City Protection Officers (CPOs) work until 6pm on a weekday and 10pm on a Friday & Saturday, and they patrol the City throughout their shifts. CPOs are often the first responders in reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and they play an integral role in our Street Aware process by intervening and addressing ASB where they can, and sharing evidence for further action against perpetrators where required. Currently the Council, ASB Team, Solace, are working with County Highways to address issues at bus stops and get unused bus stops removed so that they cannot be used to congregate and become ASB hotspots.

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The neighbourhood policing team patrol around other duties and proactively address ASB when it is reported to them.

With regards to graffiti, When graffiti is reported the Council (directly or via the CPOs). The matter is referred to Ubico and if the graffiti is on the Council's owned property, they arrange removal within 72 hours.

However, if the graffiti is on private property, the owner is made aware of the situation and they are expected to arrange removal. The only exception to this rule is if the graffiti is offensive (or the request has come from the police). In such situation, the graffiti is revolved/covered by Ubico within 24 hours regardless whether the graffiti is on private property or property in the Council's ownership.

All of the above work is undertaken proactively as much as possible, but we do also rely on businesses and members of the public reporting issues to us. Receiving reports not only lets us know what's going on, but it also helps us to direct resources accordingly and if we receive reports of issues at certain locations/times of day we can work with partners to try and arrange additional visible patrols.

Businesses who are part of CitySafe can report ASB via the DISC system and a report will automatically come through to Solace. Businesses and members of the public can also report to the Police by phoning 101 (or 999 in an emergency), reporting online, or going in to Bearland police reception. High level or recurrent ASB issues can also be reported to Solace at [asb@gloucester.gov.uk](mailto:asb@gloucester.gov.uk) or via the Council's customer services team on 396396.

- (6) In the Gloucester Local Plan tourism is very important to the city and the county economy. What progress is being made on protecting the station hotel and getting it reopened and to work with the Canal and River Trust on the silting up of Gloucester Docks?

**Leader of the Council's Response:** The Station Hotel is currently occupied and in private ownership.

Dredging of the Docks is in hand by the Canal and River Trust (CRT) and will cease for the Summer on 9<sup>th</sup> June and recommence in September. The CRT have reopened moorings in the main basin and are publishing depths regularly. Officers are working with the CRT to communicate updates regularly.

- (7) What progress is being made on the marketing of the new half hourly MetroWest railway service from Bristol Temple Meads and the hourly train service to Worcester starting the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 operated by First Group Great Western Railway (GWR)?

**Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure's Response:** The additional MetroWest services operated by GWR launched on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 and are already carrying lots of passengers. Trains are running every half hour between Gloucester and Bristol, and hourly to Worcester. The new services are being highlighted on the 'Getting to Gloucester' pages of the Visit Gloucester website, as well as on GWR and MetroWest's websites, and additional services are obvious when booking

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through rail ticket booking platforms. GWR released to the press on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2023, celebrating the launch of the services. West of England Combined Authority (WECA) publicly announced the intention to extend these MetroWest services to Gloucester in July 2020, with project partners updating on the project through the press across 2021 and 2022.

The Democratic and Electoral Services Officer drew Members' attention to the written questions submitted by another member of the public, who was unable to attend in person, as below. The Cabinet Member for Environment stated that the answers would appear in the minutes as below.

- (8) What progress has the Climate Change Member Working Group made, in two years' of existence, having held no meetings in that time?

**Cabinet Member for Environment's Response:** The most recent meeting of Gloucester City Council's Climate Change Member Working Group took place on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

There were two substantive agenda items:

The Group discussed the recent appointment of WSP as partners for work being undertaken to deliver a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, and a Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment, and received an introduction to the work from a senior WSP representative. More information on the project and the role of WSP can be found here: [www.gloucester.gov.uk/about-the-council/news/2023-news/gloucester-city-council-announces-wsp-as-climate-change-strategy-partner/](http://www.gloucester.gov.uk/about-the-council/news/2023-news/gloucester-city-council-announces-wsp-as-climate-change-strategy-partner/)

The second substantive item for discussion was regarding the potential for micro energy generation and thermal efficiency interventions in Gloucester.

- (9) Do Council litter pickers have regular rounds, as they used to, or do they only go out to pick up rubbish when it's been reported by the public? (I ask this because of the fly tipping in alleys like the one behind Sidney Street, which is left there for months, despite being easily visible from the road).

**Cabinet Member for Environment's Response:** Street cleaners have rounds with varying schedules depending on the area. Areas of high footfall for example the town centre are cleaned daily, but the majority of wards are done on a fortnightly basis. Fly-tipping if reported to us is cleared within 48 hours, it should be noted that we are only responsible for rubbish which is fly-tipped on Council owned land, if it is private land we are not responsible.

- (10) If legislation to fine Asda in Gloucester for trolleys left on our streets was put into action in March of last year, why did the City Council answer a Freedom of Information request almost a year later to say that no fines had been imposed, and still haven't been, for all that Barton & Tredworth residents have been informed to the contrary?

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**Cabinet Member for Environment's Response:** The Council have introduced a 'charge' for collecting and holding trolleys on behalf of supermarkets, as opposed to a fine. Enviro-crime Officers are able to use their discretion to decide when to pass on these charges to the respective supermarkets. In the case of Asda in Barton and Tredworth (B&T), we had developed a working partnership with their management, whereby they would send their car park operatives to roam the streets (within close proximity of Asda) on a daily basis to bring their trolleys back and they would take the responsibility of removing all fly-tips onto their land once they have been investigated by our Enviro-crime Officers. As the partnership was working and Asda was seen to be making an effort, in the spirit partnership working, the Enviro-crime team have used their discretion not to charge Asda for the odd trolleys that Ubico were having to collect in B&T.

This situation is monitored and if and when needed, the charges will be passed on to Asda and failure to make payment (when the situation arises), the trolleys will be disposed of (as per legislation).

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

There were no petitions or deputations.

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

In respect of question 5 Councillor Hilton queried whether the Cabinet Member was troubled by the 18-month gap between the data breach and its announcement to the public. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources reiterated that this derived from adherence to the advice of specialist agencies and other councils who had experienced similar incidents.

In respect of question 6 Councillor Hilton noted that the Council had been fined in 2017 for a data breach in 2014. He asked how confident the Cabinet Member was that there would be no fine for the 2021 breach and that the costs for the cyber-incident would not rise over £1 million. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources confirmed that there had been no increase to the cost of the cyber-incident. She advised that she could not predetermine the decision of Information Commissioner's Office but that the Council had been transparent and complied with them throughout the whole process.

In respect of question 7 Councillor Hilton queried why the Russian origin of the group responsible for the cyber incident had been denied before the announcement of 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources noted that the Russian origin of the group had never been denied and that the Council had followed the advice of law enforcement agencies regarding disclosure from the beginning of the process.

In respect of question 8 Councillor Field sought further detail on progress made with the Gloucester City Homes senior management team. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy stated that conversations were ongoing with a meeting this week.

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In respect of question 9 Councillor Field enquired if the commercial elements of the regeneration plans would be discarded should construction cost inflation jeopardise the schemes. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy commented that it would be wrong to speculate on hypothetical scenarios.

In respect of question 15 Councillor Wilson asked if his understanding was correct that the H-Drive had been intended only for officer's personal working documents. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources responded that this was her understanding too and asked the Managing Director for clarification. The Managing Director advised that although this was the case, at the time of the cyber incident some staff, having received unclear guidance, had documents on the H-Drive that should have been on a shared drive. He reassured Members that clearer guidance was being developed.

In respect of question 16 Councillor Wilson sought clarification on when the investigation report would be shared with Members. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources commented that a timeline was not ready yet as a key officer at the time had since retired but she reassured Members that a timeline would be available within a month. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources further advised that there would probably be a report for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, focused on the experience of the public, and one for the Audit and Governance Committee with an emphasis on internal issues.

In respect of question 18 Councillor Hilton informed Members that he perceived the Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey report to be important to the residents of Kingsholm, especially regarding small houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). He sought further clarification of the timeline towards evidence from the report being able to inform decisions on the conversion of HMOs. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy noted that she understood the report to be important to residents of all wards and that the timeline was dictated by legislation.

In respect of question 19 Councillor Hilton requested that the financing of works to improve Hillfield Gardens be reviewed as he believed it was not right to just rely on the Friends group for what he considered to be one of the best parks in Gloucester. The Cabinet Member for Environment stated that he shared the high regard expressed for the Gardens and commented that they might be an appropriate recipient of a ward member's community grant. He gave assurance that he would discuss raising the priority for funding of the park with officers but cautioned that resources were finite so spending more here would mean not spending elsewhere.

**6. 2022-2024 END OF YEAR COUNCIL PLAN 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.

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The Leader of the Council outlined the priorities driving the Plan (3.2) and highlighted some of the most significant achievements (3.5). The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources reminded Members that the report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (5<sup>th</sup> June 2023 Minute 10) without recommendations for Cabinet.

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

**7. COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER POLICY**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that sought the adoption of a policy to establish a framework and a process that would enable assets to be transferred to community organisations where appropriate.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources advised Members that the proposed policy would both protect assets and benefit communities. She stated that it had been discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (5<sup>th</sup> June 2023 Minute 9) and received a positive response.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure commented that the policy would be a further way of both engaging with, and empowering the public. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods noted that it was in keeping with the administration's commitment to support community groups and benefit residents. The Cabinet Member for Environment informed Members that he was keen to have in place a consistent policy in place for all and that he looked forward to his forthcoming meeting with Gloucestershire Music Academy to secure the future of Barbican House in this context.

**RESOLVED** that the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy is adopted.

**8. TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE - ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that sought Members to note treasury management activities for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, prudential indicators, interest rate forecasts and an overview of the financial year 2022-23.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources confirmed that there had been no new borrowing in the relevant period and that the Council had operated within the limits of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (Council 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022 Minute 94).

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

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**9. BLACKFRIARS PRIORY BUSINESS PLAN 2023-2028**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure that presented the 2023-2028 Blackfriars Priory Business Plan and sought support to enter the next lease agreement with English Heritage.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure advised Members that he was confident that proposed plan (Appendix 1) and 25-year lease (10.4-5) would build on existing achievements which included receiving national recognition as an outstanding wedding venue, education facility and historic building. He took the opportunity to place on record his appreciation for the Blackfriars Team who were responsible for recent accomplishments.

The Cabinet Member for Environment confirmed that he had observed the enthusiasm of that team for himself. The Cabinet Member for Environment further commented that the site needed to make money and that he expected it to do so with the proposed plan.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the interim Head of Finance and Resources and Head of Culture, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Culture, are delegated to enter into negotiations for a new lease agreement with English Heritage
- (2) the aims of the business plan and continuation of Cabinet as an advocate for the Blackfriars programme are endorsed
- (3) a continued financial contribution by the authority for the next 5 years to develop Blackfriars Priory is committed to.

**Time of commencement: 6.00 pm**

**Time of conclusion: 6.35 pm**

**Chair**