



## CABINET

**MEETING** : Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024

**PRESENT** : Cllrs. Hilton (Chair), Wilson (Vice-Chair), Courtney, Field, Sawyer, Shervey and Trimnell

**Others in Attendance**

Cllrs A. Chambers, S. Chambers, Chambers-Dubus, Conder, Gravells MBE and Pullen

Managing Director

Director of Communities

Head of Culture and Leisure

Monitoring Officer

Head of Transformation and Commissioning

Policy and Governance Manager

Democratic Services Officer

**APOLOGIES** : None

### 31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 32. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024 are confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

There were no public questions.

### 34. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

### 35. LEADER AND CABINET MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

In respect of question 3 Councillor A. Chambers reiterated the figures given for homeless people and that in October 2024 alone only one third (21 of 63) of the single person households who presented were placed in temporary accommodation. He asked why consideration would be given to the disposal of

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potential temporary accommodation (Agenda item 12) in this context. The Cabinet Member for Housing advised that the households not placed were not necessarily homeless but already in temporary accommodation when they presented to the Council. He stated that the proposed disposal would enable more properties to be acquired that would be better suited to use as temporary accommodation.

In respect of question 4 Councillor A. Chambers contrasted the average of 34 people sleeping rough over the last 4 weeks with the 19 which he believed to be the average under the previous administration. He sought clarification of the apparent trend. The Cabinet Member for Community Engagement emphasised that she did not want a single person sleeping rough and gave reassurance that the administration would do its hardest to prevent it and reduce the numbers. She further commented on the complexity of the issue.

In respect of question 5 Councillor A. Chambers noted the loss to the Council of both money and accommodation spaces for single people from the proposed disposal while an average of 34 people were currently sleeping rough. He enquired whether it was thought right to keep people on the streets. The Cabinet Member for Resources advised that, besides the £25,000 administration costs per year, the properties in question were not in his view suitable for conversion to accommodate vulnerable single individuals safely. He confirmed that it was intended to seek more appropriate accommodation and that 17 properties had already been bought. The Cabinet Member for Resources commented that imposing such premises on local communities without engaging with them loses their support and creates problems.

In respect of question 6 Councillor A. Chambers asked that the matter be referred to a Council meeting for discussion given the volume of homeless people needing temporary accommodation. The Leader of the Council confirmed that the Constitution of the City Council had been followed as had the policy of preserving family homes from becoming houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).

In respect of question 7 Councillor A. Chambers informed Members that he did not believe the Council took recycling seriously and queried whether adopting one large bin would be more expensive as he believed these bins were the same as those currently collected for general waste so new lorries would not need to be purchased. The Cabinet Member for Environment made it clear that the Council took recycling extremely seriously having what is already a very good system with relatively high engagement with residents which it was planned to increase still further. He advised that purchasing new bins alone would incur costs of over £1.2m. The Cabinet Member for Environment also highlighted the loss of sale income and higher risk of contamination fines from comingled recycle. He stated that the Council could not afford to implement the proposal.

Councillor A. Chambers requested that he be permitted to ask a further question and the Chair declined the request as the question had not been submitted in accordance with the rules.

In respect of question 8 Councillor S. Chambers asked if, for auditing purposes, logs were kept of any edits to the online recordings. The Leader of the Council confirmed that the unedited master recordings were retained offline. He assured

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Councillor S. Chambers that he would ask the relevant officers if there were logs and forward the response.

In respect of question 9 Councillor S. Chambers referred to the Leader of the Council's response to question 6 directed to the Cabinet Member for Housing. She queried whether the latter should have answered and whether his name should be on the temporary accommodation report (Agenda item 12) as she believed it to be substantially relevant to his portfolio. The Leader of the Council stated that the report was rightly in the name of the Cabinet Member for Resources as it concerned the disposal of assets and that as Leader he had the authority to delegate responsibility to Cabinet Members and was capable of providing the response to that question.

In respect of question 10 Councillor S. Chambers enquired whether safety advice had been given to rough sleepers. The Cabinet Member for Community Engagement reiterated the importance of protecting rough sleepers and stated that she would find out what measures had been taken and respond direct to Councillor S. Chambers.

In respect of question 11 Councillor S. Chambers noted that Members were not notified of the security officer presence until after the meeting (Overview and Scrutiny Committee 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024). She sought clarification of when the Leader was informed and why the information could not have been passed to Members earlier to reassure them. The Leader of the Council advised that he had not authorised the decision and had been informed by email earlier that afternoon. He noted that he attended the meeting in the public gallery not as a participant.

In respect of question 12 Councillor S. Chambers asked how much equipment and how many operatives were employed daily for leaf clearing. The Cabinet Member for Environment confirmed that leaf clearing was taken seriously and that the summer weeding crews had been deployed to deal with autumn leaves. He reassured Councillor S. Chambers that a written answer would be sent.

**36. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2025-28 FOR CONSULTATION**

Cabinet considered the report of the Leader of the Council that presented the draft Corporate Plan 2025-2028 and sought approval to commence the required consultation process.

The Leader of the Council summarised the report. He commented that work streams and the administration's manifesto had been combined to address the Council's key objectives (3.3). The Leader of the Council reminded Members that there would be a lot of work to do to deliver such an ambitious plan with more actions than the plan it is intended to replace.

The Cabinet Member for Resources thanked officers for producing such an easy-to-follow document (Appendix 1). He informed Members that he looked forward to the proposed public consultation and hoped that all political parties would contribute to the plan through debate as he believed it would make a big difference to the City.

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The Cabinet Member for Planning advised that she was pleased with the plan's bold ambition and that it put regeneration at its heart. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure drew Members' attention to the commitment to Gloucester's vibrant culture (Appendix 1 No.3) and the exciting programme of events described there. The Cabinet Member for Community Engagement commented on the importance of the proposed consultation in obtaining feedback, especially from young people.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the draft Corporate Plan 2025-2028 is approved for public consultation;
- (2) the timetable for the development and finalisation of the Corporate Plan 2025-2028 is noted.

**37. REVIEW OF PROVISION FOR CUSTOMERS WHO NEED FACE-TO-FACE SERVICES**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and the Cabinet Member for Housing that provided the background to and information about the review of provision for customers who need face-to-face service.

The Cabinet Member for Housing highlighted the necessity of the proposed review to help people who have struggled to access digital and telephone-based services. He advised that it aligned with the administration's manifesto promise to 'put the heart back into Gloucester'. The Cabinet Member for Community Engagement emphasised the importance of exploring all options and seeking feedback in order to offer the most cost-effective and best possible service to residents.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the progress made to date is noted;
- (2) the undertaking of the review is approved.

**38. GRAFFITI ACTION PLAN**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Environment that sought Members to review the processes currently used to tackle unauthorised graffiti within the City and develop an action plan for improving the service.

The Leader of the Council noted that the report demonstrated progress had been made since the resolution of Council requiring action to be taken (25<sup>th</sup> January 2024 Minute 70.11). The Cabinet Member for Environment advised that the Action Plan (Appendix 1) adopted a common sense approach that includes preventative measures and working in partnership with a broad range of groups, organisations

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and individuals. He reminded Members that it is a non-exhaustive live document subject to additions as work progresses.

**RESOLVED** that the Graffiti Action Plan (Appendix 1 of the report) is noted.

**39. HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Housing that provided Members with the opportunity to review Gloucester's draft Housing Assistance Policy and sought approval to carry out a public consultation.

The Cabinet Member for Housing highlighted the key features of the draft policy that would enable residents to remain in their homes. He noted that the City Council was blazing a trail as the first authority to bring forward such a policy in the county.

The Cabinet Member for Resources made clear its importance in affecting residents' lives for the better. He drew Members' attention to the focus on removing barriers to individuals and caregivers (3.3) and commented that the more that can be done to help people the better.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) a public consultation of the draft Housing Assistance Policy is agreed;
- (2) following the consultation and consideration to any representations received, a final Housing Assistance Policy report is recommended for confirmation to Cabinet in early 2025 for full adoption in April 2025.

**40. THE PREVALENCE OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION IN GLOUCESTER**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Cabinet Member for Planning that sought Members to approve the preparation of evidence and complete an options appraisal into houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in Gloucester so as to better understand their community impacts and to consider additional controls.

The Cabinet Member for Planning referred to the importance of HMOs but also growing concerns among councils and residents relating to high concentrations and poor management. She advised that the proposed review would provide the robust evidence needed to deliver the administration's manifesto pledge to mitigate negative aspects of their impact. The Cabinet Member for Housing made it clear that the key goal was to improve standards and the quality of accommodation.

The Leader of the Council noted that under planning law HMOs of six persons or less do not have to apply for planning permission (3.3) so that the requirement of no more than 10% of properties being HMOs within a 100 metre radius of a planning application for a new HMO (Gloucester City Plan 2011-31 Policy A2) could not be

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applied in their case. He commented that the Council had to make sure that owners of HMOs with four, five, or six people should request planning permission in future. The Leader of the Council further advised that the proposed review would provide the detailed evidence required to comprehend where too many HMOs are being supported in a single area, evidence that was not gathered in the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey (Cabinet 6th March 2024 Agenda item 18).

The Cabinet Member for Community Engagement reminded Members of the importance of not being seen to be against HMOs. She stated that managed properly they can provide good accommodation.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) authority is delegated to the Corporate Director and Head of Place in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Housing and Planning for the following –
  - a) to identify resources to deliver the review and carry out a new burdens impact assessment for the Council;
  - b) to prepare a final report for Cabinet setting out the key findings and recommendations.

**41. DISPOSAL OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Resources that sought to outline the reason for the disposal of two properties (property no. 2 and property no. 8) purchased as part of the Council's Temporary Accommodation Acquisition Programme and to delegate authority to enable the disposal.

The Cabinet Member for Resources summarised the report. He drew Members' attention to the points raised in its consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (4<sup>th</sup> November 2024 Minute 39). The Cabinet Member for Resources advised that this administration took a different view of how to administer temporary accommodation from the last. He reminded Members of their manifesto pledge to both support homeless people and control the proliferation of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and that the Temporary Accommodation Acquisition Programme approved by Council (16<sup>th</sup> November 2023 Minute 50) did not state that family homes would be converted into HMOs. The Cabinet Member for Resources noted that converting the two family homes in question into HMOs would be contrary to both the manifesto and what he believed to be the principles of the Temporary Acquisition Programme as well as having a negative impact on the locality.

The Cabinet Member for Resources detailed each of the revised recommendations (Addendum) published in response to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolutions (Appendix 2). He reassured Members that if there are homeless families for whom the two properties are suitable then they will have access to them.

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**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) Cabinet will enable use of property no. 2 and property no. 8 to be used as family temporary accommodation should there be suitable families large enough for their use and officers deem them a reasonable offer of temporary accommodation;
- (2) should no suitable homeless families be found for either property, then Cabinet will instruct officers to proceed with the proposed decision to dispose of either property, which will be done in consultation and agreement with the Cabinet Member for Resources;
- (3) the proceeds of the sale will be ringfenced for further purchases of suitable temporary accommodation, which will be done in consultation and agreement with the Cabinet Member for Housing.

**42. REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA) – ANNUAL UPDATE**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Resources that sought to update Members on the Council's use of its powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA).

The Cabinet Member for Resources outlined the background to the report. He confirmed that, as has been the case in previous years, the powers had not been used this year.

**RESOLVED** that the annual update on the use of RIPA powers is noted.

**Time of commencement: 6.00 pm**

**Time of conclusion: 6.52 pm**

**Chair**