



MINUTES OF COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

DATE: Wednesday 8 November 2023 TIME: 10.00 am

VENUE: Council Chamber - Shire Hall, Gloucester

Present

Membership:

Cllr Carole Allaway-Martin	Cllr Joe Harris	Cllr Alan Preest
Cllr Matt Babbage	Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Cllr Philip Robinson
Cllr Paul Baker	Cllr Colin Hay	Cllr Steve Robinson
Cllr John Bloxson	Cllr Alex Hegenbarth	Cllr Vernon Smith (Chair)
Cllr David Brown	Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Cllr Lisa Spivey
Cllr Alastair Chambers	Cllr Stephen Hirst	Cllr Lynden Stowe
Cllr Cate Cody	Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Cllr Wendy Thomas
Cllr Linda Cohen	Cllr Nick Housden	Cllr Brian Tipper
Cllr Stephen Davies	Cllr Beki Hoyland	Cllr Pam Tracey MBE
Cllr Dr David Drew	Cllr Mark Mackenzie- Charrington	Cllr Chloe Turner
Cllr Ben Evans	Cllr Chris McFarling	Cllr Robert Vines
Cllr Stephan Fifield	Cllr Dr Andrew Miller	Cllr Roger Whyborn
Cllr Bernard Fisher	Cllr Graham Morgan	Cllr Kathy Williams
Cllr Andrew Gravells MBE	Cllr Dom Morris	Cllr Susan Williams (Vice- Chair)
Cllr David Gray	Cllr Gill Moseley	Cllr Suzanne Williams
Cllr Terry Hale	Cllr Emma Nelson	Cllr Dr David Willingham
Cllr Rebecca Halifax	Cllr David Norman MBE	
Cllr Tim Harman	Cllr Sajid Patel	

Apologies: Bill Crowther (Honorary Alderman), Cllr Paul McLain and Gordon Shurmer (Honorary Alderman)

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were received:

- Cllr Alan Preest: in relation to Motion 930, Veteran from Royal Air Force
- Cllr Carole Allaway-Martin: in relation to Motion 930, Medical Specialist Reservist
- Cllr Dom Morris: in relation to Motion 930, Reservist
- Cllr Emma Nelson: in relation to Motion 933, a personal interest.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

4.1 White Ribbon

The Chair stated that almost 12 months ago to the day, this chamber committed GCC to becoming a white ribbon accredited organisation, which it has since duly achieved. As an accredited organisation GCC had committed to, amongst other things, raising awareness of violence against women and girls to help bring about change. It was added that on the 25th November, the council will be supporting White Ribbon Day and the Chair encouraged all members to help amplify this support in any way they can. The Chair also reminded members that to demonstrate their support and commitment to the cause they could sign up to become a white ribbon champion or ambassador. More details can be found on the White Ribbon UK website.

4.2 Retirement of Lydney local Wayne Barnes – International Rugby Referee

The Chair invited Cllr Alan Preest, local member for Lydney to say a few words.

Cllr Preest shared with members that Lydney resident Wayne Barnes had recently announced his retirement from refereeing after the Rugby World Cup Final earlier this month. He referenced the legacy left behind of 5 World Cups, 111 Test Matches, 26 Six Nation Games, 3 European Finals and 10 Domestic Premiership Finals. It was added however that through all of this, Wayne had never forgotten his Forest connections and alongside his wife, continued to annually arrange a rugby fundraiser at Lydney RFC to raise money for Breast Cancer Now. Cllr Preest asked members to recognise and congratulate this exceptional rugby referee career and asked that the Chair, on behalf of Council, sent a letter to Wayne to this affect.

4.3 Earthquake in Nepal

The Chair mentioned the recent news of the earthquake that has hit Nepal. He shared with members that Cllr Andrew Gravells had been in touch with those at the Gurkha Allied Rapid Reaction Corps Support Battalion based at Imjin Barracks expressing to them that Gloucestershire County Council were thinking of their colleagues and their families back in Nepal at this sad time. He echoed those thoughts.

4.4 Remembrance Service

The Chair notified members that a County Council Armistice Day Remembrance Service will be held in main reception at Shire Hall at 11.00am on Friday 10 November 2023. Participants, councillors and staff joining the service are advised to make their way to main reception at Shire

Hall by 10.45am. A two-minute silence will be held during the service. The service will be live streamed for those unable to attend in person.

4.5 Middle East

The Chair invited members to join a one minute's silence for the thousands of civilians who had lost their lives in the Middle East over recent weeks.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Fifty-five public questions had been submitted prior to the meeting. The following supplementary questions were asked:

Question 2 – Gloucester City Councillor, Lorraine Campbell, asked whether Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) viewed Stroud District Council's development plan for Whaddon as having a severe traffic impact on St Barnabus Roundabout.

Cllr David Gray stated that any major development would need to understand the impact it would have on things such as traffic, which was why GCC officers had informed Stroud District Council that bringing forward the Whaddon Development scheme would make their Stroud Local Plan unsound because of the affect it would have on the traffic for the residents.

Question 17 – Cheltenham Borough Councillor, Izaak Tailford, expressed concern about a resident he knew in the Zone 15 Parking Permit scheme who was unable to use the digital and telephone visitor parking permit system.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne ask the questioner to share the resident's contact details with the Council in order for officers to make contact and find a solution.

Question 21 – Cllr Tailford expressed concern about visibility issues with the new Zone 15 parking restrictions.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne asked the resident to email the details of any particular concerns so that they could be looked into by the appropriate officer.

Question 22 – Cllr Tailford questioned the council on how much revenue from the Cheltenham permit parking schemes was reinvested into Cheltenham and how much would be made from the Parking Zone 15 in particular.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne stated that GCC would be unable to state a figure for how much revenue would be made from Parking Zone 15 until twelve months had passed. However, he stated that it was likely that more money was spent on Cheltenham's roads than was made from the parking permits.

6. CORPORATE PARENTING

6.1 Cllr Stephen Davies, Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Early Years, gave a summary of the report.

- 6.2 On being questioned about why the rate of looked after children in education, training, or employment at the end of the academic year was below target, the Cabinet Member recognised that the statistic was low and that they were trying to improve it. He stated that he would take away the question to provide a more detailed answer and he agreed to meet with the Member who asked the question separately.
- 6.3 A Member asked why GCC were not on the Care Leavers Covenant List. The Cabinet Member stated that he would need to confirm the exact Covenant the member was referring to ensure an accurate answer.
- 6.4 When asked about the reason for the statistic that 10% of children in care were reported missing in the last 12 months, the Cabinet Member confirmed that he would need to find out more information and report back to the Member.
- 6.5 A Member asked why the statistic for the number of children in care was at its highest recorded and what could be causing the increase. The Cabinet Member stated that the national average of children in care had risen, and that Gloucestershire's rate reflects this increase. This figure also included asylum-seeking children.
- 6.6 Members acknowledged the hard work of those who worked with children in care and thanked the staff at Trevone House for facilitating the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee Visit in October.

7. PETITIONS

No petitions were received.

8. MOTIONS

Motion 930: Notice of Motion – Free Bus Travel for Gloucestershire Veterans and Service Personnel

- 8.1 Cllr Cate Cody proposed, and Cllr Chris McFarling seconded the following motion. This includes a friendly amendment from the Conservative Group which was accepted prior to the meeting:

November is the month of remembrance; This Council seeks to do more than provide tacit support for Veterans and Service Personnel in our County by taking steps to make a positive difference to their lives in recognition of their service.

*Accordingly, this council calls on the Cabinet member to **ask officers to draw up bring forward options proposals for consideration by all Group Leaders** as part of the 2024/25 draft budget process to provide a free bus pass to all Veterans and Service Personnel living within Gloucestershire,*

(based on the principles of the existing scheme for pensioners in the County, i.e., free travel on production of a valid identity card).

- 8.2 Cllr Cody stated that, during this time of remembrance in particular, the motion was a chance for this Council to do something more and take action to make a difference for our armed forces community. A free bus pass for veterans and service personnel would help financially, especially for those without a car, and enable better connectivity. It was recognised that if this motion passed, there would be a cost implication as it could see a high take up, but it should equally not be forgotten that there was a cost to the planet for the number of vehicles currently on our roads. The likelihood however is that most who were eligible would not take up the free pass for different reason, including being unable to access a suitable bus route or using other concessionary passes. It was added that in 2018 the Government introduced an armed forces ID card which could be used as proof of identity if this scheme was approved. Cllr Cody hoped that members would support this motion and show their support for Gloucestershire's current and former service personnel.
- 8.3 In seconding the motion, Cllr McFarling emphasised that supporting this motion today was simply the right thing to do, particularly at this time of year in remembrance. He welcomed the amendment by the Conservative Group which would ensure the programme was properly costed and the Council therefore spent what it was able to.
- 8.4 Cllr Evans, Liberal Democrat Group Leader, spoke in favour of the motion on behalf of the Group and echoed comments around the useful amendment to understand the details. He felt it would send a message from local leaders that even in a time of financial pressure for councils, that they recognised, appreciated and were grateful for all current personnel and veterans.
- 8.5 Cllr Gravells spoke as Armed Forces Champion for the Council and gave examples to members about the type of support local authorities across Gloucestershire provided for veterans which included things like; transition back into civilian life, helping with housing or social services for example.
- 8.6 The Cabinet Member responsible for bus services, Cllr Philip Robinson, raised concern about the cost of such a scheme to the taxpayer. He added that officers had done some initial research on potential models and different projections estimated either £5 – 11 million per year or £600,000 - £1 million per year. Either projection was clearly a significant amount of money for the Council and therefore important questions remained around the scheme's viability. He was however willing to support the amended motion in order to properly scope the options.
- 8.7 Cllr Bloxsom, Labour Group Leader, showed support for the amended motion on behalf of the Group but shared comments around how the scheme as suggested would be practically implemented, particularly in relation to

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identification. He welcomed the opportunity to look into this further and properly understand the detail.

- 8.8 In summing up, Cllr Cody thanked members for their contributions today and reiterated that scheme options would be considered by all group leaders when available.
- 8.9 On being put to the vote, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

November is the month of remembrance; This Council seeks to do more than provide tacit support for Veterans and Service Personnel in our County by taking steps to make a positive difference to their lives in recognition of their service.

Accordingly, this council calls on the Cabinet member to ask officers to draw up options for consideration by all Group Leaders as part of the 2024/25 draft budget process to provide a free bus pass to all Veterans and Service Personnel living within Gloucestershire, (based on the principles of the existing scheme for pensioners in the County, i.e., free travel on production of a valid identity card).

- 8.10 Due to the declarations of interest referenced under Item 3, Cllrs Alan Preest, Carole Allaway-Martin and Dom Morris were not present for the debate or the vote.

Motion 931: Train Ticket pricing structure

- 8.11 Cllr Alan Preest proposed, and Cllr David Gray seconded the following motion:

The cost of a rail Adult return day ticket from Lydney to Gloucester currently costs £11.60. (Chepstow-Gloucester £13.20).

One price fits all, there are no off-peak concessions.

Travelling by train is more than a journey, it is and should be the ready-made solution to make our roads quieter and safer and improve the air quality. Rail is an environmentally friendly way to travel and plays a critical role in helping to tackle climate change.

Council resolves to write to the Transport for Wales overarching Authority, the Welsh Government, to ask them to explain their regulatory pricing structure particularly for the Chepstow -Lydney-Gloucester journeys and consider an overall fare reduction, but at the very least the creation of a more realistic off-peak day return fare, in anticipation of the potential economic benefits, tourism benefits and climate change.

- 8.12 Cllr Preest stated that the 21-minute journey from Lydney to Gloucester currently cost £11.60 for a return, which was more in comparison to many other similar journeys, for example Gloucester to Yate at 24 minutes was £8.90 and Lydney to Newport, 35 minutes at £9.70 on average. He noted that due to the current Government supplement a return bus journey cost only £4 or less with concessionary travel options. The benefits for resident using the Lydney rail route included a reduced journey time in comparison to bus or car, the station was easily accessible by foot or cycle from the town centre and it had recently improved shelters in place. He added that rail was one of the greenest forms of transport, with an estimated 70 cars being removed from the road for one full train service. This motion called for a fairer pricing structure for this rail route and for prices to be aligned with other similar journeys.
- 8.13 Cllr Gray as seconder reserved his right to speak.
- 8.14 A few members spoke in favour of the motion but expressed their disappointment at its narrow scope. It was raised that there were country-wide issues with the cost of trains, with it often being cheaper to fly to many destinations than take a train journey across the same country. There was also a need to call for the electrification of the railway as diesel trains were still very polluting and air quality was not a function that could be enforced against railways. They agreed with the sentiment of the motion but felt a wider canvas would have been a better use of Council time.
- 8.15 In seconding the motion, Cllr Gray emphasised his support for local focused and sensible motions like this, rather than motions that had a limited likelihood of making a change for Gloucestershire residents. In this instance, the rail fare for this particular journey was an unfair anomaly which needed to be raised.
- 8.16 On being put to the vote, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

The cost of a rail Adult return day ticket from Lydney to Gloucester currently costs £11.60. (Chepstow-Gloucester £13.20).

One price fits all, there are no off-peak concessions.

Travelling by train is more than a journey, it is and should be the ready-made solution to make our roads quieter and safer and improve the air quality. Rail is an environmentally friendly way to travel and plays a critical role in helping to tackle climate change.

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realistic off-peak day return fare, in anticipation of the potential economic benefits, tourism benefits and climate change.

Motion 932: Sustainable Catering and Procurement Policy

8.17 Cllr Beki Hoyland proposed, and Cllr Chloe Turner seconded the following motion. This includes a friendly amendment from the Conservative Group which was accepted before the meeting:

Council notes:

- We are experiencing climate breakdown, an obesity epidemic, and a cost-of-living crisis. As a council we have declared a climate emergency, have council targets to reduce obesity, and have a multi-agency ongoing response to the cost-of-living crisis.*
- What we eat, and how that food is produced, affects our health, the environment, and our local economy.*
- The **global** food system contributes about 30% to greenhouse gas emissions – more than transport or energy - and industrial farming is the leading cause of the decline of wildlife in the UK, antibiotic resistance, and zoonotic diseases. Additionally, a third of the food we produce goes to waste. About a third of all human-caused greenhouse gas emissions is linked to food. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s43016-021-00225-9/>*
- The quality of our diets follows a social gradient, with those in poorer households consuming less fruit and vegetables and more ultra-processed food and drink produced by multinational industries. Many people struggle to afford diets that align with government minimum recommendations for a healthy and balanced diet. What we eat has become the biggest risk factor for preventable disease, taking a massive toll on our health, causing debilitating illness, and placing an unsustainable strain on the NHS.*
- Ensuring that procurement policies support and encourage local production will help create and maintain local jobs through the supply chains as well as grow the local economy.*

Council acknowledges:

- Changing what we eat and where it comes from has the potential to benefit both the health of people and the planet.*
- Locally produced food has the potential to support the wider local economy.*
- Gloucestershire County Council is a key partner in Gloucestershire Food and Farming Partnership whose purpose, among others, is to create innovative approaches to transform the food and farming system through initiatives that deliver multiple health, environmental and economic outcomes.*
- Gloucestershire is a member of Sustainable Food Places that celebrates the success of those places taking a joined up, holistic approach to food*

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and that are achieving significant positive change on a range of key food issues.

The council resolves to:

- **Consult with our staff to produce a policy for catering and procurement for council events to ensure the food served is healthy and sustainable, committing to: food served in Shire Hall in the on-site café and for members lunch and other corporate events on and off site that aims to include:**
 - *Locally produced and seasonal food*
 - *Increased plant-based options*
 - ~~better~~ **Good** *quality meat, served less frequently*
 - *Nutritious and balanced options in line with the governments Eatwell Guide*
 - *Work closely with Gloucestershire Food and Farming Partnership and Sustainable Food places*
 - *Use reusable and recyclable packaging and utensils*
- **Consider ensuring that all suppliers are signed up to:**
 - *Food For Life served: <https://www.foodforlife.org.uk>*
 - *Food for the Planet: <https://www.foodfortheplanet.org.uk/faqs/>*

- 8.18 In proposing the motion, Cllr Hoyland explained that in 2021 the Council signed up to Feeding Gloucestershire whose aim was to work with organisations across the county to drive systemic change and build food scrutiny across all communities. It was also a major partner in the Gloucestershire Food and Farming Partnership, which aimed to build and champion a sustainable food and farming system in Gloucestershire. This motion was therefore aimed at ensuring that the Council's own catering policy aligned with these Gloucestershire-wide commitments and ambitions. As humans we created a carbon footprint, but it was up to us how big that footprint became during our lives and food was one of the areas with potential to reduce our footprint. Cllr Hoyland encouraged members to support the motion to enable the council to contribute to a more vibrant and sustainable local food-based economy that would make us and the climate healthier too.
- 8.19 Cllr Lynden Stowe, Cabinet Member for Finance and Change, was very happy to support the amended motion, particularly on the grounds that much of what it included was already embedded but equally recognised there was always room for further improvement. Whilst he completely agreed with the need to support local, sustainable food production, the amendment aimed to ensure we did not restrict choice for staff and maintained a pragmatic approach.
- 8.20 Some members expressed their concern at the amendment and the removal of the phrase around meat reduction. It was expressed that study after study from various resources had identified the production of meat made up

roughly a third of diet related carbon emissions. It was identified that one of the easiest changes an individual could make to reduce their carbon footprint therefore was to reduce their meat intake. They felt the amended version 'watered down' the motion and they could therefore not support it.

- 8.21 In addition some members felt the motion did not go nearly far enough to begin addressing the much wider issues in relation to food nationally and globally. It was stressed that there was a health food pandemic being driven by large food companies who manufactured for profit, with less care for nutrition and highly focused on processed goods. Also, on the issue of meat production, some members felt there was a big difference between meat produced for these large food providers and that produced locally through sustainable farming practices, for example.
- 8.22 In response to these comments, other members felt that meat consumption should be an individual's choice and it was not for members to enforce their views on council staff. The amendment simply aimed to ensure any changes made were in consultation with staff and retained a fair choice across the board. They did not feel a motion today on global food issues was a sensible use of council time, but rather focusing on a local issue that could make a positive impact.
- 8.23 Cllr Joe Harris moved that members go to the vote on this motion. This was seconded by Cllr Mark Hawthorne.
- 8.24 The Chair used his discretion to allow Cllr Chloe Turner, seconder of the motion to speak before moving to the vote.
- 8.25 Cllr Turner, in seconding the motion, emphasised the need to celebrate the role of food and farming in Gloucestershire and the many benefits that could be drawn from sustainable and healthy food. She added that she would like to see more vegetarian options in Council catering and information on the provenance of food being sold.
- 8.26 Members voted unanimously to move to the vote.
- 8.27 The motion was put the vote and it was

RESOLVED that

Council notes:

- *We are experiencing climate breakdown, an obesity epidemic, and a cost-of-living crisis. As a council we have declared a climate emergency, have council targets to reduce obesity, and have a multi-agency ongoing response to the cost-of-living crisis.*
- *What we eat, and how that food is produced, affects our health, the environment, and our local economy.*

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- *The global food system contributes about 30% to greenhouse gas emissions – more than transport or energy - and industrial farming is the leading cause of the decline of wildlife in the UK, antibiotic resistance, and zoonotic diseases. Additionally, a third of the food we produce goes to waste. About a third of all human-caused greenhouse gas emissions is linked to food. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s43016-021-00225-9/>*
- *The quality of our diets follows a social gradient, with those in poorer households consuming less fruit and vegetables and more ultra-processed food and drink produced by multinational industries. Many people struggle to afford diets that align with government minimum recommendations for a healthy and balanced diet. What we eat has become the biggest risk factor for preventable disease, taking a massive toll on our health, causing debilitating illness, and placing an unsustainable strain on the NHS.*
- *Ensuring that procurement policies support and encourage local production will help create and maintain local jobs through the supply chains as well as grow the local economy.*

Council acknowledges:

- *Changing what we eat and where it comes from has the potential to benefit both the health of people and the planet.*
- *Locally produced food has the potential to support the wider local economy.*
- *Gloucestershire County Council is a key partner in Gloucestershire Food and Farming Partnership whose purpose, among others, is to create innovative approaches to transform the food and farming system through initiatives that deliver multiple health, environmental and economic outcomes.*
- *Gloucestershire is a member of Sustainable Food Places that celebrates the success of those places taking a joined up, holistic approach to food and that are achieving significant positive change on a range of key food issues.*

The council resolves to:

- *Consult with our staff to produce a policy for catering and procurement for food served in Shire Hall in the on-site café and for members lunch and other corporate events on and off site that aims to include:*
 - *Locally produced and seasonal food*
 - *Increased plant-based options*
 - *Good quality meat*
 - *Nutritious and balanced options in line with the governments Eatwell Guide*
 - *Work closely with Gloucestershire Food and Farming Partnership and Sustainable Food places*
 - *Use reusable and recyclable packaging and utensils*
- *Consider ensuring that all suppliers are signed up to:*

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- Food For Life served: <https://www.foodforlife.org.uk>
- Food for the Planet: <https://www.foodfortheplanet.org.uk/faqs/>

Motion 933: Policing in Gloucestershire

8.28 Cllr Jeremy Hilton proposed, and Cllr Lisa Spivey seconded the following motion:

Council Notes

1. *Gloucestershire Police was until very recently, in special measures, after His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) found them to be inadequate in six areas.*
2. *Whilst improvements have been made since the very sobering report was published, the HMICFRS noted that their response to domestic abuse incidents, behavioural crimes and Anti-Social Behaviour were 'of particular concern'.*
3. *In the year 22/23, Gloucestershire Police had the worst response times to Category Two 999 incidents of any force in England or Wales, averaging 16.7 hours to respond against a target of 5.5 hours, with response times in Gloucester peaking at 23.9 hours.*
4. *101 response times also continue to cause concern to Gloucestershire's residents with many saying they are waiting up to 40 minutes to report a crime, and the online system not working.*
5. *Despite the promise by the PCC, Chris Nelson to provide 300 new officers, Gloucestershire Constabulary is still woefully under-staffed, putting huge pressure on existing officers and resulting in residents being vulnerable to crime.*

Council Believes

1. *Gloucestershire residents deserve a swift and professional response service whenever they dial 999.*
2. *Problems with the force and with the call centre are undermining public confidence in the Police locally.*
3. *The current Police and Crime Commissioner ran on a central pledge to recruit more frontline Police Officers and has now reneged on that solemn pledge.*

Council Resolves

1. *To request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire and the Chief Constable for Gloucestershire Police, calling for an urgent meeting to discuss policing in Gloucestershire with all District Council Leaders and County Council Group Leaders, that he himself chairs.*
2. *To ask the Cabinet Member for Public Health to look into what the Council and its partners can do to work with Gloucestershire Police on improving their response to incidents of domestic violence.*

3. *To ask the Police and Crime panel to consider at their next meeting what can be done to improve the response time to category 2 999 calls and 101 reporting in Gloucestershire, with the Chair of the panel reporting back to Full Council on their findings.*
4. *To continue to put pressure on the PCC to deliver on his promise of 300 new officers*

- 8.29 In proposing the motion, Cllr Hilton referred to the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection report from 2021 which moved the Constabulary into special measures and identified 5 areas of concern. The most recent HMICFRS inspection discharged the Constabulary from all but 1 of these areas of concern and therefore brought the service out of special measures. The area of concern that remained was the handling of emergency calls to 999 and 101 services. Cllr Hilton referenced that only 75% of 999 calls were answered within the required 10 seconds and in August, 12,000 101 calls were abandoned due to extended wait times. He noted that the most recent inspection report referenced that the fully staffed Force Control room should be in place by January 2024 which he recognised as a good improvement and waited to see what impact this would have on call handling times.
- 8.30 Cllr Hilton also raised concern that the Commissioner would not reach the target of 300 additional police officers on Gloucestershire's streets that was promised on his election in May 2021. He felt this was vitally important to support overstretched police officers and reduce crime levels.
- 8.31 Cllr Spivey seconded the motion and shared with members that there were certain things she took for granted living in Britain, one of which being that the police would answer and attend a 999 call should it be needed. She unfortunately no longer felt that this was the case which was a frightening reality for everyone in Gloucestershire. She felt the answer to reducing crime levels started within our communities and returning to the idea of policing from within. For this to work however, there needed to be enough police officers to embed into communities, build relationships and prevent crimes before they were committed. This was why the target of additional police officers promised in 2021 was so important to deliver for residents.
- 8.32 Cllr Hawthorne proposed the following amendment, which was seconded by Cllr Dave Norman:

Council Notes

1. *Gloucestershire Police was until very recently, in special measures, after His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) found them to be inadequate in six areas. **Council recognises the hard work of all Constabulary staff in exiting this status in the shortest time of any service in the country.***
2. *~~Whilst~~ **Recognises that** improvements have been made since the very sobering report was published, **in which** the HMICFRS noted that their*

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response to domestic abuse incidents, behavioural crimes and Anti-Social Behaviour were 'of particular concern'

3. ~~In the year 22/23, Gloucestershire Police had the worst response times to Category Two 999 incidents of any force in England or Wales, averaging 16.7 hours to respond against a target of 5.5 hours, with response times in Gloucester peaking at 23.9 hours~~ **That response times to 999 calls have improved in Gloucestershire in 2023, with median response times of 11 minutes to grade 1 incidents and 135 minutes to grade 2 incidents since Gloucestershire Police implemented a new operating model in June this year.**
4. ~~101 response times also continue to improve for cause concern to Gloucestershire's residents with median wait times now 3 minutes, although some have reported many saying they are waiting up to 40 minutes to report a crime., and the online system not working~~ **The new online system to report anti-social behaviour has also now been implemented.**
5. ~~Despite the promise by the PCC,~~ **PCC Chris Nelson pledged to provide 300 new officers PCSOs and staff, but demand on Gloucestershire Constabulary is still woefully under-staffed, putting huge pressure on existing officers and resulting in residents being vulnerable to crime**

Council Believes

1. Gloucestershire residents deserve a swift and professional response service whenever they dial 999
2. Problems with the force and with the call centre are undermining public confidence in the Police locally
3. The current Police and Crime Commissioner ran on a central pledge to recruit more frontline Police Officers, and **is delivering on has now reneged on that solemn pledge with 164 more police officers recruited into Gloucestershire**

Council Resolves

1. To request that the **Chairman of Police and Crime Panel Leader of the Council writes to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire and the Chief Constable for Gloucestershire Police, calling for an urgent meeting to discuss policing in Gloucestershire with all District Council Leaders and County Council Group Leaders inviting them to attend the forthcoming meeting of the panel where there will be an update on the Commissioner's Police and Crime Prevention Plan annual report will be examined.** , that he himself chairs
2. To ask the Cabinet Member **with responsibility for Domestic Abuse for Public Health** to look into what the Council and its partners can do to work with Gloucestershire Police on improving their response to incidents of domestic violence.

3. To ask the Police and Crime panel to consider at their next meeting what can be done to improve the response time to category 2 999 calls and 101 reporting in Gloucestershire, with the Chair of the panel **including an update reporting back to Full Council on their findings in the next scrutiny report that goes to council.**
4. To continue to **encourage** ~~put pressure on~~ the PCC to deliver on his promise of 300 new officers

- 8.33 Cllr Hawthorne stressed that this amendment had been brought to correct out of date statistics and comments within the original motion, particularly in light of the most recent HMICFRS inspection which, as referenced, brought the Constabulary out of special measures, which was the fastest improvement journey of any other police force in the country. The amendment also addressed the exclusion of the scrutiny arrangements already provided by the Police and Crime Panel which was hosted by GCC and had membership from across all 7 local authorities.
- 8.34 In seconding the amendment, Cllr Norman welcomed the improved collaboration between all of the blue light services under the current Commissioner, which included the joint use of facilities and funding etc. in a way that brought the best benefit for residents. He also referenced that the previous Commissioner removed funding for the Road Safety Partnership which had since been re-established and was vital in addressing the increased level of KSI incidents.
- 8.35 Cllr Stephan Fifield, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Delivery, confirmed the Council were already doing a lot with partners to tackle domestic abuse. Gloucestershire had one of the lowest rates of incidents in the country but also one of the highest charging rates, which was well above the national average. There had also recently been a report and recommendations produced by Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny which was referred to cabinet on Violence Against Women and Girls. He stressed that all councillors had an important role in raising awareness of these issues and suggested the option to become an ambassador or champion with the White Ribbon project.
- 8.36 Several members spoke in favour of the amendment which they felt more accurately reflect the improvement journey of the Constabulary to date which had seen, amongst other things, a major investment in improving IT systems to enable more effective working, millions of extra funding being brought into the county via the national Safer Streets grants and a sizeable reduction in anti-social behaviour due to various initiatives.
- 8.37 There was also disappointed expressed that this motion had been brought to Council, rather than being discussed at the Panel. Members present who were on the Panel felt that it was a very effective scrutiny body which had open discussions on a whole range of issues and received a lot of information provided by the Commissioner and his team. The Chair added he was more than happy for any member to observe the Panel meetings.

- 8.38 In response to these comments, other members felt that the amendment took away the heart of the issue, that residents were being seriously let down by a key service and they therefore made no apologies for raising these concerns in the Chamber today. There were examples given of high levels of burglaries remaining unsolved and issues with drugs and gangs in the county getting worse.
- 8.39 They added that police officers were so stretched due to under resourcing and increasing criminal activity, particularly in rural areas where minimal officers were required to cover large geographic areas. Whilst more police officers were needed to reduce crime, they were also needed to protect officers who were often operating without sufficient support in dangerous situations.
- 8.40 Another area of concern discussed was the current wait times within the criminal justice system. Several members felt the system was broken and referenced the many years it often took for cases to come to court. A member added that public services had been underfunded by national Government for years and the police and justice system was one of the clearest examples of this.
- 8.41 A member highlighted that a number of these issues raised around the justice system for example were not part of the original motion. Focusing on the motion itself, they felt the amendment recognised the positive improvements that had been made so far, both by the Commissioner and the Force, recognised that improvement remained and provided a practical approach to reviewing this further improvement.
- 8.42 The proposer of the original motion expressed that he would not accept the amendment as it suggested everything was going well, whereas in reality the Constabulary had only just come out special measures, concern remained over the handling of emergency calls, police officer numbers had not been increased as promised and there were still major issues with anti-social behaviour in the county.
- 8.43 The amendment was put to the vote and was carried to become the substantive motion.
- 8.44 The substantive motion was put the vote and it was

RESOLVED that

Council Notes

- 1. Gloucestershire Police was until very recently, in special measures, after His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) found them to be inadequate in six areas. Council recognises*

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the hard work of all Constabulary staff in exiting this status in the shortest time of any service in the country.

- 2. Recognises that improvements have been made since the very sobering report was published, in which the HMICFRS noted that their response to domestic abuse incidents, behavioural crimes and Anti-Social Behaviour were 'of particular concern'*
- 3. That response times to 999 calls have improved in Gloucestershire in 2023, with median response times of 11 minutes to grade 1 incidents and 135 minutes to grade 2 incidents since Gloucestershire Police implemented a new operating model in June this year.*
- 4. 101 response times also continue to improve for Gloucestershire's residents with median wait times now 3 minutes, although some have reported waiting up to 40 minutes to report a crime. The new online system to report anti-social behaviour has also now been implemented.*
- 5. PCC Chris Nelson pledged to provide 300 new officers PCSOs and staff, but demand on Gloucestershire Constabulary is putting huge pressure on existing officers.*

Council Believes

- 1. Gloucestershire residents deserve a swift and professional response service whenever they dial 999*
- 2. Problems with the force and with the call centre are undermining public confidence in the Police locally*
- 3. The current Police and Crime Commissioner ran on a central pledge to recruit more frontline Police Officers, and is delivering on that solemn pledge with 164 more police officers recruited into Gloucestershire*

Council Resolves

- 1. To request that the Chairman of Police and Crime Panel writes to all District Council Leaders and County Council Group Leaders inviting them to attend the forthcoming meeting of the panel where there will be an update on the Commissioner's Police and Crime Prevention Plan annual report will be examined.*
- 2. To ask the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Domestic Abuse to look into what the Council and its partners can do to work with Gloucestershire Police on improving their response to incidents of domestic violence.*
- 3. To ask the Police and Crime panel to consider at their next meeting what can be done to improve the response time to category 2 999 calls and 101 reporting in Gloucestershire, with the Chair of the panel including an update on their findings in the next scrutiny report that goes to council.*
- 4. To continue to encourage the PCC to deliver on his promise of 300 new officers*

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8.45 The time allocated for Council to consider motions ran out before reaching the final motion on the agenda, Motion 934. The Leader committed however on behalf of his Administration, that he would take forward the action requested within the motion.

9. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Fifty-three Member questions had been submitted. The following supplementary questions were asked:

Questions 1, 2 & 7 – Cllr David Drew raised concern about the academy school system and asked if this needed to be addressed with the Secretary of State for Education.

Cllr Philip Robinson stated that he would explore whether more should be done about the academy schools' admissions policies, but this would need to remain in line with national policy. He requested a meeting with the councillor to discuss the specific questions he felt needed to be raised with the Secretary of State.

Question 9 – Cllr John Bloxsom asked about clarification on the Minchinhampton Common Task and Finish Group.

Cllr David Gray confirmed that the proposal from Motion 934 would be enacted as committed to by the Leader.

Question 10 – Cllr John Bloxsom asked for clarification on why it would take until Spring 2024 to implement the proposed parking restriction at Ebley.

Cllr Dom Morris confirmed that he would speak with officers to see if it could be implemented sooner.

Question 13 – Cllr Chris McFarling asked if GCC were working with academy schools to stress test their buildings against climate change and whether it would be necessary to make them more climate proof.

Cllr David Gray stated that he would need to confirm with the relevant officers and report back. He confirmed that he did agree that the council should be thinking about plans for more regular and severe weather outcomes as a result of climate change.

Question 14 – Cllr Chris McFarling asked the Cabinet Member to acknowledge that further major infrastructure development projects should require a true biodiversity net gain and not cause further loss to the natural habitats.

Cllr David Gray stated that he agreed with the Member and that he believed it was important that major infrastructure developments at a minimum should do no further damage to biodiversity but should ideally help biodiversity. The Cabinet Member stated the A417 Missing Link Development as an example of a previously failing infrastructure which has now been designed to benefit biodiversity and also improve people's lives.

Questions 16 & 17- Cllr Jeremy Hilton asked for confirmation that the current Kingsholm parking permit fee of £63.30 per year would not be increased next year.

Cllr Dom Morris responded that he would check with officers and report back.

Question 18 – Cllr Jeremy Hilton stated that due to the income for penalty notices in the Kingsholm area after one month, there should be no reason for an increase in the permit costs.

Cllr Dom Morris referred to his previous answer.

Question 19 – Cllr Jeremy Hilton asked to ensure local members were informed if the council were cutting down trees in their area so they could keep their residents informed. This was following the felling of five trees on Lansdown Road.

Cllr David Gray recognised this was needed to ensure residents knew the reasons for trees being felled, and that it was not for aesthetic reasons. It might be the case in incidents of safety that the notification to the local member was missed.

Question 20 – Cllr Jeremy Hilton asked the Cabinet Member to clarify his position regarding the White Paper “Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service”.

Cllr David Norman stated that there were positive and negative elements of the White Paper. There had been challenge to the paper by the Local Government Association (LGA) particularly to the idea that the proposed Fire College should be linked with the Police College. The Cabinet Member offered to meet with the member to discuss any particular issues in further detail.

Question 21 – Cllr Chloe Turner stated that Gloucestershire were behind other counties with installing solar panels in schools. She asked for a time frame for decisions and actions to be taken.

Cllr Lyndon Stowe stated that since the answer to the original question had been published, he had a meeting with officers to agree a way forward on this. It had been agreed that five pilot schemes would be chosen, and it was hoped that by the end of the council year, these schemes would be in their initial stages.

Question 24 – Cllr Cate Cody asked to arrange a meeting to discuss the A417 Missing Link biodiversity net gain claims.

Cllr David Gray stated that as this was a national Scheme, it would be more beneficial for the Member to express these concerns with National Highways and the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.

Question 26 – Cllr Paul Hodgkinson asked why it was taking eighteen months to replace white lining and signage on roads in his area and what assurances could be made that this would be fixed.

Cllr Dom Morris stated that they were committed to fixing Bourton and North Leach’s white lines in the next month. He stated that the Highways Transformation Programme had been put in place to fix these processes over time.

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Question 27 – Cllr Paul Hodgkinson asked for a timescale of when rural towns would be included in the implementation of the Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP).

Cllr David Gray confirmed that they were now installing EVCP across the county as quickly as possible. They were hoping to be able to bring forward their timeline to be able to install EVCP in rural towns sooner.

Question 29 – Cllr Lisa Spivey asked if GCC had evidence that the claim brought against GCC due to a resident's vehicle being damaged when he struck a pothole was caused by the driver themselves and not by the pothole.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne stated that because this was a legal case, he was unable to comment.

Question 32 – Cllr Colin Hay asked if lessons would be learnt from the mistakes made in the implementation of the Zone 15 Parking in Cheltenham.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne confirmed that investigations were ongoing, lessons would be learnt and that it would be a good topic for scrutiny to look at.

Question 33 – Cllr Roger Whyborn asked how many schools were there within Civil Enforcement and how many Civil Enforcement officer visits were performed over the last twelve months to those schools.

Cllr Dom Morris stated that he would find out and report back to the Member, but he confirmed that the Civil Enforcement Officers visited once or twice a week to the schools.

Question 34 – Cllr Roger Whyborn asked how many repairs and resurfacing items were waiting in the queue for the Highways Transformation Programme.

Cllr Dom Morris confirmed that the Highways Transformation Programme was focused on resurfacing roads in their entirety, so he would not be able to provide the Member with a list of specific roads, pathways, and bridleways.

Question 39 – Cllr David Brown asked whether the work of the Bus Task and Finish Group would feed into the Revised Bus Services Improvement Plan (BSIP) and if the Cabinet Member could share the date that the Revised BSIP would be published.

Cllr Philip Robinson stated that the Bus Task and Finish Group had largely finished its work but that the identified bus priority measures, that continued to be a key component of the BSIP, had already been considered by the Group. He would confirm the publication date of the revised BSIP when possible.

Question 40 – Cllr Rebecca Halifax asked for clarification on whether it was believed that the 30% funding that is given to Cotswold Friends was enough to make this transport service a secure and reliable replacement for the social care transportation that used to be provided by GCC.

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Cllr Philip Robinson confirmed that whilst he was happy to discuss this further with ITU, he was proud of what was already being achieved with the Cotswold Friends voluntary transport service and the 30% contribution from GCC.

Question 41 – Cllr Rebecca Halifax asked for clarification on the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in the centre of Cirencester and asked if this was viewed as the most logical alternative to an on-street parking review.

Cllr David Gray identified that this question may have been better to ask to Cllr Dom Morris, Cabinet Member for Highways, but he stated that his experience of the Process Engineer officers was that they were diligent in looking at the TRO process and at the ramifications that they would cause across the whole system. He confirmed that more would be known when the proposal was implemented.

Question 42 & 43 – Cllr Ben Evans asked about the ‘Supercity’ idea which was included in the Gloucestershire 2050 Vision document created in 2017.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne stated that this idea was first discussed in 2017 when the University of Gloucestershire led and formed an independent panel that was brought together by Leadership Gloucestershire to explore the idea of a Supercity. The project helped to create the Joint Core Strategy (now Joint Strategic Plan) between Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury authorities which encouraged the districts to work together on delivering planning. The Leader confirmed that he recognised the principle of authorities working in collaboration to deliver housing.

10. SCRUTINY REPORT

The report was noted.

11. AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The report was noted.

12. CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL UNDER SECTION 85 (1) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that there would be a likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

CHAIR

Meeting concluded at 13:30

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