



COUNTY COUNCIL MINUTES

Wednesday, 15 February 2017 at 10am

Shire Hall, Gloucester

Present:

Cllr Phil Awford	Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Cllr Vernon Smith
Cllr Dorcas Binns	Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Cllr Lynden Stowe
Cllr Robert Bird	Cllr Barry Kirby	Cllr Klara Sudbury
Cllr Tony Blackburn	Cllr Richard Leppington	Cllr Ray Theodoulou
Cllr David Brown	Cllr Steve Lydon	Cllr Brian Tipper
Cllr Chris Coleman	Cllr Steve McHale	Cllr Pam Tracey MBE
Cllr Dr John Cordwell	Cllr Paul McLain	Cllr Robert Vines
Cllr Iain Dobie	Cllr Paul McMahon	Cllr Stan Waddington
Cllr Bernard Fisher	Cllr Tracy Millard	Cllr Simon Wheeler
Cllr Jasminder Gill	Cllr Patrick Molyneux	Cllr Jack Williams
Cllr Andrew Gravells	Cllr Nigel Moor	Cllr Kathy Williams
Cllr Tim Harman	Cllr Graham Morgan	Cllr Lesley Williams MBE
Cllr Joe Harris	Cllr Brian Oosthuysen	Cllr Suzanne Williams
Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Cllr Shaun Parsons (Vice- chairman)	Cllr Roger Wilson
Cllr Colin Hay (Chairman)	Cllr Alan Preest	Cllr Will Windsor-Clive
Cllr Tony Hicks	Cllr Brian Robinson	

Apologies: Cllrs Jason Bullingham, Sarah Lunnon, David Prince, Nigel Robbins OBE and Mike Sztymiak

Honorary Aldermen Liz Boait, Bill Crowther, Paul Drake, Chas Fellows, Jackie Hall, Bill Hobman, Terry Parker, John Sewell, Gordon Shurmer and Mike Williams

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2015 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A copy of the declarations of interest is attached to the signed copy of the minutes.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) John Howe

Members stood in silence as a mark of respect to John Howe, former county councillor for the College Division in Cheltenham, who had sadly passed away. John had been a county councillor from 1991 to 1995.

Cllr Chris Coleman said that he had spent a great deal of time with John and had been inspired by his work not only as a county councillor but also as a member of the Liberal Democrat Party. He noted how active John had been in his local community in Frampton on Severn where he had lived for many years. He stated that John was a thoroughly decent man and would be greatly missed by his friends and family.

b) Queen's New Year Honours

The Chairman congratulated the people living in Gloucestershire who had received awards as part of the Queen's New Year Honours.

c) Gloucestershire Music

The Chairman congratulated Gloucestershire Music on the following recent achievements:

- i) The Gloucestershire Youth Wind Orchestra on winning a Platinum award at the West of England and Wales Regional Festival of the National Concert Band Festival.
- ii) The Gloucestershire Youth Jazz Orchestra on winning a diploma for services to jazz education from the Will Michael Jazz Education Awards.
- iii) Over 180 young people from Gloucestershire who had joined with two other county areas for a massed choir and band performance at the Royal Albert Hall.

Council officer Steve Legge was present in the Council Chamber.

d) Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) awards

The Chairman advised that the Fastershire Project in Gloucestershire and Herefordshire had won an ADEPT President's Special Recognition Award

under the category 'Powers to plan and grow successful communities and places'. Council officers Dawn Thompson and Angela Presdee who had been closely involved in the project were in the Council Chamber.

e) Suzette Davenport

The Chairman formally advised that Suzette Davenport, the Chief Constable of Gloucestershire Constabulary, would be retiring at the end of April 2017. It was noted that elected members on the Police and Crime Panel had a statutory role in the appointment of the new Chief Constable.

f) Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) history month

PRISM (the Council's LGBT network) was hosting a celebration of LGBT on the Council Chamber landing throughout February.

g) Holocaust Memorial Day

An event led by the Chairman had been held at Shire Hall on Friday, 27 January 2017. The Chairman had reflected on his visit to Srebrenica in 2016 and read out the 'Kaddish', the Jewish Mourner's Prayer. Members and officers then stood in silence to reflect on the millions of people killed in the Holocaust and other genocides including Bosnia, Cambodia and Rwanda.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Thirty three public questions had been received. The following supplementary questions were asked:

Question 1 - Anna Mozol asked what the member was doing to protect the Clearwater open space site and asked whether he was 'giving up' on the residents of Quedgeley by not protecting the site.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne explained that he felt strongly about Clearwater Drive and that he had been campaigning for a number of years to keep this vital open space open to residents. He had written to residents in the area and many people had signed a petition and questioned what had happened. He had received written confirmation from the parish council that the bid for a Village Green application was never submitted to the county council and therefore was never considered.

Question 2 - Anna Mozol – asked what was really happening with the space. She explained that the planning application for the school had been delayed until after May 2017. She asked whether the delay was due to the County Council elections and asked whether the member would be supporting the application after the

election.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne explained that he had written to over 300 residents on a regular basis about the issue. The decision regarding when the application would be put forward was down to the diocese. He had asked them to state their plans for the site and his understanding was that it had been delayed until the completion of their consultation.

Question 6 - Gerald Hartley asked whether a one tonne increase in waste collection authority recycling cost Gloucestershire County Council more in credits than it would to have UBB burn that tonne?

Cllr Ray Theodoulou stated that it would not cost more and he assured members that there was a commitment from Gloucestershire County Council to recycling.

Question 7 - Gerald Hartley asked whether the Councillor would commit to fully supporting the waste collection authorities to convert residual waste to recycle. He also asked whether the member would list the initiatives being taken by the Council to improve the range and quantity of materials collected as recycle rather than black bag waste.

Cllr Ray Theodoulou stated that the Council was dedicated to reducing waste that could not be composted. He stated there were many opportunities to recycle and that the County Council encouraged collection agencies to do more through discussions within the Joint Waste Committee.

Question 8 - Dennis Parsons emphasised that, given the September intake of nearly 800 students, the work on a TRO for Albert Drive, Pitville was time critical. He asked if the member would give priority to the proposal.

Cllr Vernon Smith thanked Mr Parsons for coming to the meeting. He replied that once the consultation was completed and the responses worked through, this work would be progressed appropriately.

Question 9 – Dennis Parsons asked what the Cabinet Member's 'Plan B' was with regards to the Road Safety Partnership given the withdrawal of funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner.

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Cllr Vernon Smith explained that the County Council saw Road Safety as being paramount and that the Council would take this forward itself.

Question 21 – Kate Haigh asked whether the cabinet member believed that reducing spending on CAB and the Law Centre would cause long term harm to vulnerable people. She asked what work he would do to save those vital services.

In response, Cllr Ray Theodoulou stated that the County Council does calibrate to the CAB but that this was primarily a City Council matter and that the question would be better directed there.

Question 22 - Nigel Wise stated his concerns about being instructed to only correspond with the Commissioning Director and that he had not received a response as promised. He asked whether this was because the Parking Team were unable to respond to straightforward day to day requests regarding parking matters.

Cllr Vernon Smith stated that the letter had been written and would be with him in the coming days.

Question 23 – Nigel Wise stated that he wanted to receive a publicly published answer to his question and asked why he should receive a private response to his question from officers.

Cllr Vernon Smith replied that TROs and parking were complex and detailed areas and that in these instances he referred the matter to senior officers, who were experts in these fields, to respond.

Question 24 – Nigel Wise stated that he had held a meeting with APCOA who had agreed that the Municipal Offices road in Cheltenham was unenforceable. He asked if the member would meet with himself and the APCOA supervisor and an officer of the Council at the site.

Cllr Vernon Smith reiterated that parking was a complex area and that officers were confident that the Council was working within the regulation. If Mr Wise felt this was incorrect then there was a full complaints procedure which could be followed via the Local Government Ombudsman.

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Question 26 – Nigel Wise asked whether the Council would employ someone, even on a temporary basis, with the necessary competence with regards to parking?

Cllr Vernon Smith replied that the Council did employ experts on parking and that he had confidence in the team.

Question 28 – Mr Dragojlovic expressed his concern that petitions from Park Street with regards to the Cheltenham West Parking Review had not been considered. He requested numbers for those ‘for’ the scheme and those ‘against’.

Cllr Vernon Smith stated that the numbers would be provided and advised him to speak to Cllr Harman and the MP Alex Chalk regarding this complex matter.

5. PETITIONS

The following members presented petitions on behalf of residents in their divisions:

Cllr Nigel Moor relating to a highway matter at Upper Rissington (Cllr Vernon Smith, Cabinet Member for Highways and Flood).

Cllr Lesley Williams relating to road works to lay cables in the High Street, Stonehouse (Cllr Vernon Smith, Cabinet Member for Highways and Flood).

6. CORPORATE PARENTING

Cllr Paul McLain, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Strategic Commissioning, presented the report.

Cllr McLain undertook to provide Cllr Tracy Millard with more detailed information outside the meeting regarding the figures for Section 20 agreements and legal orders. He also agreed to provide Cllr Paul McMahon with more information on the support provided during the journey from adolescence to adulthood.

A member noted that Cllr McLain was standing down as a county councillor at the election in May 2017 and he thanked him for all his efforts in supporting children and young people across the county.

Responding to questions, Cllr McLain stated that a briefing on corporate parenting would be available for candidates ahead of the election. He thanked members of

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the Corporate Parenting Group and the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their support over the term of the Council.

RESOLVED that the report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Strategic Commissioning be noted.

7. POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK - MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND THE COUNCIL STRATEGY

The report before members included the Budget recommendations, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Council Strategy, Budget consultation report, Scrutiny Budget report and Due Regard Statement.

Jo Walker, the Council's Section 151 Chief Finance Officer, provided advice relating to the current status of the Local Government Finance Settlement. She explained that the Council had not yet received the final financial statement for 2017-18. The debate in the House of Commons was likely to take place in the week starting 20 February 2017 when Parliament returned from its recess, following which the Department for Communities and Local Government would publish the final settlement.

The Council had taken legal advice on the implications of a local authority setting its budget in advance of the final settlement being agreed by Parliament and had also reviewed the advice given by the Local Government Association. In summary, the Local Government Finance Act 1992 placed a duty on local authorities to set a balanced budget with regard to the advice of its Section 151 Chief Finance Officer. Major precepting authorities, like the Council, were required to issue a precept for 2017-18 before 1 March 2017.

Each local authority needed to make sure that it set a balanced budget and this could be done on the basis of the provisional settlement if it was the best information available at the time. The Council's proposed budget was based on the best information available. The risk associated with reduced funding in the final settlement would be dealt with through the Rates' Retention Reserve and General Reserve. Any amendments would be reported in the budget monitoring reports as was normal custom and practice.

Jo Walker's advice was to proceed in setting the budget and to authorise her to resolve any changes to the final budget publication.

The Chief Executive explained the procedure that would be followed at the meeting for setting the budget (as set out in the flow chart attached to the briefing paper). First, Cllr Mark Hawthorne, Leader of the Council, and Cllr Ray

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Theodoulou, Cabinet Member for Finance and Change, would be asked to present the budget recommendations from the Cabinet.

Second, in order to reach a position where a substantive motion could be debated, the other groups would be invited to propose amendments to the budget but there would be no debate at that stage. This would be a departure from the normal procedure where only one amendment could be moved and discussed at any one time. The Chairman therefore proposed that under procedure rule 24.1 the following part of procedure rule 13.5 be suspended for the duration of the budget debate:

‘Only one amendment may be moved and discussed at any one time. No further amendment may be moved until the amendment under discussion has been dealt with.’

The Vice-chairman seconded the motion and, on being put to the vote, the motion was supported.

Once the amendments had been presented, the Chairman would call for an adjournment to provide an opportunity for the Group Leaders to reach a common position.

After the adjournment, the Leader of the Council would advise members of those areas where it had been possible to reach agreement. Any amendments which had not been accepted or withdrawn would then be presented by the groups, debated and voted upon.

Thereafter all members would have an opportunity to debate the budget in line with the normal rules of debate. At the end of the debate, the Leader of the Council would have the right of reply.

Finally, a recorded vote would be proposed from the Chairman on the substantive motion, seconded by the Vice-chairman.

Conservative Group

In presenting the recommendation from the Cabinet meeting held on 1 February 2017, Cllr Mark Hawthorne, the Leader of the Council, proposed the following amendment to the budget:

Following the decision of the Police and Crime Commissioner to withdraw Gloucestershire Constabulary from the Road Safety Partnership, the Council contributes £390,000 from the Transformation Reserve to continue the vital work of the partnership in 2017-18.

Cllr Ray Theodoulou, the Deputy Leader of the Council, seconded the recommendation from the Cabinet and the amendment relating to the funding of the Road Safety Partnership.

Cllr Hawthorne explained that the budget presented to Council included an additional £5.6 million for priority areas resulting in a total budget of £402.7 million. He stated that this included additional investment in health and social care, services for people with learning and physical disabilities and children's social workers. He said that claims that the Council was cutting funding for mental health services were false with the budget increasing from £9.5 million to £9.97 million. He noted the continued investment in rural broadband and increased funding of £6.2 million for roads following lobbying of the Government. He expressed concern that the Police and Crime Commissioner was withdrawing from the Road Safety Partnership. He believed that this would put lives at risk and the Council was therefore investing £390,000 in the partnership to allow it to continue its vital work. In summary, he said that it was a budget that delivered for the county and its people.

Cllr Theodoulou advised that the views of the public, key partners, hard to reach groups and the scrutiny committees had been sought through the budget consultation process. He said that no significant alterations had been proposed to the budget. He noted that the biggest areas of spend were £136 million for Adults and £87 million for Children's Services. He stated that the road maintenance backlog had been reduced significantly and total new investments of more than £400 million stretched into the future. He believed that the Council was listening to its residents and delivering on its promises. Savings of £35 million had been made on top of those already achieved.

Cllr Theodoulou reminded members about the Public Sector Equality Duty and the need for them all, as decision makers on the Council Strategy and the Medium Term Financial Strategy, to show 'due regard'. The Due Regard Statement formed an integral part of the Council's budget process.

Liberal Democrat Group

Cllr Paul Hodgkinson, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, and Cllr Iain Dobie, Deputy Leader, presented the following amendment to the budget:

In 2017-18, the Liberal Democrats on Gloucestershire County Council propose budget amendments in the following three areas:

- *Roads and Pavements*
- *Children and Young People*
- *Adults*

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The Liberal Democrat Group proposals will be funded from a combination of the Transformation Reserve, Rates Retention Reserve, Active Communities Reserve, Adult Social Care Support Grant and the General Reserve (subject to it remaining at the recommended minimum level of 4% of the Revenue Budget).

Roads and pavements

We will invest an extra £5.09 million in our roads and pavements. This is on top of the Highways budget of £17.3 million proposed by the Conservative Group. This will:

- a) Increase the 'Highways Local' Scheme for every County Councillor in 2017-18 from £20,000 to £50,000 (amounting to £1.59 million in total) so that more highways decisions are made at local level. The scheme will be redefined to include the Lengthsman Service at the discretion of individual councillors.*
- b) Double the amount of revenue budget spent on the fixing of pavements and footways across Gloucestershire by earmarking a dedicated £2 million revenue budget for this purpose.*
- c) Repeat the 2016-17 £100,000 investment to improve the implementation process for Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs), which impose traffic restrictions for safety reasons, by continuing to employ a designated TRO Officer and providing additional funds for the preparations of TROs.*
- d) Add £1.4 million to undertake crucial structural maintenance work on roads across the county.*

Children and Young People

In 2014-15, the Liberal Democrat Group successfully secured funding to enable Gloucestershire's school nurses to be trained to provide mental health resilience to children and young people. The Liberal Democrat Group proposes to build on this and spend £1 million on the following:

- a) Extending access to family mental health workers and therapists in Social Care Teams across the county through an investment of £500,000.*
- b) Building on the work of the National Adoption Support Fund which enables children who have been adopted to access a variety of therapies by investing £250,000 to develop a local fund for children living in the community.*
- c) Creating a £250,000 fund for primary and secondary schools across the county to bid for funding to set-up projects that address particular needs in their school (for example to prevent exclusions).*

Adults

The Liberal Democrat Group proposes to spend £1 million as follows:

- a) A one-off investment of £600,000 (£100,000 for each district area), administered by Gloucestershire County Council, to fund those projects with the priority of improving adults' physical and mental health whilst reducing social isolation and loneliness.*
- b) A one-off investment of £400,000 to help people with learning disabilities to live as independently as possible and to tackle 'Disability Hate Crime' across Gloucestershire.*

Cllr Hodgkinson believed that the Administration had consistently failed to support residents. He referred to broken roads and pavements and cuts to Children's Services, Trading Standards, Road Safety and services to people with learning disabilities. He noted that local schools were losing out following recent changes to the national funding formula. He also expressed concern that council taxpayers' money was needlessly being wasted on legal fees relating to Javelin Park, a botched bus lane proposal in Cheltenham and by holding valuable items of art.

Cllr Dobie believed that the proposals were practical, compassionate and credible. He said that he was concerned at the impact of the budget on the lives of the most vulnerable people living in Gloucestershire.

Labour Group

Cllr Lesley Williams, Leader of the Labour Group, and Cllr Barry Kirby, Deputy Leader, proposed and seconded procedural motion 12.1.8 for the debate on the Budget to be adjourned until Friday, 24 February 2017 and for procedure rule 12.2 relating to the number of speakers and the length of speeches to be suspended.

They thanked Jo Walker, the Council's Section 151 Chief Finance Officer, for her advice but they believed that the debate on the Budget should be held when the Government had published the final figures for the Local Government Finance Settlement. They hoped that the delay would provide more time for the Council to lobby the Government and hopefully secure a special deal similar to the one that appeared to have been agreed in Surrey.

Cllr Hawthorne stated that there had been no special deal for Surrey. Surrey was likely to be a pilot for the new business rates' retention scheme along with a number of other areas. Although the final settlement figures had not been published, the Government had published its indicative settlement and Gloucestershire County Council had signed up to a four year funding deal. He

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believed that sufficient information was available to set the Council Budget and members should follow the advice of the S151 Chief Finance Officer.

Cllr Hodgkinson stated he was aware that a number of local authorities were lobbying the Government because of the cuts to the New Homes Bonus and the impact of the social care crisis. He was concerned that the Government had failed to publish the final settlement figures due to the lack of parliamentary time as a result of the Brexit legislation. He noted, however, that no major changes in funding were anticipated and he believed that the Council should follow the advice of the Section 151 Chief Finance Officer and go ahead in setting a budget.

On being put to the vote, the procedural motion was lost.

Cllr Richard Leppington

Cllr Richard Leppington proposed the following amendment to the Budget:

To propose that £500,000 is invested into the Lengthsman Scheme in 2017-18 (increasing the amount available by £110,000 compared with 2016-17) to enable the deployment of an extra crew. This will mean that each district in Gloucestershire will have its own dedicated team.

Cllr Leppington advised that the Lengthsman Scheme had been first trialled in his division in 2015-16 and had been extremely successful. He said that it allowed regular clearance of drainage ditches to prevent flooding, tidying of verges, cleaning road signs and a range of other local activities. He stated that the scheme was greatly appreciated by local communities including parish councils.

In seconding the amendment, Cllr Tim Harman believed that the first year of the Lengthsman Scheme had been a real success and allowed members to address particular concerns in their divisions. He recognised the benefits of having a crew in each district. He said that there was an opportunity to learn from the experiences of the first year and he hoped that new councillors would be briefed on the operation of the scheme after the May 2017 elections.

The meeting was adjourned from 11.45am to 1.30pm to provide an opportunity for the political groups to discuss and agree amendments.

Debate on budget amendments

Following the adjournment, the Leader of the Council advised that the Liberal Democrat Group had indicated that their proposal was a package that could not be changed and they were not prepared to negotiate on individual elements. He said that the Conservative Group were therefore unable to accept the Liberal Democrat

Group amendment. He advised that the amendment from Cllr Richard Leppington relating to the Lengthsman Scheme was acceptable to the Conservative Group.

The Leader introduced the proposals from the Conservative Group including the £390,000 funding previously advised to allow the work of the Gloucestershire Road Safety Partnership to continue in 2017-18. He said that the extra investment in the Budget amounted to £5.52 million, including £1 million from the Adult Social Care Grant, with all the items being one-off items of expenditure. The amendment from Cllr Richard Leppington relating to the Lengthsman Scheme added a further £500,000 to the Budget on a one-off basis.

- a) *Following the decision of the Police and Crime Commissioner to withdraw Gloucestershire Constabulary from the Road Safety Partnership, the Council contributes £390,000 from the Transformation Reserve to continue the vital work of the partnership in 2017-18 (to be funded from the Transformation Reserve).*
- b) *Invest £500,000 in additional senior practitioners to work alongside the additional social workers funded in the base budget to secure improvements in practice, including a focus on mental health and adoption (to be funded from the Active Communities Reserve).*
- c) *Investment of £100,000 to improve the implementation process for Traffic Regulation Orders (to be funded from the Transformation Reserve).*
- d) *Increase the Highways Local funding for each county councillor by £10,000 (from £20,000 to £30,000) in the Highways Local Scheme (total cost of £530,000 to be funded from the Transformation Reserve).*
- e) *Additional investment in Highways of £3 million (to be funded from the Rates Retention Reserve £835,000, Transformation Reserve £870,000 and General Reserves £1,295,000).*

In addition, £1 million from the Adult Social Care Grant to:

- a) *Invest £400,000 in Building Better Lives, which includes tackling disability hate crime.*
- b) *Invest £600,000, including social prescribing, to improve adults' physical and mental health whilst reducing social isolation and loneliness.*

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In light of the new proposals presented by the Leader on behalf of the Conservative Group, the Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow the other political groups to consider them. The meeting was adjourned from 1.45 to 2.10pm.

On returning to the Council Chamber, the Chairman explained that the amendments from the Conservative Group and Cllr Richard Leppington would be treated as if they were in the budget. The Liberal Democrat Group proposals would be treated as a total package and be presented together.

Cllr Hodgkinson stated that the Conservative Group's proposals covered a number of areas already put forward by the Liberal Democrat Group. He noted, however, that there were some important differences. For example, the increase in the Highways Local funding from £20,000 to £50,000 for each member (to include access to Lengthsman services), a dedicated revenue budget for footways and pavements, specific funding for services for adopted children and funding for schools.

Cllr Dobie recognised that the Conservative Group had adopted a number of the Liberal Democrat Group's proposals but they had been watered down. Under Adults, he noted that the Liberal Democrat Group had called for £100,000 of funding for each of the six district to ensure that area specific issues were addressed. He said that funding for people with learning disabilities had been changed to an investment in the Building Better Lives Programme which was not the same.

A member stated that a 4% rise in council tax at the same time as cutting services was unacceptable to the people of Gloucestershire. Another member referred to the cuts to Council services over the last four years whilst cost pressures were increasing. He made specific mention of the Fire and Rescue Service, Trading Standards, Libraries, Mental Health, Sexual Health and the Drugs and Alcohol Advice Service.

A member stated that roads and pavements were in a desperately poor state across the county and this was a major concern to local residents. The new approach proposed for Highways Local, with Lengthsman services available on request, offered more flexibility. He recognised that Highways Local had worked well in more rural areas but he believed that it was of limited value in the urban areas of Gloucester and Cheltenham. He welcomed the proposals for a dedicated revenue budget for pavements and called for the additional funding for Traffic Regulation Orders to be made available every year and not just on a one-off basis.

Cllr Hawthorne said that he was disappointed that there had not been a proper opportunity to have proper negotiations over the Liberal Democrat Group's budget

proposals. He expressed concern that the proposals did not specify where the money was coming from. He noted that some of the things being asked were already being funded in the revised budget.

Cllr Paul McLain, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Strategic Commissioning, stated that he had announced at the Cabinet on 2 February 2017 that £800,000 was being provided to tackle domestic abuse and family breakdown. On school exclusions, £270,000 was being made available to match Government funding.

On being put to the vote, the budget amendment from the Liberal Democrat Group was not supported.

A motion for a recorded vote had been proposed and seconded. The voting was as follows:

For (13): Cllrs David Brown, Chris Coleman, Dr John Cordwell, Iain Dobie, Bernard Fisher, Joe Harris, Colin Hay, Jeremy Hilton, Paul Hodgkinson, Klara Sudbury, Simon Wheeler, Jack Williams and Suzanne Williams

Against (25): Cllrs Phil Awford, Dorcas Binns, Rob Bird, Tony Blackburn, Andrew Gravells, Tim Harman, Mark Hawthorne, Tony Hicks, Richard Leppington, Paul McLain, Patrick Molyneux, Nigel Moor, Shaun Parsons, Alan Preest, Brian Robinson, Vernon Smith, Lynden Stowe, Ray Theodoulou, Brian Tipper, Pam Tracey, Robert Vines, Stan Waddington, Kathy Williams, Roger Wilson and Will Windsor-Clive

Abstentions (9): Cllrs Jasminde Gill, Barry Kirby, Steve Lydon, Steve McHale, Paul McMahan, Tracy Millard, Graham Morgan, Brian Oosthuysen and Lesley Williams

General debate on the Budget

Members acknowledged the work of the Chief Executive and senior officers for all their hard work in preparing the budget papers.

Cllr Lesley Williams, Leader of the Labour Group, stated that she was aware that the Council was lobbying for increased funding but every year there were more cuts to services that were affecting the most vulnerable people in the county. She noted the constant focus on issues relating to highways but she was concerned at the impact of funding cuts on those people who were isolated and living alone. She said that it had been known nationally that there would be a funding crisis in social care 30 years ago but nothing had been done about it. She believed that

Council services were in disrepair with officers doing the best they could with limited resources.

A member said that the bottom line was that there were significant cuts to public services. She expressed concern that even basic standards in schools were not being met consistently due to reductions in funding. Some schools had asked the Council for help but nothing had been forthcoming. Cuts in funding were reducing the number of teachers in both primary and secondary schools. She also referred to failures in mental health care and lack of capacity in rehabilitation services to allow people to be released from hospital.

Another member stated that the Labour Group had not proposed any amendments to the budget due to the severe limitations on funding. He noted that the arguments at the meeting over the proposals presented by the Conservative Group and Liberal Democrat Group related to just 1.5% of the budget and were not addressing larger strategic issues facing the county. He said that a Labour controlled Council would be taking advantage of the historically low interest rates to invest in the county.

Other members expressed concern at reductions to public funding. Tough choices were having to be made and members of the public were not happy with the way things were going. Particular concern was expressed at the increasing pressure on Adult Social Care services and the reductions shown to the safeguarding budget.

A member, whilst concerned at the reductions in funding in a number of areas, said that she was pleased that there was an extra investment of £800,000 in tackling domestic abuse.

Responding to comments made on the Lengthsman Scheme, Cllr Richard Leppington recognised that it had been less successful in the more urban areas but he believed that there was learning from the first year of operation that could result in significant improvements. He disagreed with another member's comments that the funds would be used more efficiently if they were held centrally rather than allowing local members to allocate funds. He again referred to the value of the scheme to local communities and the request from parish councils in his area for it to continue.

In summing up, the Leader of the Council noted the extra funding that the Government had provided in a number of areas, including Adult Social Care, Highways and Schools. He recognised that things were tough and difficult choices had to be made but he said that the Council was continuing to invest in vital services and was driving the county forward. He referred to £300 million received from the sale of property. Extra investment was being made in services for the

most vulnerable, including Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Mental Health. He noted that the 2017-18 budget included £9 million extra investment in roads compared with the previous year. He recommended the revised budget to the Council.

On being put to the vote, it was:

RESOLVED

- 1 *That the Council Strategy 2017-2020 be approved.*

- 2 *That, having considered the additional consultation responses and the Public Sector Equality Duty Assessment, approval is given to the MTFs and the revenue and capital budgets for 2017-18, amended to take account of the following changes for one year only:*
 - a) *Following the decision of the Police and Crime Commissioner to withdraw Gloucestershire Constabulary from the Road Safety Partnership, the Council contributes £390,000 from the Transformation Reserve to continue the vital work of the partnership in 2017-18 (to be funded from the Transformation Reserve).*

 - b) *Invest £500,000 in additional senior practitioners to work alongside the additional social workers funded in the base budget to secure improvements in practice, including a focus on mental health and adoption (to be funded from the Active Communities Reserve).*

 - c) *Investment of £100,000 to improve the implementation process for Traffic Regulation Orders (to be funded from the Transformation Reserve).*

 - d) *Increase the Highways Local funding for each county councillor by £10,000 (from £20,000 to £30,000) in the Highways Local Scheme (total cost of £530,000 to be funded from the Transformation Reserve).*

 - e) *Additional investment in Highways of £3 million (to be funded from the Rates Retention Reserve £835,000, Transformation Reserve £870,000 and General Reserves £1,295,000).*

 - f) *£500,000 is invested into the Lengthsman Scheme in 2017-18 (increasing the amount available by £110,000 compared with 2016-17) to enable the deployment of an extra crew. This will mean that*

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each district in Gloucestershire will have its own dedicated team (to be funded from the Transformation Reserve).

g) Investment of £400,000 in Building Better Lives, which includes tackling disability hate crime (to be funded from the one-off Adult Social Care Grant).

h) Investment of £600,000, including social prescribing, to improve adults' physical and mental health whilst reducing social isolation and loneliness (to be funded from the one-off Adult Social Care Grant).

3 *That approval is given for the council tax for each valuation band, and to issue precepts on each district collection fund as set out below:*

a) Gloucestershire County Council 2017-18 Budget:

	£000
Original 2016-17 Budget	408,463
Inflation	5,200
Cost and spending increases	29,380
Cost Reductions	<u>-35,341</u>
Total	407,702
Less:	
Settlement Funding Assessment	102,841
Public Health Grant	24,912
New Homes Bonus	4,041
Education Single Grant	1,295
Transitional Grant	2,482
2017-18 Adult Social Care Grant	2,541
Other non-ring fenced grants	870
Reserve movements	5,020
Collection Fund Surplus	4,075
Total to be precepted (Council Tax Requirement)	259,625

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	Taxbase	Total Precept
	Total	£
Cheltenham	41,041.30	48,398,281
Cotswold	39,045.55	46,044,777
Forest of Dean	28,154.45	33,201,360
Gloucester City	36,706.40	43,286,315
Stroud	42,699.32	50,353,514
Tewkesbury	32,512.32	38,340,413
Total	220,159.34	259,624,660

- b) That approval is given to the Capital programme set out in Annex 8a of the detailed MTFS, and delegated authority is given to the Strategic Finance Director to vary allocations between individual schemes in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Change.
- 4 That the Council approves the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2017-18 as set out in Annex 9 of the detailed MTFS.
- 5 That approval is given to the Operational Boundary and Authorised Limits of Borrowing, as set out in the Treasury Management Strategy, at Annex 9 in the detailed MTFS as follows:

Authorised limit for External Debt	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
	Approved	Revised	Estimate	Estimate	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	
Total	360.000	360.000	360.000	350.000	

- a) Noting that the authorised limit for 2017-18 will be the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003.
- b) That the approval is given to the Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management as set out in Annex 9 of the MTFS:

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- (i) Upper limit of fixed interest rate exposure of £320 million of net outstanding principal sums.*
 - (ii) Upper limit of variable rate exposure of zero of net outstanding principal sums.*
 - (iii) The maturity structure of borrowings as set out in Annex 9.*
 - (iv) The upper limit for principal sums invested for more than 364 days of £200 million.*
- 6 *That the Council approves the schools funding set out in Section G and Annex 4 in the detailed MTFS.*
- 7 *That the Council approves the Risk Management Strategy 2017-18 as set out in Annex 10 of the detailed MTFS.*

A motion for a recorded vote had been proposed and seconded by the Chairman and Vice-chairman.

The voting on the substantive motion on the budget was as follows:

For (25): Cllrs Phil Awford, Dorcas Binns, Rob Bird, Tony Blackburn, Andrew Gravells, Tim Harman, Mark Hawthorne, Tony Hicks, Richard Leppington, Paul McLain, Patrick Molyneux, Nigel Moor, Shaun Parsons, Alan Preest, Brian Robinson, Vernon Smith, Lynden Stowe, Ray Theodoulou, Brian Tipper, Pam Tracey, Robert Vines, Stan Waddington, Kathy Williams, Roger Wilson and Will Windsor-Clive

Against (9): Cllrs Jasminder Gill, Barry Kirby, Steve Lydon, Steve McHale, Paul McMahon, Tracy Millard, Graham Morgan, Brian Oosthuysen and Lesley Williams

Abstentions (13): Cllrs David Brown, Chris Coleman, Dr John Cordwell, Iain Dobie, Bernard Fisher, Joe Harris, Colin Hay, Jeremy Hilton, Paul Hodgkinson, Klara Sudbury, Simon Wheeler, Jack Williams and Suzanne Williams

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8. MOTIONS

No motions had been received.

9. MEMBER QUESTIONS

Forty four member questions had been received. The following supplementary questions were asked:

Question 5 – Cllr Paul Hodgkinson stated that he had been expecting confirmation of the legal costs of the Council's attempts to block details of the incinerator contract becoming public. He explained that it had been suggested that the figure was £200,000 and he asked the member if this was accurate.

Cllr Ray Theodoulou replied that this was an ongoing enquiry and in legal hands. Until the process was complete, he was unable to confirm the exact cost and it was not appropriate to comment further.

Question 7 - Cllr Paul Hodgkinson asked to receive details of the 'specific and measurable payback' from the visit to China by councillors and officers.

In response, Cllr Mark Hawthorne explained that the visit had delivered real dividends. It was the Council's role to support Gloucestershire businesses and help them to make new trade connections. A number of companies had taken the conversations further such as 'Green Fuels', 'Royal Agricultural University' and 'Prospects training'. In addition companies from China were looking to invest in Gloucestershire.

Question 8 – Cllr Simon Wheeler noted that in response to his answer it had been stated that the proposal was an increase in the highways budget of £6m this year. He asked for clarification of where that was to be found within the budget papers.

Cllr Vernon Smith replied that following the Conservative amendments during the budget discussion there was now £9m more for highways. He would ask officers to provide the member with the specific details.

Question 9 - Cllr Simon Wheeler explained that some answers to questions provided members with precise figures. He asked why precise figures could not be

provided on the total amount of revenue raised from Highways related activities.

Cllr Vernon Smith responded that for some services such as parking it was easy to collate the information but with regards to highways, asset management was used with spend allocated where there was the greatest need.

Question 11 – Cllr Steve Lydon asked why the Council would not publish the contract information requested in relation to the UBB Incinerator project.

Cllr Ray Theodoulou replied that consideration had to be given to the legal position and the commercial contracts the Council were engaged in.

Question 12 – Cllr Steve Lydon asked for a written response detailing what the total budget would have been for the Council had Council Tax been increased consistently at 1.99% since 2013.

Cllr Ray Theodoulou stated that there were many other factors that would have had an impact on the budget during that time and that he would not put forward resources in order to carry out this exercise.

Question 17 – Cllr Lesley Williams asked the cabinet member for the definition of a suitable location for Vehicle Activated Signage.

Cllr Vernon Smith confirmed he would provide the member with a written response.

Question 18 – Cllr Lesley Williams asked whether the Leader believed that the additional £2m across schools due to the new funding formula would make a difference.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne stated that the Council had concerns about the initial proposals but that the cabinet member had worked with MPs and Schools Forum to provide a robust response aiming to ensure a fairer funding formula and create a level playing field nationally.

Question 19 – Cllr Lesley Williams asked for reassurance that whoever took on the portfolio for Children and Young People would monitor Children's Centres closely.

Cllr Paul McLain stated that he believed this would be the case.

Question 21 – Cllr Tracy Millard asked that the cabinet member look again at adult social care in Gloucestershire as she did not believe that the most vulnerable were being looked after properly and that there was fear from individuals that their care plans would be revised.

Cllr Dorcas Binns replied that she was not aware of there being any fear and that she was proud of what the County did with regards to adult social care. She stated that if the member had any personal information to the contrary, she would be happy to meet with her to discuss.

Question 22 – Cllr Tracy Millard referred to reductions in day care centres and asked what the member would do about the increased isolation.

Cllr Dorcas Binns stated that she believed that improvements had been made in the provision for vulnerable people. It was better to give individuals choice about how to spend the time and money more wisely. There were an increasing number of people living in isolation due to an increasing number of older people and that this was being tackled through services such as Village Agents and methods such as social prescribing.

Question 24 – Cllr Tracy Millard asked for details on the timescales for the review of home care contracts, specifically around whether home care workers had received up to date training.

Cllr Dorcas Binns replied that she would provide the member with the information.

Question 25 – Cllr Tracy Millard expressed concern about training care workers with regards to dementia and asked whether the cabinet member would ensure Gloucestershire County Council had signed up to the ethical charter.

Cllr Dorcas Binns stated that she chaired the Health and Wellbeing Board and they had signed up to the charter.

Question 28 – Cllr Tim Harman asked if the residents of Kensington Avenue offered to make a financial contribution to meet costs if required resolve issues relating to the Cheltenham Parking Review, would the cabinet member support that?

Cllr Vernon Smith replied that he would be happy to support that.

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Question 41 – Cllr Jeremy Hilton asked for confirmation on what the mechanical capacity of the waste incinerator at Javelin Park would be.

Cllr Ray Theodoulou would provide the member with a written response.

Question 42 – Cllr Jeremy Hilton asked if the cabinet member could confirm whether UBB had negotiated with third parties regarding filling the planned capacity of the incinerator. If so, could he provide details of who those suppliers might be?

Cllr Ray Theodoulou stated that he was unaware of any negotiations of this nature having been entered into. He would inquire and if negotiations had started he would inform the member.

Question 43 – Cllr Jeremy Hilton asked whether the cabinet member believed that a hostile bid to take on the governance of the Fire and Rescue Service would harm the close collaboration of community services in the County.

Cllr Nigel Moor agreed that it could damage that collaboration. A piece of work had been commissioned to better understand the current collaboration, the benefits of the fire and rescue service being integrated within the county council, and the impact of the legislation.

Question 44 – Cllr Jeremy Hilton stated that previously the member had informed him that the number of homeless people sleeping rough in Gloucester was 13, now the latest figure was 23, he queried the difference.

Cllr Kathy Williams stated that the figures did fluctuate and that not all information had been available at the time.

10. SCRUTINY REPORT

Cllr Brian Oosthuysen, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, presented the report.

Cllr Tim Harman, Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, assured members that a piece of work would be undertaken ahead of the May 2017 elections to scope a scrutiny review on school exclusions. He recognised that there had been a significant increase in exclusions across the county and the reasons for this needed to be explored. He said that the review

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would not start ahead of the elections but the terms of reference would be ready for the work to start soon afterwards.

RESOLVED to note the report.

11. CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

Cllr Mark Hawthorne, Chairman of the Constitution Committee, presented the recommendation from the meeting held on 16 January 2017.

RESOLVED to ratify the changes to the Constitution made by the Monitoring Officer under delegated powers as set out in annex A to the report.

12. CABINET DECISION STATEMENT

RESOLVED to note the Cabinet Decision Statements for the meetings held on 15 December 2016 and 2 February 2017.

13. CABINET MEMBER DECISION STATEMENT

RESOLVED to note the Cabinet Member Decision Statements for the period 1 September to 31 December 2016.

14. HIGHWAYS PERFORMANCE REPORT

Cllr Vernon Smith, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Flood, presented the report. Answering a question from Cllr Dr John Cordwell, Cllr Smith said that he would check when the parish and town council survey was being undertaken and inform Cllr Cordwell outside the meeting.

RESOLVED to note the report.

The meeting ended at 4pm

CHAIRMAN