



MINUTES OF COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

DATE: Wednesday, 26 February 2014 TIME: 10am

VENUE: Shire Hall, Gloucester

Present:

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

Honorary Aldermen

Barry Dare	Terry Parker
Bill Hobman	Gordon Shurmer

Apologies: Honorary Aldermen Liz Boait, Bill Crowther, Paul Drake, Chas Fellows, Deryck Nash, John Sewell, Charmian Sheppard and Mike Williams and Cllr Suzanne Williams.

12. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2014 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

14. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a) Cllr Bill Whelan
The Chairman welcomed Cllr Bill Whelan back to the Council Chamber following his recent illness.
- b) Flooding
The Chairman thanked officers from the Council, emergency services, Environment Agency, district councils, utility companies and voluntary organisations such as SARA for their efforts over recent weeks.
- c) Stewart Edgar
The Chairman welcomed Stewart Edgar who had recently been appointed to the post of Chief Fire Officer.
- d) New highways contract
Officers would be present on the Council Chamber landing following the meeting to provide information on the new contract.

15. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Two public questions were received. A copy of the questions and answers were circulated and are attached to the signed copy of these minutes.

The following supplementary questions were asked:

Question 1 – Diana Shirley asked whether Gloucestershire County Council could now start to negotiate with Urbaser Balfour Beatty for an alternative technology.

In response Cllr Ray Theodoulou stated that this would not be appropriate.

Question 2 – Diana Shirley stated that in addition to some councillors, there were officers who had championed incineration. She asked whether the officers advising on this issue should be the ones who had already promoted incineration as being the correct solution.

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

Cllr Ray Theodoulou stated that officers did the best job they could and would continue to be independent. He said that it was important to select the best technology.

The following oral questions were asked:

Oral Question 1 – Diana Shirley asked whether Gloucestershire County Council had made any effort to discover whether fracking would increase the likelihood of the release of radon gas.

Cllr Will Windsor-Clive stated that each application would be looked at in accordance with the Council's planning policy. National research would be used and, at the moment, no planning applications had been received.

Oral Question 2 – Diana Shirley stated that as British industry was at last catching up with the US and EU lead that incineration was not the correct way to deal with our waste and bearing in mind that Conservatives were not, or should not, be in control of this Council now. Would it be possible for the councillor answering the public questions about incineration not to be one who was simply repeating the policy of the old Conservative controlled council?'

Cllr Ray Theodoulou responded that all things were possible.

16. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Twenty nine member questions were received. A copy of the answers was circulated and is attached to the signed copy of these minutes.

The following supplementary questions were asked:

Question 1 – Cllr Iain Dobie referred to the issue of self harming in private schools and asked whether Cllr Binns was satisfied that the help and support provided by the Council on self harming was equally available to private schools.

Cllr Dorcas Binns replied that the Council did a lot with regards to self harm and mental health issues and worked with all schools across the County. She gave the example of Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning and a forum where self harm and mental health issues were discussed.

Question 2 – Cllr Paul Hodgkinson asked why the Council would not provide detailed maps down to specific postcodes providing information on when areas

would receive faster broadband and what type. He stated that other Councils were providing this level of detail to residents.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne stated that the Council was working with BT and that residents could use the postcode checker on the website to see what information was available. 'Fastershire' was something to be celebrated and he suggested that we should welcome the investment. He explained that the government had announced an additional £10m for the project within the Gloucestershire/Herefordshire area.

Question 3 – Cllr Paul Hodgkinson asked for assurances that issues raised by the National Star College regarding families accessing guidance and support were being given due attention.

Cllr Paul McLain stated that he believed the issues raised had been addressed, however, he was happy to talk to the National Star College. He referred to member advocates such as Cllr Shaun Parsons and the work that they did. He drew attention to the excellent special schools and colleges in Gloucestershire where the Council spent significant sums each year.

Question 4 – Cllr Dr John Cordwell explained that the answer to his original question had not contained reference to the landslip at Old London Road and stated that it had been closed for 15 months. He asked where the road was in terms of priority and why it was behind some of the roads listed.

Cllr Vernon Smith apologised for Old London Road not being included in the answer and confirmed that it was on the list. The County Council's position was that public safety was paramount and some roads had to be closed to undertake the appropriate survey before reopening the road. Officers were working hard in order to progress this work as soon as possible.

Question 6 – Cllr Dr John Cordwell welcomed the additional resources in the Public Rights of Way (PROW) Team and stated that he hoped to hear progress on this issue in the future.

Cllr Vernon Smith stated that work was underway to reduce the backlog on Commons and Public Rights of Way (CROW). He thanked Cllr Dr Cordwell for his work over the years as part of the CROW Committee and for his help in keeping him informed of the issue.

Question 7 – Cllr Sarah Lunn asked what meaningful steps the Council would take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across Gloucestershire, not just putting its own house in order.

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

In response, Cllr Vernon Smith stated that in addition to the LED street lighting, work was carried out in schools and solar panels provided through Grow Gloucestershire. In addition there was the £5 million Local Sustainable Transport Fund which would help reduce CO2 emissions through reduced traffic.

Question 8 – Cllr Sarah Lunnon asked whether the Cabinet Member could identify other uses for pavements.

Cllr Vernon Smith stated that pavements including footpaths were designed for pedestrians to have a safe way to travel.

Question 9 – Cllr Sarah Lunnon asked whether the Leader of the Council was saying that he would base the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) Strategy on a low carbon economy.

Cllr Hawthorne informed the member that it was the LEP's strategy and if she had any comments on the strategy she could write to the LEP chair.

Question 10 – Cllr Sarah Lunnon, in response to the initial answer around census figures not being helpful, asked could the data be used as a starting point in setting targets around modes of transport.

Cllr Dorcas Binns replied that she did not see the benefit of collating this data without a specific purpose. She stated that she encouraged everyone to cycle and that members could use their 'Active Together' grant to improve cycleways if they wished.

Question 11 – Cllr Paul Hodgkinson stated that this was a particular issue for Northleach residents and asked for greater parking enforcement.

Cllr Vernon Smith replied that this was a major issue but that it was for the Police to enforce this. This could be discussed further in the Shadow meetings.

Question 16 – Cllr Colin Hay asked whether the Cabinet Member would give advice to the new Director of Public Health as to whether Gloucestershire County Council should be signing up to the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control.

Cllr Dorcas Binns replied that more information was needed on this declaration and that she would only advise signing up to it if it was in the Council's best interest.

Question 17 – Cllr Jeremy Hilton asked whether the Cabinet Member would give a commitment for better outcomes for young people from children's centres.

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

Cllr Paul McLain explained that he was committed to this and that the Council would work with the four localities to enhance the outcomes for young people. He also explained that the responses from Ofsted had yet to be published.

Question 18 – Cllr Jeremy Hilton asked whether the Ofsted reports on children’s centres would be based on locality and reported as a collective. He was concerned that performance of well performing centres could be counter balanced by those not performing so well.

Cllr Paul McLain replied that the reports would be based on locality.

Question 19 - Cllr Paul McMahon explained that he had attended the ‘February’ event and passed on his thanks to Cllr Paul McLain and the Youth Participation Team.

Question 20 – Cllr Lesley Williams was hoping to see a report on how the Welfare/Social Fund Scheme was working and suggested that decisions around how surplus cash was used could then be better supported with information.

Cllr Paul McLain said he would try and share information as best he could. He would look to see how best to use the surplus on this in the future.

Question 23 – Cllr Lesley Williams asked in reference to the Prime Minister’s claims that ‘money was no object’, whether the age of austerity was now over.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne stated that the Council should welcome the response from Government with regards to flood damage. Flood damage in Gloucestershire was something that still needed to be addressed. He referred to his answer to the original question stating that the mechanism for Belwin funding needed to be looked at again as it did not respond to current challenges.

Question 24 – Cllr Steve Lydon asked where specifically the Leader of the Council had made his representations on the state of local government funding.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne stated that he and colleagues at the County Councils’ Network regularly lobbied Government on a number of issues and had seen success on issues such as the New Homes’ Bonus. The Council had also lobbied on the Council Tax freeze.

Question 25 – Cllr Barry Kirby asked whether the County Council or Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service had asked for military support during the flooding. He wondered what the public would have made of the military presence and suggested that the support might have been needed elsewhere.

In response, Cllr Will Windsor-Clive stated that he did not know whether Gold Command had requested the support, but that it had been welcomed and people would have been happy to have seen them.

Question 26 – Cllr Mike Sztymiak asked whether, in determining resources required, had level of demand and public expectation of the role of the County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority been taken into account.

Cllr Vernon Smith stated that he worked daily with the Flood Alleviation Team, and was in constant communication. He was proud of the work of the team and was aware of their very heavy workload. He explained that the team could have support of officers from Planning, as well as the six districts working with the team. In a tough economic climate he was pleased at the partnership working taking place and he provided examples of the work that was being carried out.

Question 27 – Cllr Mike Sztymiak explained that with regard to a mineral extraction application, it had been submitted before two large housing applications in Twyning. He asked whether the Cabinet Member could confirm that flood assessments would now take into account those new housing proposals.

Cllr Will Windsor-Clive stated that applications in Planning were considered on individual merit. The Flood Team would give advice to the decision making authority as appropriate.

Question 28 – Cllr Colin Hay stated that he thought that the ‘Active Together’ scheme administration costs needed to be considered to ensure value for money. He asked what those costs were likely to be.

Cllr Dorcas Binns stated that she did not see any problems with the administration of the scheme. She stated that the application forms were clear and easy to fill in and that councillors should work together and be supportive of the scheme.

17. PETITIONS

Cllr Colin Guyton presented a petition to Cllr Vernon Smith, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Flood, requesting a reduction in the speed limit on Morse Lane, Drybrook.

18. POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK - REPORT OF THE CABINET

The Chairman stated that the budget was arguably the most important item of business for the Council each year. With a minority administration the Council's task was more complex than in previous years. The collective objective was to agree the Council budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy and, following discussion with Group Leaders, a pragmatic approach had been agreed on how the budget should be presented and debated. In order to facilitate this, there would need to be some flexibility to the normal rules of debate.

The Chief Executive explained the procedure that would be followed. Firstly, Cllr Mark Hawthorne, Leader of the Council, and Cllr Ray Theodoulou, Cabinet Member for Finance and Change, would be asked to present the recommendations from the Cabinet.

Secondly, 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 Chief Executive advised that the Chairman would call for an adjournment to provide an opportunity for the relevant 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. This fulfilled the expectation of the Government that decisions on the budget and Council Tax were transparent.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne, the Leader of the Council, presented the recommendation from the Cabinet meeting held on 5 February 2014. He said that the proposed budget followed the principles established in recent years: 'supporting vulnerable people, living within our means, providing the basics as the Council could not do everything and helping communities to help themselves'. He was proud that despite the cheque from the Government getting smaller, the Council had been able to maintain spending on Adult Social Care at the same level as 2010. He noted the success of community run libraries and youth activities. Significant sums had been invested to support the local economy including the 'Fastershire' broadband project and the apprentice scheme.

The proposal to freeze Council Tax for a fourth successive year would mean that a total of £48.7 million would remain in the pockets of residents. Although much had been achieved, he recognised that there remained significant challenges ahead for the Council. The ageing population meant that there would be greater pressure on Adult Social Care and it was critical that there was better integration of health and social care and local communities were empowered to help meet the greater demand for services. It was estimated that the investment in flood alleviation schemes since 2007 had saved around 500 properties. However, further action was still needed and £500,000 had been allocated for matched funding schemes.

The Council would continue to support the local economy and would be investing in infrastructure schemes across the county including the A417 'Missing Link' at Birdlip. He recognised, however, that the severe weather in recent months was having a serious impact on the road network and he announced that the Council had submitted a £15 million bid for funds from the Government's emergency scheme.

He said that he was pleased to present a budget with cross-party involvement that protected services to vulnerable people whilst still investing in the local economy.

Cllr Theodoulou, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Change, seconded the recommendation from the Cabinet and spoke in support of the proposals. He stated that savings amounted to £154 million over the period of the last administration and the new Council. The Council had sold surplus assets, reorganised its accommodation, used smarter procurement methods, reduced debt and become more efficient in its day to day activities. Difficult decisions had been taken with over 2,000 staff leaving the Council and the number of councillors and the size of the Cabinet being reduced significantly. Powers were being devolved to

a local level through schemes such as 'Highways Local' and 'Active Together'. Services to vulnerable people were being protected with £242 million of the total budget of £428 million being spent in that area.

He 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'. He said that all members had been provided with a Due Regard Statement and this recognised the potential for the Council Strategy and budget proposals to have both a positive and negative impact on people within protected groups. He drew members' attention to specific examples, including the potential impact on people with disability arising from proposals in the Adult Social Care, Children and Families and Fire Safety budgets. He assured members that the impact on protected groups would be monitored and the Due Regard Statement updated as plans were implemented.

Cllr Colin Hay and Cllr Jeremy Hilton presented the amendments to the budget proposed by the Liberal Democrat Group. They believed that there was an opportunity to take a relatively small sum from reserves to improve the budget in a number of areas. Concern was expressed at the way the 'old' Council had taken budget decisions, particularly relating to issues such as waste, libraries and the youth service, and it was hoped that the new cross-party approach would result in better decisions.

Liberal Democrat Group budget amendments:

- a) £1million to be taken from the Council's Transformation Reserve to be spent on additional Highway repairs.
- b) To reduce the 'Active Together' funding for each councillor from £50,000 to £30,000 in 2014-15 and that £1 million be invested over two years to build upon existing preventative/early help programmes and services to improve young people's mental health (no additional financial cost).
- c) £35,000 one-off investment to give all year 5 children attending a Gloucestershire school the opportunity to attend a session at the SkillZone ('to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).
- d) Residents' parking permit fees for the first car to be reduced from £80 to £50 with effect from 1 May 2014 at a cost of £132,000 each year (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).
- e) £10,000 for a study into the use of the pupil premium in Gloucestershire's schools (already funded by £50,000 one-off investment in Education).

Cllr Lesley Williams and Cllr Steve Lydon presented the amendments to the budget proposed by the Labour Group. They thanked the leaders of the political groups and officers for their hard work over recent weeks in developing the budget proposals. They believed that the amendments proposed by the Labour Group were affordable and would benefit the people who were suffering the most through the current 'cost of living' crisis. They were concerned, however, that Adult Social Care was underfunded with costs set to rise further in future years. The Coalition Government had cut local government funding by 40 per cent and, despite the huge savings already made by the Council, a further £32 million was likely to be required over the next two to three years.

Labour Group budget amendments:

- a) Additional investment of £211,000 to create a local living wage supplement for Council staff (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).
- b) Additional investment of £350,000 to provide an Apprentice Travel Card (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).
- c) Additional investment of £100,000 to provide a Children in Care and Care Leavers' Travel Card (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).
- d) Top slicing the 'Active Together' funding by £530,000 to fund healthy projects and healthy living campaigns in Gloucestershire's disadvantaged communities over two years (pooled at district level). This would leave £40,000 per councillor over two years (no additional financial cost).
- e) Additional investment of £100,000 for a Community Empowerment Chest (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).
- f) No reduction in Children Centres' funding in 2014-15 at a cost of £168,000 (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).
- g) To provide £50,000 for a 'Suited and Booted' fund to provide 16-18 year olds that are on free school meals and in education or training with funds to buy work clothing, tools, or books.
- h) Fire Service measures – Council Strategy appendix 'How will we measure our performance'

To add under Outcome 4 'People and communities are active and resilient':

- Number of home safety visits completed
- Number of business safety visits completed
- Number of 'community interactions' at:
 - External events
 - Fire Stations (detailed by station)

- Skillzone

Cllr Alan Preest and Cllr Richard Leppington presented an amendment to the budget from the UKIP Group. They recognised that 2014-15 was the final year of the Meeting the Challenge Programme and therefore they would not be proposing any major changes to the budget. They were concerned at the pressure on the Adult Social Care and Children and Families budgets arising from the increasing demand for services. They believed that unless the Council followed a 'zero based' budgeting approach it was in danger of becoming seriously overstretched in future years. They also expressed disappointment that the district councils were not supportive of looking at options for local government reorganisation.

UKIP Group budget amendment:

Estimated saving of £100,000 by not employing Political Researchers (noting that one-off redundancy costs would be payable).

The Chairman called for an adjournment to provide an opportunity for the political groups to discuss and agree amendments.

During the adjournment the following amendment was also put forward:

Additional investment of £450,000 over two years (2014-15 and 2015-16) to improve Young People's Mental Health Services (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).

Following the adjournment, the Leader of the Council provided details of those budget amendments that had been agreed:

- a) Additional investment of £211,000 to create a local living wage supplement for Council staff (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).
- b) Additional investment of £350,000 to provide an Apprentice Travel Card (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).
- c) Additional investment of £100,000 to provide a Children in Care and Care Leavers' Travel Card (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).
- d) Top slicing the 'Active Together' funding by £530,000 to fund healthy projects and healthy living campaigns in Gloucestershire's disadvantaged communities over two years (pooled at district level). This would leave £40,000 per councillor over two years (no additional financial cost).

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

- e) Additional investment of £100,000 for a Community Empowerment Chest (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).
- f) Additional investment of £450,000 over two years (2014-15 and 2015-16) to improve Young People's Mental Health Services (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).
- g) £35,000 one-off investment to give all year 5 children attending a Gloucestershire school the opportunity to attend a session at the SkillZone (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).
- h) Residents' parking permit fees for the first car to be reduced from £80 to £50 with effect from 1 May 2014 at a cost of £132,000 each year (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).
- i) £10,000 for a study into the use of the pupil premium in Gloucestershire's schools (already funded by £50,000 one-off investment in Education).

He advised that the change proposed to the Council Strategy relating to measuring the performance of Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service had also been accepted.

The following budget amendments were withdrawn:

- a) Labour Group - No reduction in Children Centres' funding in 2014-15 at a cost of £168,000 (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).
- b) Labour Group - To provide £50,000 for a 'Suited and Booted' fund to provide 16-18 year olds that are on free school meals and in education or training with funds to buy work clothing, tools, or books.
- c) Liberal Democrat Group - To reduce the 'Active Together' funding for each councillor from £50,000 to £30,000 in 2014-15 and that £1 million be invested over two years to build upon existing preventative/early help programmes and services to improve young people's mental health (no additional financial cost).

The following budget amendments were not withdrawn and were subject to a debate and vote in the chamber:

- a) Liberal Democrat Group - £1million to be taken from the Council's Transformation Reserve to be spent on additional Highway repairs.

A number of members noted that the poor state of the roads were the number one concern on the doorstep. The condition of the roads had deteriorated significantly in recent weeks as a result of the severe weather.

Taking £1 million from the Transformation Reserve would still mean that there was £7.2 million in the reserve at the end of March 2015. They supported the bid for £15 million from the Government's severe weather fund but noted that many of the roads in poor condition were not flood damaged. They expressed concern that the situation had become so bad that it was dangerous to ride a bicycle or motorcycle on some roads.

Other members spoke against the budget amendment and believed that the Council should continue with its long term programme to improve the condition of the county's roads. The approach in Gloucestershire was working, with the backlog of repairs significantly lower than in other counties such as Dorset and Wiltshire. The 'Highways Local' Scheme was the mechanism for members to address specific problems in their local area. The bid for £15 million from the Government's severe weather fund would allow landslips to be addressed and resurfacing works to be undertaken.

On being put to the vote, the budget amendment was not supported.

- b) UKIP Group - Estimated saving of £100,000 by not employing Political Researchers (noting that one-off redundancy costs would be payable).

Some members stated that £100,000 would go a long way in supporting Council services. They noted that the political parties could employ researchers but they felt that they should do so at their own expense.

Other members stated that there was a cost to democracy. They believed that the political researchers played an important role in supporting members and the wider democratic process. They referred to their role in helping to reach a negotiated position on the Council budget. A member said that there might be some confusion between the political researchers employed by the Council and party political support for which members paid a monthly subscription.

Another member believed that there was a 'democratic deficit' in the current rules for employing political researchers, whereby only the three largest political groups could employ a researcher.

On being put to the vote, the budget amendment was not supported.

Members then moved into general debate on the budget.

A member said that climate change would result in more severe weather and flooding. She believed that it was a woeful dereliction of duty by the Cabinet that

the Council was not taking concerted action to reduce the emission of green house gases. She called on the Council to hold a referendum to allow the public to decide on whether funds should be spent on addressing this critical issue.

Some members expressed serious concern about the national cuts to local government and their impact on vulnerable people. They noted that the Council was facing an overspend on Adult Social Care in 2013-14 and pressure would increase in future years. They were pleased, however, that the budget proposals included measures to support the lowest paid, young people entering work, public health and community organisations. They were disappointed, however, that the budget amendment to protect funding of the Children's Centres had not been supported.

The Cabinet Member for Older People recognised that Adult Social Care was a demand led service and he reassured members that vulnerable people would receive appropriate levels of support. He paid tribute to his fellow Cabinet members who had made savings in other areas to allow the Adult Social Care budget to be protected. He noted that joint working with the health community was delivering efficiencies and the Council continued to invest funds to support new initiatives.

Another member stated that there was much to support in the budget but he was disappointed that the proposal for an additional £1 million for highway repairs had not been supported. He noted that more detail was required around the working arrangements for the budget amendments relating to a community empowerment chest and travel cards for young people. He supported the funding of £450,000 to support Young People's Mental Health Services but recognised that more funding might be required in the future.

In summing up, the Leader of the Council was pleased that there had been cross-party support for nearly all of the Cabinet's draft budget proposals. He noted that the debate at the meeting had focused on a very small proportion of the total budget. He said that he was proud that the Council was continuing to protect services to the most vulnerable but had been able to freeze council tax for the fourth successive year. He recognised that there were significant challenges ahead with joint working required to develop a new corporate strategy. He hoped that members could continue to work together in the best interests of the people of Gloucestershire.

RESOLVED

- 1 *That the 2014/15 update of the Council Strategy 2011-2015 be approved by Council subject to the following amendment:*

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

Fire Service measures – Council Strategy appendix ‘How will we measure our performance’

To add under Outcome 4 ‘People and communities are active and resilient’:

- *Number of home safety visits completed*
- *Number of business safety visits completed*
- *Number of ‘community interactions’ at:*
 - *External events*
 - *Fire Stations (detailed by station)*
 - *Skillzone*

- 2 *That, having considered the additional consultation responses and the Public Sector Equality Duty Assessment, approval is given to the MTFs submitted to Council amended to take account of the following changes:*
- a) *Additional investment of £211,000 to create a local living wage supplement for Council staff (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).*
 - b) *Additional investment of £350,000 to provide an Apprentice Travel Card (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).*
 - c) *Additional investment of £100,000 to provide a Children in Care and Care Leavers’ Travel Card (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).*
 - d) *Top slicing the ‘Active Together’ funding by £530,000 to fund healthy projects and healthy living campaigns in Gloucestershire’s disadvantaged communities over two years (pooled at district level). This would leave £40,000 per councillor over two years (no additional financial cost).*
 - e) *Additional investment of £100,000 for a Community Empowerment Chest (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).*
 - f) *Additional investment of £450,000 over two years (2014-15 and 2015-16) to improve Young People’s Mental Health Services (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).*
 - g) *£35,000 one-off investment to give all year 5 children attending a Gloucestershire school the opportunity to attend a session at the SkillZone (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).*

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

- h) Residents' parking permit fees for the first car to be reduced from £80 to £50 with effect from 1 May 2014 at a cost of £132,000 each year (to be funded from the Debt Redemption Budget).
 - i) £10,000 for a study into the use of the pupil premium in Gloucestershire's schools (already funded by £50,000 one-off investment in Education).
 - j) Reduction in additional debt redemption investment from £1.432m to £54,000.
- 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:

Gloucestershire County Council 2014/15 Budget:

	£000
<i>Original 2013/14 Budget</i>	430,910
<i>Inflation</i>	4,566
<i>Cost and spending increases</i>	14,805
<i>Cost Reductions</i>	<u>-22,174</u>
<i>Total</i>	428,107
<i>Less:</i>	
<i>Formula Grant</i>	153,443
<i>Council Tax Freeze Grant 2014/15</i>	2,488
<i>Public Health Grant</i>	21,793
<i>NHS Funding</i>	11,596
<i>New Homes Bonus</i>	2,546
<i>Education Single Grant</i>	5,309
<i>Education Statutory Responsibility Grant</i>	1,255
<i>Collection Fund Surplus</i>	2,543
<i>Total to be precepted (Council Tax Requirement)</i>	227,134

	<i>Taxbase</i>	<i>Total Precept</i>
	<i>Total</i>	<i>£</i>
<i>Cheltenham</i>	39,045.80	42,579,445
<i>Cotswold</i>	36,906.55	40,246,593
<i>Forest of Dean</i>	26,499.93	28,898,174

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

Gloucester City	34,673.00	37,810,906
Stroud	40,871.90	44,570,807
Tewkesbury	30,287.37	33,028,377
Total		227,134,302

- 3 a) That approval is given to the Capital programme set out in Annex 8 of the 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.
- b) 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 MTFs as follows:

Operational Boundary for External Debt	2013/14	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
	Approved £m	Revised £m	Estimate £m	Estimate £m	Estimate £m
Total	495.000	400.000	380.000	370.000	345.000

- c) Noting that the authorised limit for 2014/15 will be the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003
- d) That the approval is given to the Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management set out in Annex 9 of the MTFs for
- (i) Upper limit of fixed interest rate exposure of £450 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 £50 million

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

- e) *That approval is given to the Treasury Management Strategy set out in Annex 9 of the MTFs.*

A motion for a recorded vote had been proposed and seconded by the Chairman and Vice-chairman and received support from at least 10 members.

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

For (25) – Phil Awford, Dorcas Binns, Rob Bird, Tony Blackburn, Jason Bullingham, Andrew Gravells, Tim Harman, Mark Hawthorne, Tony Hicks, Paul McLain, Patrick Molyneux, Nigel Moor, Shaun Parsons, Vernon Smith, Norman Stephens, Lynden Stowe, Mike Sztymiak, Ray Theodoulou, Brian Tipper, Pam Tracey, Robert Vines, Stan Waddington, Kathy Williams, Roger Wilson and Will Windsor-Clive.

Against (1)- Sarah Lunnon

Abstentions (24) – David Brown, Chris Coleman, Dr John Cordwell, Iain Dobie, Bernard Fisher, Jasminder Gill, Colin Guyton, Joe Harris, Colin Hay, Jeremy Hilton, Paul Hodgkinson, Barry Kirby, Richard Leppington, Stephen Lydon, Steve McHale, Paul McMahon, Tracy Millard, Graham Morgan, Brian Oosthuysen, Alan Preest, Nigel Robbins, Simon Wheeler, Bill Whelan and Lesley Williams.

19. MOTIONS

Cllr Colin Hay and Cllr Sarah Lunnon, the proposer and seconder for the following motion on female genital mutilation (FGM), requested that it be deferred until the next meeting on 19 March 2014 to allow more time for a proper debate.

Motion 701 - Female Genital Mutilation

This Council notes that the number of women and girls living with Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in the UK is more likely to be around 170,000, almost three times the existing official figures, and that 65,000 girls aged 13 and under are at risk of mutilation in this country.

This Council is aware that in spite of the UK law in 1985 banning what was then termed 'female circumcision' there has not been a single successful prosecution in the country.

This Council is concerned that this abusive practice is being carried out in areas within our own county and that more needs to be done to raise awareness, investigate concerns and secure prosecutions.

This Council recognises the importance of a multi-agency approach that primarily involves education, health and local authorities, the police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in appropriately coming together to share data and raise awareness.

This Council welcomes the decision that doctors and nurses in the UK are now to be told to log details of injuries suffered by victims of FGM. It has been reported that by September, all acute hospitals will have to report this data to the Department of Health, on a monthly basis.

This Council requests for these figures to be monitored and evaluated also by the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to see how big a problem these crimes really are in Gloucestershire and for this particular committee to determine what steps are being taken to stop the practice from happening to children in Gloucestershire.

20. LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE TASK GROUP

Cllr Brian Oosthuysen, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, presented the recommendations of the Local Government Structure Task Group. He explained that the task group had been set up following a motion proposed by Cllr Steve Lydon at the full Council meeting on 4 September 2013. The motion requested that an all-party scrutiny task group be set up to investigate the options for unitary working arrangements in Gloucestershire.

An 'open conversation' had been held with the district councils to seek their views on local government reorganisation. He thanked the Leaders and Chief Executives from Cheltenham BC, Forest of Dean DC, Gloucester City, Stroud DC and Tewkesbury BC (or their representatives) for taking the time to attend the session. Unfortunately no one from Cotswold DC had been available to attend.

The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, had indicated that proposals could be put forward to reorganise local government but they would not be considered unless all the councils in that area were supportive. It was evident that it would not be possible to reach a common position in Gloucestershire at the present time.

Members were concerned at the unsettling nature of discussions regarding a potential unitary structure and believed that it was important to draw the scrutiny inquiry to a close. Instead, they believed that efforts should concentrate on improving public services through co-operation between organisations.

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

At the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 29 January 2014, the task group's recommendations were supported. He thanked the members of the task group and officers for their efforts over recent months.

Cllr Steve Lydon stated that local government reorganisation would not go away and he believed that it was inevitable that it would come up again in the future. He regretted that it had not been possible to seek the views of the wider business community.

A member stated that he was happy with the outcome of the scrutiny inquiry but believed that greater effort should be made to integrate services. He said that the Council, the district councils and other public sector agencies needed to look long term and work strategically. He hoped that this message could be conveyed to Leadership Gloucestershire and incorporated within the Council Strategy moving forward.

RESOLVED

- a) *That, as there was no consensus in the local government community, there should be no further consideration of unitary local government for Gloucestershire at this time.*
- b) *To advise the district councils of the outcome of the scrutiny inquiry.*
- c) *To encourage public sector organisations in Gloucestershire, including the Council, the district councils, the health service, the police and the voluntary and community sector, to work together where there were mutual benefits.*
- d) *The report be shared with Leadership Gloucestershire.*

21. CABINET DECISION STATEMENT

RESOLVED *that the Cabinet Decision Statement for the decisions taken on 5 February 2014 be noted.*

22. SCRUTINY REPORT

RESOLVED *that the scrutiny report be noted.*

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

CHAIRMAN

The meeting ended at 3.20pm