

CABINET	<i>Gloucestershire County Council</i>
26 January 2022	
Minutes	

**PRESENT
MEMBERSHIP:**

Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE - Leader of Council
 Cllr Lynden Stowe – Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance and Change
 Cllr Stephen Davies – Cabinet Member for Children’s Safeguarding and Early Years
 Cllr Carole Allaway Martin – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Commissioning
 Cllr Dave Norman – Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Parking and Libraries
 Cllr Phil Robinson – Cabinet Member for Economy, Education and Skills
 Cllr Tim Harman – Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities
 Cllr Vernon Smith – Cabinet Member for Highways and Flood
 Cllr Kathy Williams – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Delivery
 Cllr David Gray – Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning

Apologies:

1. Apologies

See above.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 22 December 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made at the meeting.

4. Questions at Cabinet Meetings

A total of 4 public questions were asked at the meeting.

A total of 17 member questions were asked at the meeting.

The following supplementary questions were asked:

Question 1 – Cllr Ben Evans asked, regarding costs of high end services, did the council think it was a mistake to dismantle the youth service in 2010?

Cllr Stephen Davies replied that this was an important piece of work that was being carried out. The Cabinet Member was on the scrutiny task group and outlined that buildings were not the solution. The whole strategy was designed to change that.

Question 2 – Cllr Ben Evans asked, did the cabinet member have an idea on what needed to be done and what capital spend was required?

Cllr Stephen Davies would get back to the member once the figures were available.

Question 4 – Cllr Ben Evans asked what thought was being given to IT solutions around management of information to ensure coherent reporting of outcomes and outputs of services.

Cllr Stephen Davies agreed the interface was important and he would get back to the member on the details.

Question 5 – Cllr Ben Evans asked how many young people aged 10-19 were in Gloucester?

Cllr Stephen Davies stated that he did not have the number to hand and could provide it, but Cllr Evans answered that he already had the figures.

Question 6 - Cllr Ben Evans asked, regarding the preventative element in lots 2-4, did the member feel the number of youth workers seemed low? He asked could the Cabinet Member describe how the council understood preventative services and what high end difficulties they would look to prevent.

Cllr Stephen Davies replied with the example of there being young people that were not yet known to the Council requiring help and the work needed to be developed to take this into account. He was aware of the different levels of need across young people in Gloucestershire.

Question 12 – Cllr John Bloxsom asked whether there would be adequate funding for our market towns with regards to Youth Services.

Cllr Stephen Davies would provide the member with the way in which the funding would be disseminated.

Question 13 – Cllr John Bloxsom asked if a faith organisation was successful would they be able to sub contract out the provision of services related to sexual health.

Cllr Stephen Davies confirmed that they could commission out to another provider.

5 Urgent questions were asked prior to the meeting:

Urgent Question 1 - Cllr Paul Hodgkinson asked, did the Leader worry that the Council Strategy consultation simply posed motherhood and apple pie questions, which the majority were inevitably going to agree with? What learnings had this Cabinet taken from this exercise, other than the ability (legitimate or otherwise) to claim to have majority support for its proposals?

In response Cllr Mark Hawthorne stated that the priorities within the Council Strategy were based on the priorities set out in the manifesto in May, which had received strong support on the doorstep. The engagement on the Council Strategy allowed the Council to test that those priorities remained the right ones, as well as giving residents the opportunity to comment on anything else they considered to be important. He made no apologies for the fact that the priorities being proposed received widespread support.

Cllr Paul Hodgkinson asked a supplementary question on how much that consultation had cost the tax payer.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne replied he did not have the information to hand but it was a statutory responsibility to consult. It was an important part of the agenda pack for Cabinet as well as for Council. He would come back to the member with details of the costs.

Urgent Question 2 - Cllr Paul Hodgkinson asked, did the Leader accept that limiting answers on the Council Strategy to “strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree” was limiting and gave little room for respondents to offer caveated opinions?

Cllr Mark Hawthorne replied that he did not accept this and that the Council Strategy and budget consultation were designed to run alongside and complement each other, and as the report showed, there were plenty of opportunities for free text comments to be made. This provided a mixture of qualitative and quantitative feedback.

Cllr Paul Hodgkinson asked a supplementary question on what changes had been made as a result of the feedback from the consultation.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne replied that there were a number of areas that had changed, primarily as a result of consultation with members.

Urgent Question 3 - Cllr Paul Hodgkinson asked why the questions to businesses on the Building Back Better survey substantially different to those put to residents?

Cllr Mark Hawthorne replied that this was in order to ensure that the questions were as relevant as possible to the intended audience. Many of the questions asked of residents were less relevant to local businesses, though, of course, there was nothing to stop local business-owners from responding as local residents.

Urgent Question 4 - Cllr Paul Hodgkinson asked that on page 11 of the report, it was stated that stakeholders were asked to comment on “funding for 26 miles of cycle-track from Stroud to Bishop’s Cleeve.” What specific questions were asked on this claim?

Cllr Mark Hawthorne replied that this was amongst a raft of proposals relating to the Economy, Environment and Infrastructure budget on which residents were invited to

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comment. The question was - Would you like to give us any feedback on the priorities in question 1 or on any specific areas you feel we should be spending the money on, which aren't already listed?

Cllr Paul Hodgkinson asked a supplementary question asking where it was explained to residents that the route was not fully funded?

Cllr Mark Hawthorne referred the member to the answer to the public question which outlined a firm commitment to funding the scheme.

Urgent Question 5 - Cllr Paul Hodgkinson asked, of the 230 comments received on question 2, and the 192 comments received on question 4, what further analysis of the feedback was undertaken beyond simply categorising the feedback into themes? I.e. of the 141 comments received on "more investment into climate change" on question 2, what proportion were supportive of the level of investment being proposed, what proportion believed you weren't investing enough etc?

Cllr Mark Hawthorne replied that all the comments were supportive of more investment into climate change. Five comments received stated that too much money was spent on climate change.

Cllr Paul Hodgkinson asked a supplementary question on whether people in Gloucestershire felt that more should be spent on climate change? He asked whether Cllr Gray should do more to support this.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne replied that of the comments received about investment into climate change, 5 had stated that too much money was spent on climate change. The rest supported additional investment.

5. Council Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 - 2025/26

Cllr Mark Hawthorne and Cllr Lynden Stowe asked Cabinet to recommend the MTFS, Council Strategy, 2022/23 budget and Precept to Council.

Cllr Lynden Stowe outlined that the MTFS document (Appendix 2) covered a four year period but focussed on the financial investment in services needed in 2022/23 to deliver the objectives of the Council Strategy.

The draft budget for 2022/23 outlined how the council proposed to spend £520 million – an increase of over £37 million from the current year. Thanks to a good financial settlement from central government this additional investment could be delivered with only a 1.99% Council Tax increase plus an additional 1% Adult Social Care Precept. This amounted to less than 81p per week for a Band D household. This would ensure that GCC continued to have one of the lowest Council Tax levels when compared to other County Councils.

The draft budget proposed significant investment in key areas;

- Over £13 million extra investment in Adult Services
- An additional £14 million for Children Services
- A £2 million investment in our Fire and Rescue Service

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

- An additional £2m permanently allocated to Highways Local projects and Pothole repairs
- Creation of a £1 million pa Climate Emergency Fund.
- An additional £8 million invested in Environment and Infrastructure

In addition, the MTFS detailed a further £142 million of new capital investment – which meant that the Council now had a capital programme of £996 million – almost a billion pounds.

It was emphasised that much of the spend was focussed on addressing Climate Change and it was embedded throughout the budget.

Members were alerted to the Equality Impact Assessment which accompanied the report and the budget and strategy consultation report.

Cllr Phil Awford, Chair of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee thanked the Cabinet members for engaging with scrutiny during this process and for attending the meeting on 6 January 2022. He also thanked all scrutiny members for their comments and input to make the meeting a real success. Scrutiny's feedback had resulted in the following changes to the strategy:

- Making clear that the commitment to Highways includes a new policy on road safety
- Emphasising that the Council's ambition for investment extends beyond the STEP fusion project to other opportunities including Cyber Central.
- Clarifying the commitment to growing green jobs and skills
- Underlining the fact that the strategy will deliver equally for rural and urban areas.

The Leader thanked Scrutiny for their comments and noted that the strategy had been amended to incorporate that. It was noted that the Fire and Rescue Service budget was considered separately by the Fire Scrutiny Committee.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne introduced the Council Strategy that set out the priorities and ambitions for the Council and the County. It was a key document that would determine where the Council put its resources and focussed its efforts over the next four years. In particular it set out how the Council would deliver the commitments it had made.

Building Back Better in Gloucestershire explained the council's vision and priorities for 2022 – 2026, focusing on a greener, healthier, more prosperous Gloucestershire for everyone. The priorities were:

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- **Tackling climate change** through a series of ambitious yet practical initiatives that would show the Council's commitment to reducing the Council's carbon footprint to net zero by 2030, and making it easier for local businesses and residents to make greener choices, including by providing better public transport and electric vehicle infrastructure
- **Improving the resilience of our roads** – a further investment of £100m into road resurfacing over the lifetime of the strategy, and a more proactive approach to repairing potholes
- **Delivering sustainable growth** – this strategy would make sure that Gloucestershire took an infrastructure-led approach
- **Levelling up our communities** – Part of building back better was recognising that there was an opportunity to level up those parts of the County that have been left behind. Look to meet new challenges.
- **Securing investment for Gloucestershire** – Our strategy would make sure that Gloucestershire attracts inward investment from Central Government and businesses.
- The strategy continued the Council's commitment to **Transforming Children's Services, Adult Social Care, and Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service** to make sure they were efficient, effective and meet the needs and future challenges of a growing population.
- The strategy committed the Council to **Improving the experience offered to customers**

Cabinet member spoke about how the budget and strategy met the needs of residents in relation to their services.

The focus of investment in the GFRS would be on management and support to those staff on call. Extra staff would be put in place to support recruitment and development of operational and non operational areas for ensure additional resilience. In addition the capital budget included provision for upgrading vehicles.

Cabinet Members noted the significant investment into children services that would transform the approach going forward.

It was explained that early intervention and prevention in adult social care was a focus. It was acknowledged that the service had face challenges over the pandemic and Cllr Williams thanked staff for their work during the period. Members noted the demographic changes placing pressures on the service over the next four years.

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

The strategic ambition was to support people to live independently through transforming services and using technological advancements alongside the benefits of the integrated care system.

In relation to highways, Cabinet Members welcomed the £100m investment to build back better. In addition the Highways Local had been increased within the base budget.

Cabinet were informed of some of the specific investments in relation to the capital spend on schools, including new schools and expansion schemes.

Cllr Stowe thanked the officers for their work in helping to develop the budget.

Having considered all of the information. Cabinet noted the report and

RESOLVED to:

1. Consider the outcome of the budget consultation as set out in Appendix 3 and the report from the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) in Appendix 4.
2. Approve the Council Strategy 2022-2026 - Building Back Better in Gloucestershire for recommendation to County Council (Appendix 1).
3. Approve changes to the draft budget and to approve the MTFS and final revenue and capital budget for 2022/23 for recommendation to County Council, including all of the proposals set out in the annexes of the detailed MTFS (Appendix 2).
4. Note the schools funding allocations, the provisional local government finance settlement and forecast reserve movements as summarised in this report and set out in the MTFS.
5. Recommend to Council a revenue budget of £520.268 million, a band D council tax of £1,451.36 and consequential precepts on District Councils.
6. Note the Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy & Investment Strategy as set out in Annexes 7 & 10 of the detailed MTFS.
7. Approve the Risk Management Policy Statement & Strategy 2022-25 as set out in Annex 11 of the detailed MTFS for recommendation to County Council.

6. Financial Monitoring Report 2021/22

Cllr Lynden Stowe provided an update on the year-end forecast for the 2021/22 County Council's Revenue and Capital Budgets

The forecast revenue year end position based on December 2021 (Period 9) forecasts for the 2021/22 financial year was an overspend of £1.937 million all of

which is non Covid-19 related. A balanced position was forecast in relation to Covid-19 expenditure and income.

The largest non-Covid-19 budget variance was the £8.608 million forecast overspend in Children and Families – this overspend was partially offset by the £6.533 million underspend in Technical & Countywide.

Having considered all of the information. Cabinet noted the report and

RESOLVED to:

1. Note the forecast revenue year end position based on December 2021 (Period 9) forecasts for the 2021/22 financial year is an overspend of £1.937 million all of which relates to non-Covid-19 expenditure, as we are forecasting a balanced position in relation to Covid-19 expenditure and income.

2. Note the forecast capital year end position as at the end of November 2021 of £137.147 million against the current budget of £153.294 million.

3. Approve the £450k increase to the capital programme as outlined in Section B.

7. Work Smarter Digital Phase 2: Re-procurement of the Enterprise Support Service Contract

Cllr Lynden Stowe sought Cabinet approval to award a contract in relation to the supply of Enterprise Support Services.

A new Digital and ICT service was launched in April 2021. The new service model included a mixed framework of internally provisioned services and external outsourcing to third parties. The current outsourced Enterprise Support Service (ESS) contract was provided by Cantium Business Solutions Ltd.

The County Council's current Enterprise Support Services (ESS) contract would come to an end in March 2022. It was critical to commence the new contract at the time of expiry.

Direct award was appropriate in this instance as there was a clear understanding of the services GCC required from the ESS contract provider. The Council had been pleased with the work carried out by Cantium.

This would provide an opportunity to consider the emerging service requirements and value for money in delivering the County's digital aspirations. It would consider new practices and the maturing service following the launch of the new Digital and ICT service in April 2021.

Having considered all of the information. Cabinet noted the report and

RESOLVED to:

1. Approve, without further competition, the award of a call-off contract for the supply of Enterprise Support Services under Crown Commercial Services Framework RM6100 – Technology Services 3, to the preferred tenderer, namely, Cantium Business Solution Limited in accordance with the direct award criteria thereunder. The proposed call-off contract shall make provision for the supply of Enterprise Support Services to both the council and Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service to the extent that the Fire Service's requirements have been agreed in advance with the council. Such call-off contract shall continue for an initial period of two years and include options to extend its term for a further period of one year on each of its second, third and fourth anniversaries.
2. Delegate authority to the Director of People and Digital Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Change to determine whether to exercise each of the options to extend the term of such call-off contract on its second, third and fourth anniversaries.

8. Recommissioning of Youth Support Services in 2022

Cllr Stephen Davies sought Cabinet permission to procure a new contract or contracts for integrated Youth Support Services, in order to discharge the Council's statutory and partnership responsibilities towards young people aged 10 to 24 years, following the end of the current Youth Support contract on 30 September 2022.

The Council's Youth Support contract with Prospects Services was due for review and retender in 2021. However due to the pandemic, Members agreed to extend the contract until September 2022.

The report now presented to Members detailed the proposals for a full reconfiguration and retender of the Youth Support Service, enabling the Council to discharge its statutory and partnership duties towards Gloucestershire young people aged 10-24 years.

The value of the contract was £4.716M per annum, scheduled to reoccur for an initial term of 5 years, with the potential to extend the contract for 2 additional years, totalling £33.012M over 7 years.

The Council commissioned extensive research into the evolving needs of Gloucestershire young people, including supporting The Scrutiny Task Group on Youth Engagement with its research brief and commissioning a range of independent reports and modelling of best practice, all of which had assisted to inform the key proposals set out in the Cabinet paper.

Having considered all of the information. Cabinet noted the report and

RESOLVED to:

Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Integrated Children and Families Commissioning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Early Years, to:

1. Conduct a competitive procurement process in respect of the following four lots for the provision of Youth Support Services across Gloucestershire County Council, in order to discharge the Council's statutory and partnership responsibilities towards young people aged 10-24 years, following the end of the current Youth Support contract on the 30th of September 2022:

a) Lot 1: Provision of Universal Services, delivering statutory core Youth Support Services from a centralised location including *Youth Justice Service / Health and Mental Wellbeing / IAG/Youth Homelessness / NEET / Missing*, alongside targeted countywide outreach, youth training and support.

b) Lot 2: Provision of Youth Support Services in Gloucester and the Forest of Dean;

c) Lot 3: Provision of Youth Support Services in Stroud and the Cotswolds;

d) Lot 4: Provision of Youth Support Services in Cheltenham; and Tewkesbury;

Such lots may be awarded to the same tenderer under a single contract or awarded to a number of separate tenderers under not more than four separate contracts, whose term(s) shall continue for an initial period of five years and include options to extend their terms for a further period of two additional years.

2. Award such contract or (as appropriate) contracts to the preferred tenderer(s); and

3. Determine whether to exercise the option to extend such contract(s) for a further period of two years on the fifth anniversary.

9. School Admission Arrangements for 2023/24 Academic Year

Cllr Philip Robinson sought Cabinet approval in order to determine the following school admission arrangements for 2023/24 academic year:

- The Co-ordinated Admissions Schemes for all schools and academies
- The Admission Arrangements for Community & Voluntary Controlled Schools
- The Protocol for pupil admittance over Published Admission Number for
- Community & Voluntary Controlled Schools and Service Personnel.

School admissions were an important part of the council's work; there needed to be a transparent, consistent system that parents and carers can have confidence in.

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The Government regulates admissions through its statutory School Admissions Code 2021.

The council must determine the admission arrangements for entry to community and voluntary controlled schools in the following academic year, every year. The 2023 admission arrangements were almost unchanged from previous years. As there were no significant changes to the proposed admission arrangements for 2023/2024 and therefore full public consultation was not required by law. It was recommended that Cabinet approve the proposed admission arrangements which have previously been subject to consultation.

The council also had to prepare a co-ordinated admissions scheme for all maintained schools and academies so that parents only need to apply once – this included applications for infant/ primary schools for the reception year, transfer from infant to junior school and secondary schools at year 7.

Having considered all of the information. Cabinet noted the report and

RESOLVED to:

Approve the School Co-ordination and Admission Arrangements as set out in the documents referred to below:

Appendix 1 The Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for 2023 for all Primary/Infant/Junior/Secondary Schools and Academies

Appendix 2 The Admissions Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary/Infant/Junior Schools and Secondary School for 2023 (Including Published Admission Numbers)

Appendix 3 Protocol for pupil admittance over published admission number for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for 2023

Appendix 4 School Admissions guidance for children of UK service personnel and crown servants for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools

Leader of Council

Meeting concluded at 11:15