

CABINET**Wednesday, 16 September 2020**

Attendance:

Councillor Thompson (Chairperson)	– Leader and Cabinet Member for Communications
Councillor Cutler (Vice-Chair)	– Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Risk
Councillor Learney	– Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management
Councillor Murphy	– Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency
Councillor Porter	– Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Wellbeing
Councillor Prince	– Cabinet Member for Sport, Leisure and Communities
Councillor Tod	– Cabinet Member for Service Quality and Transformation

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Godfrey, Horrill, Lumby, Miller, Pearson and Read

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Ferguson

[Full audio recording and video recording](#)

1. MEMBERSHIP OF CABINET BODIES ETC.

Cabinet noted that nominations had been received from Councillors Bell and Mather for The Carroll Centre Board of Trustees appointment.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined on the agenda.

RESOLVED:

1. That Councillor Bell be appointed as the Council's representative (Observer to the Board of Trustees) on The Carroll Centre Board of Trustees until May 2022.
2. That the following changes be made for the remainder of the 2020/21 Municipal Year:

- a) Councillor Murphy to replace Councillor Ferguson as Council's representative (Company Director and Charity Trustee) on WinACC;
- b) Councillor Murphy to replace Councillor Ferguson as the Council's deputy representative on Project Integra Management Board.

2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Tod and Porter declared personal (but not prejudicial) interests in respect of various agenda items due to their roles as County Councillors.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

One member of the public spoke during public participation as summarised briefly below.

Peter Richards (Wine Festival Winchester)

The festival was an annual event held at the Winchester Guildhall, taking place in November, and had grown to national and international visibility with over 1,500 people attending last year. Due to the Covid restrictions, the event would be held online in 2020 but he expressed concern about whether the proposals in report CAB3256 would prevent it being held at the guildhall in November 2021. He highlighted the national difficulties facing the events industry due to Covid and the importance of retaining the guildhall as a venue in Winchester for other large scale events generally.

The Leader recognised the success of the Wine Festival but highlighted the difficult financial situation facing the Council. She thanked Mr Richards for his comments which would be taken into account in consideration of report CAB3256 below.

4. **LEADER AND CABINET MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements made.

5. **REVISED GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2020/21** (CAB3256)

Councillor Cutler introduced the report which was based on proposals which had been presented at an all Member briefing on 23 July 2020. He highlighted the intention to retain the Guildhall on a venue only hire basis for the next 12 months and also to continue with virtual meetings with the decision next reviewed at the end of 2020.

At the invitation of the Leader, six members of the shadow cabinet addressed the meeting, as summarised briefly below.

Councillor Miller

Queried the calculations on savings provided by the guildhall proposals, and also whether it was an appropriate time to restrict use. Questioned the possible effect on Abbey House.

Councillor Lumby

Questioned whether the guildhall proposals had adequate regard to the terms of the “Bapsy bequest” and requested that the related legal advice be shared with members.

Councillor Read

Requested assurances that the guildhall proposals would not impact on the operation of Abbey House.

Councillor Horrill

Noted the removal of the St Clements surgery replacement from the capital budget and requested an update on the current situation regarding this project. With regard to the Strategic Asset Purchase budget reduction, asked what projects would no longer be progressed? Reiterated comments made at Scrutiny Committee regarding the impact be of reductions to the housing repairs and fire safety budgets.

Councillor Pearson

Queried the figures relating to the reduction in carbon emissions from council buildings and also reduced vehicle emissions since the Covid restrictions came into place. Questioned when the proposals relating to garden waste would be communicated with residents and also queried the budget relating to open space.

Councillor Godfrey

Believed the proposals resulted in a reliance on use of council reserves which was unsustainable. Queried the level of capital savings set out in the report and the impact on current projects.

The Strategic Director: Services responded to comments made including confirming that full analysis on savings generated as a result of the guildhall proposals had been undertaken. He emphasised that it was not a proposal to close the guildhall, but continue to maintain as a community asset which would be available to hire on a venue only basis over the next 12 months. He emphasised it was a bequest to the city to develop a community asset, not specifically to the guildhall.

Cabinet Members also responded to a number of the comments made above, including confirming that all residents would shortly receive further details about the garden waste collection scheme. It was emphasised that a number of the points had already been raised and answered at the Scrutiny Committee on 7 September, a summary of which was contained at paragraph 6.4 of the report. The capital budget for the St Clements surgery replacement had been removed following agreement at a previous Cabinet that the project would be financed by private investment and a further report would be brought to Cabinet in the next few months.

Cabinet members also responded to comments made regarding reserve levels and the capital programme and requested cross party support for the further

challenges that would be faced in determining the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Council budget for 2021/22.

Councillor Tod left the meeting prior to consideration of the recommendations.

Cabinet agreed the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RECOMMENDED (TO COUNCIL):

1. THE REVISED REVENUE BUDGET AS SET OUT IN APPENDIX 1 BE APPROVED

2. THE REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME, AS SET OUT IN APPENDIX 3 BE APPROVED

3. THE EFFORTS OF COMMUNITY GROUPS AND LOCAL COUNCILS IN SUPPORTING ESSENTIAL WORK TO SUPPORT OUR DISTRICT IS RECOGNISED AND THAT THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL WRITES TO ALL GROUPS TO THANK THEM FOR THEIR ONGOING SUPPORT.

RESOLVED:

1. That due to the continuing restrictions on operation of public venues and associated operating costs of the Guildhall , that the Guildhall remain closed to general public hire for the next 12 months but that a “venue only” service be provided.

2. That virtual meetings of the council’s committees continue for the remainder of the 2020/21 committee calendar but this be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

6. CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

(CAB3253 and supplementary report)

Councillor Cutler introduced the report and explained that the scheme was required to be reviewed on an annual basis, with consultation required if significant changes were proposed. The proposed changes aimed to simplify the scheme to reduce administrative costs and assist claimants’ understanding. Following consideration at the Scrutiny Committee on 7 September 2020, an alternative income grid had been prepared and circulated as a supplementary paper. It was proposed that this revised table replace the existing table at paragraph 11.15 of the report.

At the invitation of the Leader, two members of the shadow cabinet addressed the meeting, as summarised briefly below.

Councillor Godfrey

Noted the acknowledged success nationally of the existing scheme and generally welcomed proposals to simplify it. However, questioned whether introducing banding could have a negative impact on claimants with the possibility of “cliff edges”. Also queried the effectiveness of any consultation due to the complicated nature of the scheme and proposals.

Councillor Horrill

Thanked Councillor Cutler and officers for producing the revised table in response to comments made by Scrutiny Committee. Reiterated comments made at Scrutiny Committee about utilising council resources to ensure the consultation documents were as easy to understand as possible. On consultations in general, requested that the Council make more use of the technology available to engage virtually with members of the public.

Councillor Cutler responded to comments made, including highlighting that the level of detail was required in the consultation with other precepting authorities but further consideration would be given to how best to communicate with the public more generally. Other comments made would be taken into account as part of the consultation process.

Cabinet agreed the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

That statutory consultation on the introduction of a new income banded / grid Council Tax Reduction scheme, effective from 1st April 2021 for working age applicants, be approved.

7. **GARRISON GROUND - DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS TO SPORTS PITCHES AND PROVISION ON AN OUTDOOR GYM**
(CAB3240)

Councillor Prince introduced the report and emphasised that the proposed drainage improvements were to address a longstanding issue, to the benefit of nearby residents and users of the area more generally. He confirmed that Allegra’s Ambition were supportive of the outdoor gym proposals as set out in the report.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillors Lumby and Read addressed Cabinet as summarised briefly below.

Councillor Lumby

Noted that the proposals for drainage improvements were longstanding and to be welcomed, in principle. However, given the financial situation

facing the Council he queried whether it was appropriate to be authorising any expenditure on what he considered to be non-essential measures.

Councillor Read

Generally supported the drainage improvements. With regard to the proposals for an outdoor gym, queried whether it would be more appropriate to locate closer to the centre of Winchester, for example at North Walls. Other outdoor gyms had been installed across the district, funded by the County Council, with maintenance and inspection funded by parish councils. Would the Winchester Town Forum be responsible for this gym?

The Strategic Director: Place responded to comments made, including emphasising that the drainage improvements were a longstanding aspiration of the Bar End Development Framework with the intention of ensuring different elements of the area worked well together.

Cabinet agreed the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That a capital budget and expenditure of up to £150,000, financed by prudential borrowing, be approved to implement measures to improve land drainage in the Garrison Ground.
2. That the Strategic Director - Place be authorised to undertake a procurement exercise using the GEN 4-2 Civil Engineering, Highways and Transportation Infrastructure Framework, or other suitable framework, and to subsequently instruct a suitable contractor to implement measures to improve land drainage in the Garrison Ground. The procurement exercise will be based on measures identified in the appended consultant reports but further discussion will be undertaken with the contractor appointed to undertake the works to ensure the most effective solution, both in terms of performance and cost, will be implemented.
3. That the Strategic Director - Place be authorised to negotiate and agree heads of terms and the Service Lead - Legal be authorised to enter into a funding agreement with Allegra's Ambition where the funds are for the purpose of construction and maintenance of an outdoor gym in the South Western corner of the Garrison Ground.
4. That the updates set out in the report in relation to the Winchester Sport and Leisure Park Design Framework are noted.

8. **GRANT REVIEW UPDATE**
(CAB3254)

Councillor Prince introduced the report and drew attention to the grants awarded to strategic and priority funds as set out in paragraphs 11.2 – 11.8 of the report. He also highlighted the smalls grant programme and the grants funding platform and the impact of Covid.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillors Miller and Horrill addressed Cabinet as summarised briefly below.

Councillor Miller

Acknowledged that the Council was fortunate to be still operating a grants scheme as nationally, many Councils had stopped. He noted that with exception of the smalls grants programme, grants were predominantly Winchester town based. He requested increased promotion of the availability of grants across the whole district.

Councillor Horrill

Overall welcomed the grants programme and the involvement of ward councillors in the small grants allocations, however disagreed that ongoing schemes should always be prioritised over one-off grants. Requested that the programme recommence as soon as possible and that communications on the availability of small grants should be improved. Specifically queried ongoing intentions towards grants for the Theatre Royal Winchester and the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Councillor Prince and the Corporate Head of Engagement responded to comments made, including noting the suggestions regarding improvements to communications. The situation with regard to the Theatre was being monitored closely with regular contact maintained.

Cabinet agreed the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the outcomes achieved as a result of the Strategic and Priority Outcome fund allocations in 2019/20 be noted.
2. That the small grant programme continues to be operated in the new style of an interactive grant panel, involving ward councillors.
3. That delegated authority be given to Corporate Head of Engagement in consultation with the Cabinet Member to make minor revision and improvement to the grant award process and priorities for the Small Grants and Crowd Funding to ensure these remain accessible, effective and responsive to changing needs and issues that may arise over the course of a funding period.

9. **FUTURE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

RESOLVED:

That the list of future items, as set out in the Forward Plan for October 2020, be noted.

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 11.05 am

Chairperson