



COUNCIL

MEETING : Thursday, 24th September 2015

PRESENT : Cllrs. Field (Mayor), Beeley (Sheriff & Deputy Mayor), James, Dallimore, Noakes, D. Norman, Organ, Porter, Haigh, Hilton, Gravells, Tracey, McLellan, Smith, Hobbs, Lugg, C. Witts, Hanman, Lewis, S. Witts, Llewellyn, Williams, Brown, Dee, Taylor, Toleman, Chatterton, Pullen, Etheridge, H. Norman and Pearsall

Others in Attendance

Jon McGinty, Managing Director

Martin Shields, Corporate Director of Services and Neighbourhoods

Ross Cook, Corporate Director

Shirin Wotherspoon, Solicitor

Tanya Davies, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. Bhaimia, Hansdot, Patel, Randle and Hampson

27. MINUTES

27.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2015 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

28.1 Councillor Dallimore (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods) declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 9(3), a notice of motion from the Conservative Group concerning the Syrian refugee crisis, as she was employed by the City MP Richard Graham.

28.2 Councillors Williams, Gravells and Tracey declared personal interests in Agenda Item 9(1), a notice of motion from the Labour Group concerning safety features installed at Kimbrose Triangle, as they were Gloucestershire County Councillors.

28.3 Councillor Toleman declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 9(2), a notice of motion from the Conservative Group concerning heritage projects as he was a trustee of Llanthony Secunda Priory.

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29. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

- 29.1 Mr Paul Soden, representing the Licensed Victuallers Association, acknowledged the success of the Rugby World Cup Fanzone, but asked the Leader of the Council whether he considered it fair for the Fanzone to remain open for the remainder of the tournament and continue taking business away from city centre venues that had invested in screens to attract customers during the World Cup because the original intention had been for the Fanzone to close after the group stages of the competition.
- 29.2 Councillor McLellan declared a personal interest as he had been appointed as a volunteer at the fanzone.
- 29.3 Councillor James (Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy) thanked Mr Soden for his question and praised the work of staff and volunteers in making the Fanzone a success. He stated that a commitment had been given to review the operation of the Fanzone after the group stages and that there were a number of factors to consider, including the impact of Docks residents, the financial impact and the interests of businesses across the City. A decision would be made in the best interests of the City's residents and economy after all of the facts had been considered.

30. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

- 30.1 There were no petitions or deputations.

31. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor

- 31.1 The Mayor offered the Council greetings from the Mayor of Metz, whom he had met during a civic visit to the Mirabelle Festival. He hoped that the Council would be return the kind hospitality by inviting the Mayor of Metz to visit Gloucester in the future.
- 31.2 The Mayor invited Members to attend the Civic Service on 18 October 2015 at 3pm at Gloucester Cathedral and the Mayor's Ball on 19 March 2016 at Kingsholm Stadium.
- 31.3 The Mayor reported that he and Councillor Noakes (Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure) had attended the opening of the Museum Sweet Shoppe at the Folk Museum and advised that Members and staff were entitled to a 10% discount on purchases.

Cabinet Members

- 31.4 Councillor James reported that, due to pressures on parking at North Warehouse following the success of the Regus contract, with effect from 28 September 2015 the parking order had been amended to allow enforcement officers to issue tickets to cars parked outside of the parking bays and/or to those not displaying the appropriate authorisation.

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- 31.5 Councillor D. Norman (Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources) announced that the six-week budget consultation had commenced on 14 September 2015 and encouraged Members to highlight it to constituents.
- 31.6 Councillor Noakes advised that the Invictus exhibition would open on 9 October 2015 at the City Museum, but that the Rodin sculpture would be on display from 6 October for anyone seeking an early viewing.

32. MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

Leader and Cabinet Members' Question Time

- 32a.1 Councillor Chatterton asked the Leader of the Council whether, given the success and positive feedback regarding the Rugby World Cup Fanzone, he would consider keeping it open for the final five matches or the tournament.
- 32a.2 Councillor James advised that the Council would consider all of the options and take into account all relevant factors, including the views of Docks residents, the impact on businesses and what is happening elsewhere in the City. He noted that an offer of financial assistance had been made to make extending the opening of the Fanzone possible. He acknowledged that it would not be possible to please all affected parties.
- 32a.3 Councillor Chatterton noted that there had been few complaints from residents and that the security arrangements had been excellent and he asked the Leader to make a commitment to inform all Councillors of the decision by 30 September 2015.
- 32a.4 Councillor James agreed that organisation at the Fanzone had been good and that the impact on residents had been limited. He noted the need to take into account the fact that the Gloucester rugby team had a match at Kingsholm on the day of the RWC final, but gave a commitment to make a final decision on the Fanzone by the end of the month.
- 32a.5 Councillor Hilton asked the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy whether he agreed that 67/69 London Road was suitable for conversion into much-need housing.
- 32a.6 Councillor James noted that he had no role in the planning process, but his personal view was that 67/69 London Road would be suitable for housing and that the Council was continuing to put pressure on the owners to bring the buildings back into beneficial use.
- 32a.7 Councillor Hilton asked the Cabinet Member whether he would consider exercising the Council's compulsory purchase powers to acquire the buildings.
- 32a.8 Councillor James explained that compulsory purchase order was expensive, time-consuming and with no guarantee of a positive outcome; therefore the power should be used cautiously and only as last resort. He advised talks with the owners would continue and he hoped progress could be made.

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- 32a.9 Councillor Chatterton asked the Leader of the Council what plans the Council had to mark the Queen's 90th birthday in June 2016.
- 32a.10 Councillor James advised that, as a royal-supporting City, the Council would seek to mark it in an appropriate manner.
- 32a.11 Councillor Hilton asked the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources whether he agreed that it was too much for central government to ask local government for savings of up to 40%, which represented more than was required meet the deficit.
- 32a.12 Councillor D. Norman advised that there would be two stages to the savings process, with up to 20% being required in the first stage and potentially up to 40% in the second stage; however, the savings would be required over the life of the Parliament, not all in one year. He agreed that it represented a challenge, but that Councils could not spend money that they did not have.
- 32a.13 Councillor Hilton noted reports of a predicted overspend of £554,000 for 2015/16 and asked for assurances that it would resolved before the 2016/17 budget was set.
- 32a.14 Councillor D. Norman explained that at the end of Quarter 1, £554,000 of savings had not been achieved and that he was meeting fortnightly with the Head of Finance to monitor the situation. He stated that it was too early to tell whether all proposed savings would be achieved, but that fundamental cuts would be required if they could not be.
- 32a.15 Councillor Smith asked the Leader of the Council why the recent issue of City Life focused only on the Rugby World Cup and did not market any of the other events in the City?
- 32a.16 Councillor James explained that it was intended to be a one-off RWC commemorative issue and that other events were marketed in alternative ways.
- 32a.17 Councillor Smith asked the Leader to ensure that all events are appropriately publicised well in advance to give residents the opportunity to put dates in their diary.
- 32a.18 Councillor James reiterated that that the recent issue was a one off and events would continue to be marketed in City Life and using a variety of other methods.
- 32a.19 Councillor Brown asked the Leader of the Council if he shared concerns that advertising boards on roundabouts had the potential to distract motorists.
- 32a.20 Councillor James advised the sponsored roundabouts were commonplace and that as long as they had the appropriate planning consents and adhered to highways standards he did not have any concerns.
- 32a.21 Councillor Brown asked what financial gain the sponsored roundabouts provided to the City.

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- 32a.22 Councillor Porter (Cabinet Member for Environment) reported that the City Council received £10,000 per advert.
- 32a.23 Councillor Tracey asked the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods what the Council could do to tackle bicycle security issues in the city centre and help prevent thefts and vandalism.
- 32a.24 Councillor Dallimore reported that the number of bicycle crimes had in fact reduced, but acknowledged that it remained an important issue and that incidents should be reported to the police. She noted that there were a number of safe places to leave bicycles across the City and that educating cyclists about security was fundamental to reducing crime.
- 32a.25 Councillor Tracey stated that the police did not have time to deal with the number of incidents reported and asked what plans the Council had to help cyclists.
- 32a.26 Councillor Dallimore advised that the police took all incidents seriously. She highlighted the impact of the new CCTV network and improvements already made to bike racks and offered to explore the options further with Councillor Tracey.
- 32a.27 Councillor McLellan asked the Leader of the Council if he agreed that it was ironic for the Labour Group to encourage the marking of the Queen's 90th birthday given the republican views of the new Leader of the national Labour Party.
- 32a.28 Councillor James commented that he preferred to highlight consensus rather than focusing on differences.
- 32a.29 Councillor Hobbs asked the Cabinet Member Regeneration and Economy what plans were being made to improve the linkages between the Docks and the city centre in the run up to Christmas.
- 32a.30 Councillor James remarked that the pedestrian linkages for able-bodied individuals via the Kimbrose shared-space were good and that the more events that could be organised, the more people would flow between the two areas. He acknowledged that public transport links needed to be developed further and he welcomed any suggestions that would contribute to the formulation of a single cohesive plan for both areas.

33. PROGRESS REPORT ON DEVOLUTION PROPOSAL TO GOVERNMENT

- 33.1 Council considered a report of the Managing Director concerning a devolution proposal submitted to Government by Leadership Gloucestershire.
- 33.2 Councillor D. Norman moved the recommendations set out in the report and explained that cross-party support for the work of Leadership Gloucestershire in developing the proposals would be fundamental moving forward. He stated that the primary driver for the submission was achieving the best for the residents of Gloucester and that he considered that it offered the best outcomes for both the authority and residents. He thanked the Managing Director and all involved in the work to date and highlighted the role of the Members' Working Group in contributing

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to the process on behalf of their Groups. He advised that it was hoped that a decision on the proposal might be made as part of the Government's Autumn Spending Review.

- 33.3 Councillor James seconded the motion.
- 33.4 Councillor Hilton emphasised the importance of the proposal being locally-led and warned against the creation of unnecessary bureaucracy. He stated that many of the proposals could be achieved without devolution so it was important to be clear about the benefits and carefully consider the governance arrangements for a combined authority. He advised that he would support genuine devolution, but would not support any requirement for an elected Mayor or the erosion of district Councillors.
- 33.5 Councillor Smith noted that the proposals had to be developed quickly with little opportunity for cross-party involvement and that, moving forward, it would be essential for all Members to be kept informed. She highlighted concerns in relation to additional bureaucracy, local planning processes and the role of civic Mayors and emphasised the role of the Members' Working Group in scrutinising the proposals as they developed.
- 33.6 Councillor D. Norman gave assurances that all Members would be briefed as proposals developed and that the Council would ensure that the outcome would be in the best interests of the authority and residents before seeking to commit to it.
- 33.7 **RESOLVED –**
- (1) The devolution proposal be noted;
 - (2) The relevant Cross-Party Members Working Group continues to monitor the development of the devolution proposal, prior to any decisions being brought back to this Council.

34. NOTICES OF MOTION

(1) Notice of Motion from the Labour Group

- 34.1 Moved by Councillor Lugg and seconded by Councillor Chatterton:

“This Council notes the installation of 'safety features' in the shared space at Kimbrose triangle. These measures do not constitute a regulated zebra crossing and drivers and pedestrians are now confused as to whether the remaining section of road within the scheme is shared or not. The scheme has never worked as intended, due to poor design, and this tinkering with the layout is likely to lead to accidents.

This Council asks the Leader to enter discussions with the County Council to either install a proper pedestrian crossing or to take steps such as the installation of rumble strips and other cues to make the shared space more obvious to drivers and pedestrians.”

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- 34.2 Councillor James moved the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor Dallimore.

~~“This Council notes the installation of 'safety features' in the shared space at Kimbrose triangle. These measures do not constitute a regulated zebra crossing and drivers and pedestrians are now confused as to whether the remaining section of road within the scheme is shared or not. The scheme has never worked as intended, due to poor design, and this tinkering with the layout is likely to lead to accidents,~~ **and further notes that additional works including improved lighting are planned.**

This Council asks the Leader to enter discussions with the County Council ~~to either install a proper pedestrian crossing or to take steps such as the installation of rumble strips and other cues to make the shared space more obvious to drivers and pedestrians~~ **following an appropriate period of monitoring to review the operation of the scheme and identify any further works required.”**

- 34.3 Councillor Lugg rejected the amendment.

- 34.4 The amendment was put to the vote and was carried.

- 34.5 The following motion, as amended, was put to the vote and was carried:

“This Council notes the installation of 'safety features' in the shared space at Kimbrose triangle, and further notes that additional works including improved lighting are planned.

This Council asks the Leader to enter discussions with the County Council following an appropriate period of monitoring to review the operation of the scheme and identify any further works required.”

(2) Notice of Motion from the Conservative Group

- 34.6 Moved by Councillor H. Norman and seconded by Councillor Tracey:

“This Council:

Believes that the city's rich heritage must continue to be protected, enhanced and promoted as part of Gloucester's continuing regeneration;

Welcomes the ongoing generous support from the Heritage Lottery Fund for projects within the city;

Welcomes the establishment of the Heritage Forum to co-ordinate heritage projects Gloucester;

Enthusiastically endorses the support, both advisory and financial, given by the Council to the projects with Stage 1 HLF approval, which are working towards on their Stage 2 submissions - Llanthony Secunda Priory, Project Pilgrim at Gloucester Cathedral and Discover De Crypt.”

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- 34.7 Councillor Hilton moved the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor Brown.

“This Council:

Believes that the city's rich heritage must continue to be protected, enhanced and promoted as part of Gloucester's continuing regeneration;

Welcomes the ongoing generous support from the Heritage Lottery Fund for projects within the city;

Welcomes the establishment of the Heritage Forum to co-ordinate heritage projects Gloucester;

Enthusiastically endorses the support, both advisory and financial, given by the Council to the projects with Stage 1 HLF approval, which are working towards on their Stage 2 submissions - Llanthony Secunda Priory, Project Pilgrim at Gloucester Cathedral and Discover De Crypt.

Agrees that the City Council must do more to regenerate historic properties in its ownership for example the Fleece Hotel.”

- 34.8 Councillor H. Norman rejected the amendment.

- 34.9 The amendment was put to the vote and was lost.

- 34.10 The motion was put to the vote and was carried.

(3) Notice of Motion from the Conservative Group

- 34.11 Moved by Councillor James and seconded by Councillor Organ:

“This Council:

Recognises the extraordinary government contribution to funding aid to displaced Syrians in refugee camps in the region;

Notes that the government has committed to accepting up to 20,000 vulnerable refugees from Syrian camps;

Further notes that many residents will wish to help Syrian refugees that come to the UK;

Supports the MP for Gloucester's call for the government to provide matched funding for all donations specifically for Syrian refugees to the UK;

Encourages all citizens of Gloucester who want to help, in whatever way, to register their interest with Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers.”

- 34.12 Councillor Hilton moved the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor McLellan.

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“This Council:

Recognises the extraordinary government contribution to funding aid to displaced Syrians in refugee camps in the region;

Notes that the government has committed to accepting up to **just** 20,000 vulnerable refugees from Syrian camps **over the next five years**;

Agrees that the UK could do more and that this country should take its fair share of refugees now entering the European Union.

Further notes that many residents will wish to help Syrian refugees that come to the UK;

Supports the MP for Gloucester's call for the government to provide matched funding for all donations specifically for Syrian refugees to the UK;

Encourages all citizens of Gloucester who want to help, in whatever way, to register their interest with Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers.”

34.13 Councillor H. Norman rejected the amendment.

34.14 The amendment was put to the vote and was lost.

34.15 The motion was put to the vote and was carried.

35. WRITTEN QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS

35.1 Councillor C. Witts declared a personal interest in written question 4 as his son was employed as County Court bailiff.

35.2 As a supplementary question to written question 4, Councillor Haigh asked why the bailiffs used by the Council were not adhering to current LGA guidance and asked when processes would be brought into line with best practice.

35.3 Councillor Dallimore advised that she had recently met with the bailiffs in response to concerns raised and that they had been asked to provide further details of the principles and practices followed in order that comparisons could be made with best practice.

35.4 **RESOLVED** – That the written questions submitted and corresponding responses be noted.

Time of commencement: 7.00 pm hours

Time of conclusion: 9.40 pm hours

Chair