



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING : Monday, 5th September 2016

PRESENT : Cllrs. Coole (Chair), Ryall (Vice-Chair), Pearsall (Spokesperson), Hilton, Lewis, Morgan, Wilson, Haigh, Dee, Hampson, H. Norman, Hawthorne, Melvin, Smith,

Others in Attendance

Cllr James, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture

Cllr Dallimore, Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods

Cllr Norman, Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

Cllr Noakes, Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure

Mr Jonathan Lund, Corporate Director, Gloucester City Council

Mr Jon Topping, Head of Finance, Gloucester City Council

Mr Darren Mountford, Senior Licensing and Markets Officer, Gloucester City Council

Mr Anthony Hodge, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development, Gloucester City Council

Chief Inspector Neil Smith, Gloucestershire Constabulary

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. Finnegan

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Melvin declared a personal interest in agenda item 7, Late Night Levy, by virtue of her association with Dr Foster's pub.

25. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

26. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

There were no questions from members of the public.

27. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

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There were no petitions or deputations.

28. CHANGE TO ORDER OF AGENDA

The Chair announced that the running order of the agenda had been changed from that set out in the published agenda following consultation with report presenters.

29. LATE NIGHT LEVY

The Chair welcomed Councillor Dallimore, Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods; Chief Inspector Neil Smith of Gloucestershire Constabulary; and Mr Darren Mountford, Senior Licensing and Markets Officer, to the meeting.

Members were presented with a report which set out the key issues which needed to be considered when deciding whether or not to consult on a late night levy in Gloucester. Councillor Dallimore outlined the background to the report and Chief Inspector Neil Smith added some extra commentary before opening up the topic to Members for debate.

Members discussed the following matters:-

1. A Member acknowledged the challenges faced by the Police in managing the late night economy in Gloucester and asked whether all licensed premises would be included in the late night levy and how the money would be spent. Councillor Dallimore responded that all licensed premises within the City boundary selling alcohol after midnight would be included in the late night levy apart from those covered by exemptions set out in paragraph 3.19 of the report. Councillor Dallimore indicated that discussions would be held with the Police and Crime Commissioner on how the money would be spent and pointed out that every levy area was different.
2. Turning to the Late Night Levy Consultation Questionnaire at Appendix 1, a Member suggested that question 1 should be revised as the current wording was 'open' and might not elicit a useful response. Councillor Dallimore thanked the Member for the comment and agreed to revisit the question.
3. A Member commented that the report did not reflect any examples where schemes had been implemented successfully elsewhere. Councillor Dallimore acknowledged the comment.
4. A Member referred to the position in Cheltenham where 65 premises identified as having a post-midnight licence chose to vary their licence rather than pay the levy and queried whether this was likely to happen in Gloucester. Councillor Dallimore commented that Gloucester's scheme would be different to Cheltenham's.
5. A Member sought assurance that the funding obtained from the Late Night Levy would not be used by the Police to compensate for service cuts. Chief Inspector Neil Smith replied that monies would be used to enhance the existing Police provision in connection with the late night economy and would not be used as a 'top-up'. The Member thanked Chief Inspector Neil Smith

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for his response, but added that he was still unsure how the Gloucester scheme would be better than the Cheltenham one and was concerned that there would not be any improved protection measures for Gloucester residents. Chief Inspector Neil Smith replied that he was confident that he could guarantee extra resources when they were needed. Councillor Dallimore added that there would be transparency on how the funds would be used and reminded Members that any decision to introduce a late night levy would be based on the outcome of the consultation and that would be brought before full Council for determination. A Member who acted as a City Council representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel reminded Members that he could act as a conduit for Overview and Scrutiny Committee if representations needed to be made to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

6. A Member reflected on research he had carried out on 7 other authorities and speculated whether the Gloucester scheme would collect enough money to be able to make a meaningful difference. Councillor Dallimore thanked the Member for his comment and agreed that this was a potential risk.
7. A Member commented that it was difficult to support the scheme without knowing what the money would be spent on and stated that there was insufficient evidence in the report to support the introduction of a late night levy. The Member suggested that the concentration of Police resources in the City Centre at weekends meant that other wards in the City were not adequately policed and that this was an issue for residents. Chief Inspector Neil Smith assured the Member that there were more than 20 Police officers patrolling the whole of the City at weekends.
8. A Member referred to question 2 of the Consultation Response Questionnaire regarding the funding of community safety initiatives and stated that he would not wish to see these initiatives devalued. Councillor Dallimore said that it was the intention for premises to take responsibility by not serving intoxicated customers, etc. and added that schemes which were already working well such as 'Best Bar None' would not be affected by the introduction of a late night levy.
9. A Member suggested that a 12 monthly review process should be built in to the scheme. Councillor Dallimore agreed to revise the report to include a 12 monthly review process.
10. A Member congratulated the Officers on the work carried out in producing the report and stated that the introduction of a late night levy could provide good value for money.

The Chair thanked Councillor Dallimore and Chief Inspector Neil Smith for their presentation.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO CABINET:

1. **That Question 1 of the Consultation Questionnaire in Appendix 1 to the report be reworded.**
2. **That 12 monthly review arrangements be included in the scheme.**

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30. CULTURE BOARD UPDATE

The Chair welcomed Councillor Noakes, Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, and Mr Jonathan Lund, Corporate Director, Gloucester City Council, to the meeting.

Members were presented with a briefing on work carried out following the Cabinet's decision to adopt the Gloucester Cultural Strategy in March 2016, particularly the current recruitment of a Chair and Trustees to serve on the Culture Board.

Councillor Noakes summarised the key headlines in the report and added an update on refurbishment of King's House, a building which was being renovated to provide a cultural hub in the City Centre.

A Member queried the composition of the Interview Panel. Councillor Noakes clarified the position for the Member.

The Chair thanked Councillor Noakes for her presentation.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

31. FINANCIAL MONITORING QUARTER 1 REPORT

The Chair welcomed Councillor Norman, Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources, and Mr Jon Topping, Head of Finance, Gloucester City Council, to the meeting.

Members were presented with a report which set out details including budget variances, year-end forecasts and progress made against agreed savings targets for the first quarter of the financial year ending 30 June 2016.

Councillor Norman summarised the key headlines in the report and drew Members' attention to a factual inaccuracy in 7.4 concerning the Democratic Services team before opening up the matter for debate by the Committee.

Members discussed the following matters:-

1. A Member received clarification on the position regarding the General Fund overspend as set out in 2.2 (2) of the report.
2. A Member queried the position on the savings target for Amey. The Head of Finance confirmed that the saving was expected to be achieved within the year.
3. A Member asked what steps would be taken within the year to keep savings targets on track. Councillor Norman indicated that business cases would need to support recruitment requests and added that from discussions with budget holders it was evident that some savings were already coming through. Another Member referred to the status of anticipated savings set out in Appendix 1 and said that he would expect to see steps taken to

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achieve these savings. Councillor Norman replied that he would have no qualms about taking the necessary actions.

4. A Member noted the overspend within the Eastgate Market as set out in 5.2 of the report and asked what was being done to stimulate confidence in the Market following recent uncertainty regarding its future. Councillor Norman responded that this was a matter for the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy, but that he was aware of discussions held with market traders and that a new market featured in regeneration plans for the City Centre.
5. A Member enquired what income generation measures were being explored. Councillor Norman commented that every service area had been encouraged to think creatively on ways to raise income.
6. A Member queried the likely income stream arising from plans for charging for street naming and numbering. The Head of Finance agreed to provide this information to the Member.
7. A Member was provided with clarification on a query relating to figures for a 'Head of Service' shown at 10.0 in the report.
8. A Member noted that there was no reserve funding for works to Eastgate Rooftop Car Park as set out in 12.1 of the report.

The Chair thanked Councillor Norman for his presentation.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

32. KING'S QUARTER CONSULTATION

The Chair welcomed Councillor James, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy, to the meeting.

Members were presented with four concept designs for King's Quarter which were currently the subject of a public consultation exercise. Councillor James also took the opportunity to brief Members on wider regeneration matters concerning the City Centre including the latest position regarding the Eastgate Shopping Centre.

Members discussed the following matters:-

1. A Member speculated whether some local residents would be confused with the concept designs and think that they simply related to King's Square. The Member also asked if Debenhams could be approached to improve the appearance of their building. Councillor James replied that responses to the consultation revealed that the public did understand the designs and that many were in favour of retaining King's Square as a public space. He added that whilst the Council would be pressing for more than cosmetic improvements to buildings in the area, that it had no control over Debenhams.

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2. A Member noted that the designs had moved away from being retail led and asked how this would be addressed. Councillor James responded that there was a change in retail habits now with the realisation that good public realm attracted potential investors. He referred Members to plans to relocate the Eastgate Market to King's Quarter, which, in turn, would open up the vacant market site as a retail opportunity.
3. Members discussed a current bid to the LEP for funding for a proposed footbridge which would link the new railway station with King's Quarter. A Member questioned whether this was the right solution as the public might choose not to use it and speculated whether it might be better to upgrade the existing subway instead. The Member also queried whether pedestrian movements for the area had been studied and referred to existing traffic flow in the vicinity. Councillor James responded that the project was subject to funding from the LEP and that all these factors would be taken into account, should the bid be successful.
4. A Member asked whether there was any liaison with the hospital regarding plans for changes to pedestrian/cycling/traffic management arising from regeneration of the area. Councillor James informed the Member that the hospital would be fully briefed.
5. A Member sought clarification on the role of Overview and Scrutiny Committee in considering planning issues. The Chair advised the Member that it was wholly appropriate for the Committee to examine major regeneration schemes of this nature.

Councillor James thanked Members for their comments and reminded them to attend an all Councillor briefing which had been arranged later in the week on the proposals.

The Chair thanked Councillor James for his presentation.

SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 6

On the motion of the Chair, and in accordance with the Constitution, the Committee resolved that the meeting be extended beyond two hours.

33. CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Members examined the latest version of the Cabinet Forward Plan.

RESOLVED – That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.

34. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the latest version of the Overview and Scrutiny work programme. It was agreed that the annual monitoring report on Gloucester City Council performance scheduled for 31 October 2016 would constitute an interim report pending development of a new performance monitoring scheme.

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RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme, as amended, be noted.

35. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 3 October 2016 at 6.30 pm.

Time of commencement: 6.30 pm hours

Time of conclusion: 8.45 pm hours

Chair