



CABINET

MEETING : Wednesday, 13th January 2016

PRESENT : Cllrs. James (Chair), Dallimore, Noakes, D. Norman, Organ and Porter

Others in Attendance

Jon McGinty, Managing Director

Shirin Wotherspoon, Solicitor

Ross Cook, Corporate Director

Andrew Cummings, Management Accountant

Atika Tarajiya, Democratic Services Officer

77. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

78. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 9th December 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

79. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

There were no public questions.

80. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

There were no petitions or deputations.

81. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources which sought approval to retain the current Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS) for 2016/17.

Councillor Norman (Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources) highlighted the key areas of the report acknowledging that in light of the financial challenges

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faced by the City Council the future funding and viability of the scheme might need to be reconsidered.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:

That the current Local Council Tax Support Scheme as the approved scheme for Gloucester City Council for 2016/17 be adopted.

82. ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2016-2021

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member of Regeneration and Economy which sought approval for 2016-2021 Asset Management Strategy.

Councillor James (Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy) summarised the key areas of the report noting that the City Council held a range of assets of different material value. He acknowledged that managing a portfolio of assets and in particular listed buildings presented challenges with regards to maintenance, commenting that the strategy outlined a maintenance schedule and timetable for planned repairs.

Cabinet Members endorsed the proposals acknowledging that the schedule of planned maintenance was financially prudent and would protect the City Council's revenue streams. They placed on record their thanks to Officers involved.

RESOLVED:

That the strategy that will provide the framework for the management of the Council's property portfolio be approved.

83. REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy which sought approval for the Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy 2016-2021.

Councillor James highlighted the key areas of the report, advising that the strategy had been amended following consultation responses to reflect the City Council's commitment to developing open spaces and the City's cultural offer. He noted that the strategy was a living document that would require updating to reflect the range and pace of regeneration within the City.

Cabinet Members endorsed the approach and were pleased to note that the strategy had been amended following responses from the consultation.

RESOLVED:

That the Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy be approved.

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84. KINGS HOUSE, KINGS SQUARE, GLOUCESTER

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy and Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure which sought approval for Officers to enter into discussions with potential occupiers with charitable status to create an Arts and Culture hub on the upper floors of Kings House.

Councillor James explained that the building that had been acquired from Aviva in December 2014 was currently occupied on the lower floor. He reported that the long term future for the building was uncertain, noting that a further report outlining the proposals in more detail would be presented to Cabinet in the future.

Councillor Noakes (Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure) reported that the proposals had been met with enthusiasm from the Director of the South West Arts Council and would aim to be operation in March 2016. She thanked Councillor Dallimore (Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods) for securing external funding, noting that Officers were currently investigating a long term solution for the project.

In response to a query from Councillor Porter (Cabinet Member for Environment) the Management Accountant explained that the building would have the appropriate level of insurance as the Officers would inform the City Council's insurers of the changes in building use.

85. GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL ENERGY CONTRACT

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy which sought approval to enter into a new contract for energy supply with West Mercia Energy (WME).

In response to a query from Councillor Norman, the Managing Director advised that there was potential to secure more competitive rates if local authorities in the area developed a partnership; however this was speculative as there were other shared arrangements being considered by authorities in Gloucestershire.

In response to a query from Councillor Porter, the Management Accountant explained that the length of contract was in order to secure the wholesale prices offered by WME. He reported that WME would carry out a procurement exercise for each year noting that City Council would accrue credit for any unused energy.

RESOLVED:

That authority be delegated to the Managing Director/Corporate Director to enter into a formal partnership agreement with Tewkesbury Borough Council to jointly procure the Council's energy supply by entering into a new 3 year contract with possible extension of 2 years with West Mercia Energy on terms approved by the S151 Officer and the Council's Solicitor.

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86. HOUSING DELIVERY IN GLOUCESTER

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning which updated Members on housing delivery within the City, including the percentage of development achieved on brown field sites as well as the number of affordable homes delivered through the planning process and other means.

Councillor Organ (Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning) highlighted the key areas of the report acknowledging that the City did not have large amounts of lands for development purposes and would need to work with private developers to satisfy the City's housing needs. He concluded by reporting that Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 11th January 2016, had asked for paragraph 4.1 to be removed from the covering report.

Councillor Dallimore acknowledged that the wording of paragraph 4.1 was not particularly articulate but felt that it was a useful aspect that needed to be considered.

RESOLVED:

1. The contents of the report be noted.
2. Priority be given to making the best use of previously developed land and the progress made on delivering new and affordable homes for the City of Gloucester be welcomed.

87. GLOUCESTER PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY 2015 – 2025

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning which sought approval for the Gloucester Playing Pitch Strategy 2015 – 2020 and the Artificial Grass Pitch Strategy.

Councillor Organ summarised the key areas of the report noting that the strategy formed part of the Council Plan and a requirement of the national planning guidance. He explained that the strategy would help to evidence and develop new policies to help protect against the loss of important playing fields, noting that the strategy had been amended to incorporate the responses received from the consultation.

Cabinet Members welcomed the strategy commenting that there would be opportunities for sports groups and local residents to become involved in the delivery process. Councillor Norman emphasised the need for external funding and support from Members and the Officers in meeting the aims of the strategy. They placed on record their thanks to all the Officers involved in the preparation of the comprehensive document.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:

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1. The Gloucester Playing Pitch Strategy 2015 – 2025, as provided at Appendix 3, and the Artificial Grass Pitch Strategy, as provided at Appendix 4, be adopted by the Council; and
2. An Officer led Delivery Group be established for a period of three years from adoption of Gloucester Playing Pitch Strategy 2015 - 2025 and the Artificial Grass Pitch Strategy to monitor, evaluate and review the delivery of the strategies and related action plan as set out in paragraph 9.2, which shall report to the Cabinet on an annual basis.

88. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the following item of business on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public are present during consideration of this items there will be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended.

89. ACQUISITION OF LAND, GLOUCESTER RAILWAY STATION

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy which sought approval to acquire land adjacent to Gloucester Railway station.

RESOLVED:

The recommendations as laid out in the exempt report.

Time of commencement: 6.00 pm

Time of conclusion: 6.45 pm

Chair