



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING : Monday, 28th November 2016

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

Others in Attendance

Councillor David Norman MBE, Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

Councillor Lise Noakes, Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure

Jason Smith, Chief Executive, Marketing Gloucester Limited

Bernie Jones, CEO, Aspire Trust

Jacquie Douglas, Business Development Manager, Aspire Trust

Andrew Cummings, Management Accountant

Anne Brinkhoff, Corporate Director

Rhys Howell, Democratic Service Officer

APOLOGIES : Councillor Pearsall

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Hampson and Hawthorne declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 10, the Aspire Trust Annual Performance Monitoring report, as they were trustees on its board.

47. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 31st October 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

48. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

There were no questions from members of the public.

49. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

There were no petitions or deputations.

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50. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Members examined the latest version of the Cabinet Forward Plan and the latest version of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme.

The Chair informed the Committee that the next meeting of the Committee would be given over to scrutinising the Council budget for 17/18.

The Chair stated that the Housing Development Company report was not being scrutinised in the current meeting as the report to Cabinet had been delayed until 11 January 2017. The Chair stated that he would still like the Committee to scrutinise this prior to 11 January.

Councillor Haigh requested that the Committee scrutinise the Public Realm Strategy, prior to Cabinet receiving it on 11 January 2017.

The Chair informed the Committee that he, the Vice Chair and Spokesperson would finalise the agenda for the next meeting of the Committee in their next Lead Members' meeting.

RESOLVED-

- 1. That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.**
- 2. That the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme be finalised by the Lead Members of the Committee.**

51. FINANCIAL MONITORING QUARTER 2 REPORT

The Chair welcomed Councillor David Norman (Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources), Anne Brinkhoff (Corporate Director) and Andrew Cummings (Management Accountant) to the meeting.

Councillor David Norman shared that the forecasts within the report were best estimates based on the current financial status and that the financial performance was stronger than at the end of Quarter 1.

Councillor David Norman stated that the Cabinet were aware that the Culture and Leisure Portfolio presented some challenges and expressed disappointment that targets were not being met. He stated that the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure was taking steps to improve the financial performance of the portfolio.

Councillor David Norman concluded his update stating that the Council continued to enjoy a wide range of financial options and opened the topic to the Committee for questions.

Councillor Wilson stated it was an encouraging report with a large breakdown of figures, but that it did not show if there were any overall concerns in specific areas, such as an effect on performance due to financial changes and the resultant changed workloads for Officers.

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Councillor Wilson also raised the matter of the discrepancy between the forecast income and the actual income for the Tourist Information Centre (TIC) and asked if it should be of concern. Councillor David Norman confirmed that the Council should not be complacent regarding any missed target. Andrew Cummings clarified the figures, stating that a significant amount of TIC revenue was due to ticket sales but a large amount of costs were also due to ticket sales, so as sales rose, costs would rise and vice versa. Due to lower sales resulting in lower costs, the TIC was expected to be down by about £20,000 in revenue, rather than £109,000 in the income appendix.

In response to a question from Councillor Wilson regarding the difference between the forecast and actual spend on Housing projects, Andrew Cummings explained it may have been due to lower take up of Disabled Facilities Grants but he would obtain the Councillor further information.

Councillor Hilton expressed disappointment that, with only a few months of the year left, there was no time to address the overspend within the Culture and Leisure Portfolio. Councillor David Norman agreed that it was disappointing that targets had not been met, but that the matter was being addressed in plans for the next financial year. Andrew Cummings stated that the predicted overspend was due to the saving target agreed by Council, and the revenue performance for this portfolio was set to exceed this time last year. Councillor David Norman stated that Cabinet was in the process of drafting the budget for 2017/18 and were aware that the Council was facing financial challenges and would be realistic with their aims. As part of meeting those challenges, Cabinet had received recommendations from the Together Gloucester team on how to make savings. He stated that 2017/18 will be a financial challenge for the Council, but all portfolios would be scrutinised by Cabinet, and that he would oversee that process.

Councillor Haigh asked for further information regarding the Garden Waste and Bulky Items schemes, as these were intended to be cost neutral, but currently were not. Andrew Cummings said that the scheme was broadly on target, but an increase in engagement, meant an increase in costs. He said more details could be shared and Councillor Haigh requested this.

The Chair thanked Councillor David Norman, Anne Brinkhoff and Andrew Cummings for their presentation.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

52. MARKETING GLOUCESTER PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Chair welcomed Councillor Noakes (Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure), Anne Brinkhoff (Corporate Director) and Jason Smith (Chief Executive Marketing Gloucester Limited) to the meeting.

Councillor Noakes stated that Marketing Gloucester Limited (MGL) had had a good year and she had been hearing an increased amount of positive talk about

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Gloucester as a cultural destination. She also highlighted contributions MGL had made towards increased cultural funding for Gloucester.

Jason Smith explained that MGL managed destination tourism and events in Gloucester, alongside promoting and marketing Gloucester and attracting investment. Due to MGL's work there had been a 60% increase in tourists between 2013 and 2015, and 4100 jobs were supported by tourism in the City. Building on this, MGL was looking to introduce a tourist card, similar to the current resident's card scheme, as well as capitalising on Gloucester's involvement in the Great Gloucestershire High Street, The Great British High Street and its Digital Pathfinder status.

Jason Smith explained that MGL was operating within budget, and was continuing to develop sponsorship models for many events. As part of these sponsorship attempts there was an aim to package multiple events together, as done with SOMAC (Summer of Music and Culture), which allowed for cross promotion of events.

Councillor Haigh wished to ask a question related to the confidential MGL Audit report that was not on the agenda for the meeting, but had been circulated to Members of the Committee at their request. As such, a motion was passed to move into private session and the press and public were removed from the room.

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the remainder of this 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 item there will be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended.

Councillor Haigh asked about MGL funding and whether there were plans to move towards a zero contribution model, similar to that of Aspire. Councillor Noakes advised that Cabinet would be looking at MGL funding as part of the budget and she could not make any commitments at the present time. Councillor Noakes stated that spending on MGL in 16/17 was the same as in previous years, but that it was bringing a lot more revenue in.

Councillor Wilson asked how greater transparency could be ensured, given that the Council provided significant funds to MGL, and what the working relationship between MGL and The Council was like. Councillor Noakes informed the Committee that there was a good working relationship, partly because the Leader of the Council was also the Chair of MGL. She also informed the Committee that performance review meetings were now formalised and that a full report on MGL's performance would be available in March.

Councillor Hilton asked about the recommendations in the confidential Audit Report. Anne Brinkhoff reported that this was being pursued by the Audit and Governance Committee and further audit work would be undertaken in early 2017.

Councillor Hampson asked how the success of an event was measured. Jason Smith explained that different events had different aims so success was measured

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in different ways. Some were measured by turnout such as the Fireworks, other were measured by increased financial intake such as Art in the City. Councillor Noakes explained that event monitoring sheets were completed after events to gauge the success of an event.

Councillor Haigh asked for clarity regarding the relationship between MGL and the Council and whether there were any conflicts of interest, given that the Leader of the Council was also the Chair of MGL. Councillor Noakes stated that MGL was a Council body and that proper arrangements were in place to prevent any conflict interest.

Councillor Haigh said that young people at the Mayor and Young People's Conference and had expressed a feeling that Gloucester's cultural events did not reflect the diversity present in the City. Councillor Noakes agreed that more diversity was needed and due to this, young people were a key focus for the Culture Trust. Jason Smith disagreed that the diversity of the City was not reflected in the cultural offerings, using the example of SOMAC which catered for a diverse audience, with Beat Box and Street Dance in King's Square, a Haka at The Quays and a classical music concert in the Cathedral, all on the same day. He advised that MGL aimed to provide something for everyone and were aiming for successful engagements with mass audiences.

Councillor Hilton asked whether Members would be consulted on MGLs plans for the year ahead. Councillor Noakes confirmed that the Festivals and Events report was considered by Cabinet every January and that she welcomes the Committee's scrutiny. Jason Smith told the Committee that MGL operated on a five year plan, and he would be happy to share it with the Committee.

Councillor Melvin praised the work that MGL had been doing and asked why the Culture Trust was required, as MGL had a wealth of skills that were not being utilised by the Culture Trust. Councillor Noakes said that the Arts Council had recommended a Culture Trust be formed and the Culture Trust Board had been selected by a panel, but that MGL could be called upon by the Culture Trust Board for assistance if needed.

Councillor Lewis expressed his desire that more Councillors got involved in cultural events, such as 'The Assize of Ale', and stated that since MGL's inception Gloucester was improving in cultural offerings and had achieved a critical mass which would continue to grow. Councillor Finnegan echoed the comments and said that she had heard people speak positively about Gloucester's cultural offerings from as far afield as Birmingham.

The Chair thanked Councillor Noakes, Anne Brinkhoff and Jason Smith for their presentation.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

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53. EXCLUSION OF 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 Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended.

Note: The Chair allowed a brief adjournment to allow Members to familiarise themselves with the documents relating to the Aspire Annual Performance Monitoring report.

54. ASPIRE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING

This item was discussed in private session.

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.

After the discussion was completed, the Chair thanked Bernie Jones and Jacquie Douglas and Councillor Noakes for their presentation.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

55. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 19 December 2016 18:30 hours.

Time of commencement: 6.30 pm hours

Time of conclusion: 8.35 pm hours

Chair