



## **CABINET**

**MEETING** : Wednesday, 7th March 2018

**PRESENT** : Cllrs. Watkins (Chair), Organ and Cook

**Others in Attendance**

Cllr Coole

Managing Director

Corporate Director

Head of Policy and Resources

Head of Communities

Community Wellbeing Officer

Democratic Services and Elections Officer

**APOLOGIES** : Cllrs. James, Noakes and D. Norman

### **100. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **101. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th February 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **102. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)**

A member of the public asked if Members felt that the system and premises available in Gloucester for vulnerable homeless people were suitable. He brought to Members' attention nine cases where he perceived failings to have taken place by agencies within the city and enquired what steps will be taken to rectify each of them. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning thanked the questioner for bringing these matters to Members and assured him that each point would be considered in detail and responded to.

An independent volunteer litter-picker, active in the Hucclecote area, raised concerns about litter on the approaches to the city and his experience attempting to find the right organisation to report the problem to. He asked Members whether the Council actively works with other organisations to keep the city surroundings litter-free and enquired to whom the public should make reports. The Cabinet Member

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for Environment expressed Members' own frustration with these issues and stated that officers were taking steps to improve co-ordination with the other agencies, such as the Highways agencies, the neighbouring boroughs, and Amey the Council's contractors, with the expectation that progress would be visible soon.

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods highlighted the importance of communities in tackling litter issues and thanked all volunteers for their efforts. She took the opportunity to ask the questioner how the Council could be of more assistance to people willing to be active in dealing with litter. He responded that requiring volunteers to complete forms and courses put people off and that ways to encourage wider participation should be explored. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods gave assurance that these comments would be taken into account. The Managing Director reminded Members of Gloucester's participation in the 'Great British Spring Clean' and the city centre litter pick on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> April which the public are encouraged to join.

**103. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)**

There were no petitions or deputations.

**104. LEADER AND CABINET MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)**

There were no questions from Members to the Cabinet.

**105. LOCAL AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT**

Cabinet considered the joint report of the Cabinet Members for Communities and Neighbourhoods and for Environment that updated Members on air quality within the city and outlined measures intended to form part of a new air quality action plan.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning highlighted the breadth of monitoring in the city and drew Members' attention to the Gloucester's high rank in the Centre for Cities' national low emissions table.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the importance of raising awareness of air quality in order to empower residents to make positive choices is endorsed.
- (2) authority is delegated to The Head of Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities & Neighbourhoods to undertake a consultation exercise with the Gloucester Taxi Trade on proposals to introduce air quality considerations into the Council's taxi licensing policy.
- (3) the development of an air quality action plan for the City to be completed by autumn 2018 be endorsed and presented back to this Cabinet for information.

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**106. GROWING GLOUCESTER'S VISITOR ECONOMY ACTION PLAN ANNUAL UPDATE 2017**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure that updated Members on progress made within the Growing Gloucester's Visitor Economy Action Plan during 2017.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning reminded Members of the importance of visitors as an economic driver and commented on the increase in the number of festivals, events and return visitors that the city has experienced. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods reiterated the increase in visitor activity and emphasised that it is due to partnership working.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the 2017 actions to deliver the Growing Gloucester's Visitor Economy Action Plan are noted;
- (2) the activities undertaken by various partners are recognised as contributing to the 'Growing Gloucester Visitor Economy' aims and objectives;
- (3) the Action Plan supporting the delivery of the Strategy is reviewed and updated during 2018.

**107. FINANCIAL MONITORING QUARTER 3**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that informed Members of year-end forecasts, and progress made against agreed savings targets for the third quarter of 2017-18.

The Cabinet Member for Environment noted good performance in his portfolio but advised Members that new standards for the acceptance of material for recycling recently introduced by China may have a negative impact in future. He explained that although the Council only sells material for recycling that it collects to British companies, it is an international market and prices paid may reduce. He emphasised the importance of encouraging residents to sort their recycling materials before collection, as the better it is sorted the higher the price it commands helping to keep Council Tax low.

The Cabinet Members for Housing and Planning and for Communities and Neighbourhoods thanked officers for their close monitoring of changing circumstances and commented that this must continue.

**RESOLVED** it is noted that:

- (1) the savings achieved in year to date total £1.844 million with a further £331k in progress.
- (2) the forecast year end position is currently for a reduction to the Council's General Fund balance of £38k.

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- (3) the details of specific budgetary issues identified by officers and the actions being taken to address those issues
- (4) the current level of Capital expenditure as shown on Appendix 2.

**108. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2018/19**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that informed them of the contents of the Treasury Management Strategy, the prudential indicators and Treasury activities.

The Cabinet Member for Environment noted that the strategy was prudent. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning reminded Members that the current financial climate requires careful monitoring of investments and commented that the strategy presented a sensible approach.

**RESOLVED** it is recommended to Council that the Treasury Management Strategy be approved.

**109. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2018/19**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that presented the Pay Policy Statement for 2018-19.

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods read a summary provided by the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources advising Members of the key features of the report.

**RESOLVED** it is recommended to Council that the Pay Policy Statement for 2018-19 attached as Appendix One be approved.

**110. RISK BASED VERIFICATION**

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that sought Members to approve the annual review of the Risk Based Verification Policy in determining evidence requirements for the assessment of new Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims.

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods informed Members that the policy adopted the recommendations of the Department for Work and Pensions. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning asked if the actions represented a continuation of current practice. The Head of Policy and Resources responded that it was.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the reviewed Risk Based Verification Policy for verifying Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims as outlined (Appendix 1) is approved

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- (2) the reviewed Risk Based Verification policy as at January 2018 (Appendix 1) is approved for implementation from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

**Time of commencement: 6.00 pm**

**Time of conclusion: 6.40 pm**

**Chair**