



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING : Monday, 4th June 2018

PRESENT : Cllrs. Coole (Chair), Hawthorne (Spokesperson), Dee, Haigh, Hampson, Hilton, Morgan, Pullen, Taylor, Toleman, Walford and Wilson

Others in Attendance

Councillor David Norman, Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

Councillor Richard Cook, Cabinet Member for Environment

Councillor Leslie Noakes, Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure
Corporate Director

Head of Policy and Resources

Accountancy Manager

Head of Culture and Trading Services

Director of the Gloucester Culture Trust

Democratic and Electoral Services Team Leader

Democratic and Electoral Services Officer

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. Ryall, Finnegan and Lewis

60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

60.1 There were no declarations of interest.

61. DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPPING

61.1 There were no declarations of party whipping.

62. MINUTES

62.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 30th April 2018 were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

63. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

63.1 There were no public questions.

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64. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

64.1 There were no petitions or deputations.

65. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

65.1 The Committee considered the Work Programme and the Council Forward Plan.

65.2 The Chair noted the items scheduled for the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He commented that it would be useful for the Committee to revisit the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) report. He also stated it would be beneficial for the Committee to scrutinise the Shire Hall Accommodation Move report at the next Committee meeting.

65.3 Councillor Haigh noted the Social Enterprise Grounds Maintenance Pilot decision affects all wards so would be beneficial for Overview and Scrutiny to discuss this in the future.

65.4 Councillor Haigh also stated the Social Impact Bond Mid-term update should be brought before Overview and Scrutiny along with the Gloucestershire 2050 Vision Consultation.

65.5 It was agreed by the Committee that the Social Impact Bond Mid-term update and the Gloucestershire 2050 Vision Consultation would be added to the Committee's Work Programme and discussed at the next Committee meeting.

65.6 The Chair reminded Members that there is a Member Development session regarding Overview and Scrutiny held by the Centre for Public Scrutiny in the next month, which would be beneficial for Members of the Committee to attend.

65.7 Councillor Haigh raised the point that as the High Strength Alcohol Task and Finish Group has finished there is now capacity for another Task and Finish Group.

65.8 The Chair noted this and asked the Committee to consult with Members and Officers for suggestions for a new Task and Finish Group.

RESOLVED: - (1) That the Social Impact Bond Mid Term Report and the Gloucestershire 2050 Vision Consultation are added to the Committee's Work Programme for July and, (2) That the Work Programme be noted.

66. 2017-18 FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT

66.1 The Chair welcomed Councillor Norman, Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources, the Head of Policy and Resources and the Accountancy Manager.

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- 66.2 Councillor Norman provided an overview of the Financial Outturn report for 2017/18. The Committee were informed that the figures show an in year improvement quarter on quarter, with an improvement of £300,000 from quarter one.
- 66.3 Councillor Norman advised that £1.8m of savings were achieved in 2017/18 and those savings that had not been achieved would be added to the current year's target. He commended the Finance Team for their advice and guidance which has ensured the Council's financial situation continues to improve.
- 66.4 Councillor Hilton noted that there had been a slight improvement in Outturn for the year. However it appeared this was mainly due to corporate funding received from Kings Walk. He asked whether without this money the Council financials would be in worse position.
- 66.5 Councillor Norman replied that the Council was not solely funded by corporate income and the Council use all revenue streams wisely.
- 66.6 The Accountancy Manager stated the £15 million from Kings Walk was not being used to replenish this year's accounts and has resulted in £250,000 income from interest. This money meant that the Council was able to safely invest which is beneficial in the long term.
- 66.7 Councillor Wilson enquired whether all staff are charged in full to the service area they predominately work in. He noted a previous statement from Councillor Noakes who stated that staff were being charged to her portfolio when they only carry out a small amount of work for Culture and Leisure.
- 66.8 The Accountancy Manager replied that a section was included in the report that stated staff times are not split across areas, that some Officers will carry out work for other sectors within the Council and the Budget reflects this.
- 66.9 Councillor Wilson noted that the cost for providing the Housing Subsidy had resulted in an overspend of £252,000 in the last quarter. He queried whether this would mean there would be an overspend of excess of £1 million in the coming year. He also stated that all of the portfolios have seen an increase in bad debt.
- 66.10 The Head of Policy and Resources replied that the increase in Housing Subsidy had resulted from the change to Universal Credit and the 2018/19 Budget would reflect this change. It was only a small negative swing in the last quarter therefore it only differed slightly from the year-end target.
- 66.11 The Accountancy Manager stated that there had not been an increase in bad debt, simply some debt had aged without collection.
- 66.12 Councillor Pullen thanked Councillor Norman for his report and honesty. He questioned whether it was beneficial to keep rolling over the debt from previous years and if there was a better solution.

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- 66.13 In reply Councillor Norman agreed with Councillor Pullen and stated that the Cabinet were planning to introduce long term portfolio budgets in the coming year to rectify this problem.
- 66.14 The Head of Policy and Resources stated that detailed work is taking place with Services Heads regarding this issue and that he will have more information in the coming months.
- 66.15 In response to Councillor Haigh regarding Aspire repairs costs not being charged to the Capital Budget, the Accountancy Manager stated that repairs cannot be capitalised.
- 66.16 Councillor Haigh further questioned why the planning income had fallen short of forecast levels.
- 66.17 The Head of Policy and Resources replied that planning had substantial temporary staff this year which affected the budget and that detailed work is being carried out in this area to ensure this shortfall does not reoccur. The Accountancy Manager added that planning was a difficult area to forecast due to the variation in frequency of planning applications.
- 66.18 In response from a query from Councillor Morgan regarding how the Council is going to maximise planning income, the Head of Policy and Resources stated that the planning department's new structure would ensure costs would be reduced for staffing and the department are carrying out work in relation to realistic income targets.
- 66.19 The Chair welcomed Councillor Cook, Cabinet Member for Environment and the Corporate Director.
- 66.20 Councillor Cook presented a briefing regarding the year outturn for his portfolio. It was noted that the income from the recycling service was down from the amount previously forecast. He stated this was due to Amey's failure to obtain market average prices and a portion of the incoming recycling not being sold on by Amey.
- 66.21 The Committee was informed that the quarterly report regarding recycling stated that the recycling markets were good despite concerns relating to the Chinese market as the majority of Gloucester's recycling is sold within the UK and Europe.
- 66.22 The Members welcomed the report from Councillor Cook.
- 66.23 The Spokesperson thanked Councillor Cook for his report. He stated that this was an issue that should be brought back to the Committee when there is more information available.
- 66.24 The Chair welcomed Councillor Noakes, Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, the Corporate Director and the Head of Culture and Trading Service.

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- 66.25 In relation to the overspend in this portfolio, the Committee were informed that two of the museums and the Guildhall operate from elderly buildings that are expensive to maintain. The building work outside of Blackfriars had an impact on the income from this venue and The Tourist Information Centre has seen a decrease in income due to coach and tour operators are selling tickets through online stores.
- 66.26 Councillor Noakes stated new staff appointments will provide guidance and leadership for the coming year. However, the impact of these appointments on the budget had not been as quick as expected.
- 66.27 It was noted there are new projects in the forthcoming year that will save resources. In particular, the proposed TIC move, the transfer of the ownership of the Gloucester Life Museum building and new food and drink project regarding the Arbour. Councillor Noakes stated the bid for Gloucester to become City of Culture 2025 is still a main objective.
- 66.28 Councillor Hilton thanked the Cabinet Member for her report. He noted that the Culture and Leisure portfolio had significant overspend compared to other portfolios. He enquired whether the budget for this portfolio was unrealistic.
- 66.29 Councillor Noakes replied that throughout the portfolio everything was being done to create realistic targets. She commented that staff met regularly to investigate where they could make improvements and that the figures would be better in the coming year.
- 66.30 The Corporate Director stated that Culture and Leisure is a difficult area to predict figures and there have been circumstances out of the Council's control which had resulted in an overspend. He noted that it was not necessarily a service overspend, rather a decrease in income in some areas.
- 66.31 It was noted that the targets for Culture and Leisure had been set in exceptionally good years for the portfolio which were hard to reach in years when there were no large events taking place.
- 66.32 In response to a query from Councillor Pullen regarding the benefits of moving the TIC to another venue, the Head of Culture and Trading Services stated that they were currently looking to both the Museum and Guildhall as possible venues. It would be beneficial for the Guildhall to incorporate the TIC as it would increase footfall to the Café and would be able to have the same staff promoting both TIC and Guildhall events.
- 66.33 Councillor Morgan shared his view that it would be beneficial for a third party to take on the Life Museum to save money.
- 66.34 In response Councillor Noakes shared the proposal for the Gloucester Historic Buildings Company Limited to take control of the Life Museum. This would ensure the collection is kept. She stated that there were upcoming talks regarding the transfer.

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66.35 Councillor Haigh shared her view that the low TIC footfall is a reoccurring problem that will not be solved by moving to the Guildhall. She also stated that the Guildhall has accessibility issues that would need to be rectified before the move could take place.

66.36 The Chair noted that it would be beneficial for the TIC move proposals to be brought before the Committee.

RESOLVED: - (1) That the proposals for the TIC move be brought before the Committee and, (2) the Financial Outturn 2017/18 report be noted.

67. 2017-18 YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT

67.1 The Chair welcomed Councillor Norman, Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources and the Policy and Governance Manager.

67.2 Councillor Norman stated that this is the first performance report since 2016. He was pleased to note that the Council had invested in a Performance Management System that would enable the Council to provide continuous oversight of performance.

67.3 The Committee were informed that with the new system in place the Corporate Performance would be reported quarterly with an Annual Report at year end. He further commented that the performance report was a work in progress but was hopeful the new system would provide clearer analysis of the Council's performance.

67.4 Councillor Hilton noted the 12 downward trend areas, stating the Council needs to do better in terms of performance and that the report had 11 areas where the trend is unknown or there was no data available. He queried when the dataset for waiting times on the telephone would be available. He further questioned whether the complaints regarding Amey would increase in the following year.

67.5 Councillor Norman replied the performance report was a step in the right direction however it was a new process of collecting performance data and next year there would be more datasets. In reference to the specific performance questions, the Cabinet Member stated he would pass the questions on to the relevant officers.

67.6 In response from a query from Councillor Haigh regarding the formatting of the report, the Policy and Governance Manager clarified that the symbols are inherent within the system however she would review the formatting options.

67.7 Councillor Pullen shared his view that it would be beneficial to have qualitative data to support the existing data.

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- 67.8 Councillor Hampson agreed and stated that more information is needed to support the datasets, especially in reference to footfall at the TIC and museums.
- 67.9 Councillor Toleman enquired whether there are any other key performance indicators are being looked at for reception.
- 67.10 The Spokesperson noted that the increase in staff absence had been contributed to the restructure and questioned what evidence the Council had for this correlation. He enquired if the Cabinet Member had any additional information regarding staff views towards Together Gloucester.
- 67.11 Councillor Norman responded that he would ask the Human Resources team for more information regarding the reason for staff absences, within the limits of data protection.

RESOLVED: - That the Committee note the Year End Performance Report.

68. GLOUCESTER CULTURE TRUST ANNUAL REPORT

- 68.1 The Chair welcomed back the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, Councillor Noakes, the Head of Culture and Trading Services and the Director of the Gloucester Culture Trust.
- 68.2 The Director of the Gloucester Culture Trust gave a presentation on the strategy and achievements of the Culture Trust thus far.
- 68.3 The Committee were informed that the Culture Trust were awarded £1.49 million from the Great Place scheme to deliver their vision of Gloucester and to develop Gloucester's cultural offering.
- 68.4 The Director of the Gloucester Culture Trust gave an overview of their current achievements and projects, including the Gloucester Roundhouse Exchange, the Kings Quarter regeneration project and upcoming festivals.
- 68.5 With regards to the impact of the Culture Trust, the Committee were informed that they provide the strategic guidance for culture throughout the City. The Trust's events increased footfall for local businesses and ensured the people of Gloucester have a say in shaping the cultural message for the City. The Trust also enables the youth of Gloucester to participate in events that have cultural impact on the City.
- 68.6 Councillor Hampson asked for clarification between the Culture Trust's aims and Marketing Gloucester.
- 68.7 The Director of the Culture Trust stated that the Trust provide a cultural strategy for the City with a long-term aim, whereas Marketing Gloucester provided the branding of the city and organise specific events.
- 68.8. In response to a query from Councillor Pullen regarding the success of the Trust in reaching young people, the Director stated that the Trust worked

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closely with partner organising to increase the involvement of young people in projects. She stated there has been targeted investment in the Culture Matson project to encourage youth participation. She further noted that 60 education packs were distributed to schools and libraries in Gloucestershire regarding the anniversary of Aethelflaed.

68.9 Councillor Hilton questioned what conditions would be needed to enable Gloucester to bid for City of Culture 2025.

68.10 In response the Director of the Culture Trust stated that it wasn't necessarily about creating the correct conditions over time, more about showing Gloucester has the drive and determination to continue to put Culture at the heart of the City.

RESOLVED: - That the Committee note the contents of the Culture Trust Annual Report.

69. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

69.1 2nd July 2018 at 6:30pm in the Civic Suite, North Warehouse.

Time of commencement: 6.30 pm hours

Time of conclusion: 8.34 pm hours

Chair

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 04/06/18
Questions on the 2017/18 Year End Performance Report

1. CST2 – will the phone waiting times data be available from Q1 2018/19?

Limited data will be available. Arrangements are being made with the interim telephony supplier to have limited performance data available for 18/19 within the constraints of the current system. In the longer term, we will ensure that the new telephony system (aligned with the anticipated move to Shire Hall) will support the generation of fit for purpose management information.

2. CST3 – why has the number of complaints shot up, is it only due to complaints about Amey?

The rise was due in large part to an increase in Amey-related complaints (more than 50% increase from 2016). This was fed back to Amey's Account Director in early 2018.

3. What other measures will be coming forward?

While we are going to make best use of the existing systems and data in 18/19, we are somewhat constrained by them. Therefore, our focus is on ensuring that the new systems allow us to have more visibility of outcome-based performance measures such as percentage resolved on first contact, number of self-serve transactions completed successfully and others being identified in the Service Planning process.

4. HR2 – why did the number of working days lost shoot up in Q4.

The increase in number of working days lost in Quarter 4 when compared to Quarter 3 was, in part, largely due to a number of sickness absence cases moving from medium term to long term sickness absence. The number of short term sickness absences, particularly in respect of absences due to colds and flu, stress/depression (caused predominantly through personal as opposed to work-related stress) and as a result of surgery, also increased. Seasonal absences due to colds and flu are also to be expected in the reporting period for Quarter 4 and impacted adversely on short term absence levels.

5. HR4 – what evidence is being looked at to try and understand and tackle this?

We are aware that the increase in absence levels from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4 is high for the reasons outlined above and are taking proactive measures to address this increase. Continued promotion of the HR and Occupational Health service is taking place with managers advised to obtain specialist advice at an early stage to address both short and long term sickness absence issues within their teams in a timely and appropriate manner. A number of sickness absence cases have been referred to the Specialist Case Team for formal meetings with successful outcomes being effected in these cases. The Employee Assistance Provider (EAP) service is also being further promoted to staff and managers are encouraged to seek advice from the Occupational Health advice line for further guidance as appropriate. Organisational sickness absence levels are reviewed on a monthly basis in detail at the Senior Management Team Meeting with reports also containing information on those who are reaching the Council's absence trigger points so that cases of repeated short term sickness absence

can be managed appropriately via Heads of Service and Service Managers. Training is also to be provided to Team Leaders and Service Managers on the effective management of sickness absence to ensure that fundamental principles of effective sickness absence management, such as conducting return to work interviews for all periods of sickness absence, covering staff wellbeing in one to one meetings as part of the appraisal process and considering attendance management plans are in place. It is anticipated that these proactive interventions will effect an improvement in absence levels over the coming quarter.

6. What kind of operational challenges is H1 referring to?

As Members will be aware, during 2017/2018 the Together Gloucester programme saw the merging of 3 housing teams into one Housing Service. The new service came into being on 1st June 2017, and as with any change such as this, there is time required to establish new roles, manage the knowledge transfer of departing staff and put in place in new operational arrangements. Things are now settling down and the next steps will see the service review its processes and procedures to make sure that we are as efficient as possible when dealing with the variety of applications the service assesses and determine.

Last year saw the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act and Universal Credit and all Councils were required to implement additional measures and IT infrastructure to meet the new obligations placed on us. This required resource from within the team to be re-diverted for certain periods of the year.

Unfortunately, during 2017/2018 the service suffered from a range of sickness absence across front-line staff and although we endeavoured to recruit additional resource this proved difficult particularly through the agency market. Additional key permanent posts have now been recruited into the front line of the service that will all contribute to ensuring that we are processing cases effectively and efficiently moving forward.

As predicted, the challenges outlined above inevitably led to some operational disruption and the impact of which was that we processed fewer homeless applications than the previous year. It is critically important to point out however that as Council we continued to meet our key obligation in that anybody who was owed a homelessness duty was placed into accommodation pending a decision being made. This is a very important message as it could be perceived in some quarters that a reduction in the number of homeless determinations means that residents have been pushed away by the council to fend for themselves whilst we determine their application. This is absolutely not the case and through our officers working in partnership with key agencies we continue to support residents through a variety of measures.

The year has also seen noticeable successes with our annual rough sleepers count indicating that the number of rough sleepers in the City had decreased at a time when nationally this number is increasing. This is testament to the partnership arrangements in place between our Council and key agencies such as Greensquare Group and P3. Of particular note was the implementation of the Social Impact Bond for Entrenched Sleepers which supports our safe and

attractive streets policy, the ethos of which is to support and engage those who find themselves sleeping on our streets. Through this programme we have been able to house and support 22 entrenched rough sleepers who were based in Gloucester with a further 2 being engaged with currently. A key focus for us this year is the acquisition of property so that we can increase the number of units available to us in Gloucester to provide temporary accommodation. This work is underway and we are hoping to develop business cases over the next 3 months to bring this about. I would also draw your attention to the recent Cabinet Report which outlined how as a service we intend to improve on the situation reflected within the performance report and this is a key priority for us as a Housing Service in 2018/2019.

In addition, housing and homelessness will now be the focus of two cabinet members following the changes introduced to portfolio responsibilities at annual council in recognition of the importance of reducing homelessness and increasing housing capacity in the City. Cllr Watkins will be spending time in the department over the next few months supporting the proactive work of the housing teams and looking at prevention of homelessness in more detail. We look forward to receiving and considering the well overdue Overview & Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group recommendations on tackling homelessness to aid us in this work.

7. H1 & H2 – please explain how they relate to each other?

There has been an increase in the number of residents presenting to us at risk of homelessness and naturally there has been an increase in the number of residents for whom we have accepted a duty to place into temporary accommodation pending their case being determined further. This increase in volume has also played its part in increasing the time it is taking to determine cases with caseloads increasing. In the short term, temporary resource has been introduced into the service to work on clearing legacy cases and moving forward a review of processes and procedures within the service will soon be undertaken that will mean that homeless applications are dealt with in both an effective and efficient manner.

8. H3 – please explain reduction in more detail?

This figure is not reflective of the successful prevention work that was carried out by officers in 2017/2018 when dealing with those residents who were at risk of being made homeless but at that stage we did not have a legal duty (at risk of being made homeless within 28 days) to assist them. We did however assist them to remain in their home or find alternative accommodation but these numbers were not recorded as part of the return. With the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act and the legal duty now being to support people at risk of being made homeless with 56 days these figures will be recorded through a new IT programme that will support this work.

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