



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING : Monday, 15th June 2020

PRESENT : Cllrs. Coole (Chair), Ryall (Vice-Chair), Dee, Finnegan, Haigh, Hilton, Hyman, Lewis, Organ, Pullen, Stephens, Taylor, Toleman, Tracey, Walford and Wilson

Others in Attendance

Councillor Cook, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment

Councillor Norman, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Performance & Resources

Councillor Watkins, Cabinet Member for Communities & Neighbourhoods

Councillor Melvin, Cabinet Member for Economic Recovery & Growth

Managing Director

Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer

Head of Place

Policy and Governance Manager

Democratic and Electoral Services Team Leader

Democratic and Electoral Services Officer

APOLOGIES : None.

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED: - That the appointments of Chair, Vice-Chair and Spokesperson at Annual Council be noted.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPPING

There were no declarations of party whipping.

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5. MINUTES

- 5.0 Councillor Wilson questioned the accuracy of paragraph 6.10 of the minutes of the Special Meeting held on the 10th of March 2020, suggesting that it did not reflect what was said by Councillor James.
- 5.1 Councillor Stephens pointed to the recommendations in paragraph 6.59 of the minutes. He asked whether the recommendations had been accepted by Cabinet and asked for an update on the current status of MGL liquidation proceedings. Responding to the latter, the Managing Director explained that the liquidators were still gathering evidence from potential creditors. In answer to the first query, the Leader of the Council advised that Cabinet would review the recommendations and come back to the Committee with an answer.
- 5.2 Additionally, Councillor Hilton queried whether Cabinet could prepare a short report outlining how the recommendations had been implemented. The Chair reiterated the Leader of the Council 's comments stating that Cabinet needed to review the recommendations first. However, they would follow up this request with Officers. Similarly, the liquidator 's report would likely be coming for consideration at a future Committee meeting. Lastly, the Chair outlined that it was an evolving situation which would be kept under constant review.
- 5.3 **RESOLVED:** that Paragraph 6.10 of the minutes of the last meeting would be reviewed and amended if necessary*; Cabinet would review and then confirm whether they accepted the recommendations; the Chair would enquire with Officers about the suggested report on the implementation of the recommendations made at the meeting on the 10th of March 2020.

**Following this meeting, a recording of the meeting was reviewed and paragraph 6.10 was found to be an accurate depiction of what was said. In light of this, both Councillor Wilson and the Chair agreed that the minutes did not need to be changed*

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

- 6.1 The Democratic and Electoral Services Officer read out a question on behalf of a member of the public who had elected for a written submission. The written submission was read out as follows:

“I can see from the agenda that there is no agenda item to review the latest position with the insolvency of Marketing Gloucester Ltd, a company that was 100% owned by Gloucester City Council. The minutes of the last meeting make several references to the fact that it would have benefitted the meeting if the former CEO and Bookkeeper of Marketing Gloucester had been invited to the meeting. Why is there no agenda item to discuss Marketing Gloucester and why were the former CEO and Bookkeeper not invited to this meeting?”

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6.2 In response, the Chair stated that MGL had been discussed by the Committee on several occasions. However, the Committee would continue to pursue any matters of importance alongside any COVID-19 related scrutiny. The Chair added that in relation to MGL, the Leader of the Council had stated that Cabinet would be reviewing the recommendations made at the Special Meeting held on the 10th of March. Similarly, the liquidator 's report would likely be coming for consideration at a future Committee meeting. Thus, he would not be ruling out any MGL related scrutiny based on both the recommendations and the liquidator's report.

6.3 A member of the Public read out two questions. He read out his first question as follows:

"Item 6.10 in the minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on the 10th of March 2020 states the following

Councillor Wilson queried whether Councillor James had read the internal audit report in 2017 which followed on from the 2014 whistleblowing allegations. Councillor James advised that it had not been brought to his attention at the time.

Please can you explain why an Internal Audit report on Marketing Gloucester Ltd was not shared with the Leader of the City Council at that time who was also Chairman of Marketing Gloucester? If it was the case that it was not brought to his attention, are there any proposals to review the situation? "

6.4 The Chair responded saying that they were mindful of the fact that Councillor James was not present at the meeting. They then opened the floor to any Cabinet Members or Officers who were able to respond to the question.

6.5 The Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer advised that being mindful of the potential conflict of interest with Councillor James as both Leader of the Council and Chairman of MGL, the appropriate way to make MGL aware of the report was to bring it to the attention of the then Chief Executive at one of the quarterly review meetings as they had done.

6.6 The member of the public asked whether this meant that Councillor James was not aware of the report. The Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer reiterated his point made earlier stating that the then Chief Executive was made aware of the report, and there was a working assumption that he would have informed the board about the report.

6.7 The member of the public then read out his second question as follows:

He read out paragraph 6.16 of the minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny meeting held on the 10th of March 2020 which states the following:

"Finally, in terms of the limited company, he (Cllr James) believed that the limited subsidiary of the UK DRIC was a dormant company with no assets or liabilities. Councillor Watkins outlined that there was an active UK DRIC subsidiary company with both assets and liabilities".

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He then asked why view of the position relating to the formation of the UK DRIC as a limited company so different between the two former Chairs of Marketing Gloucester Ltd the proprietor of the wholly owned subsidiary the UK? Furthermore, he asked which of the two accounts was correct.

- 6.8 The Chair reiterated that they were mindful of the fact that Councillor James was not present at the meeting, and that they could not answer the question on his behalf. They then asked Councillor Watkins, Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods & former Chair of MGL if she had anything to add.
- 6.9 Councillor Watkins emphasised that she could not answer on behalf of Councillor James who was not present at the meeting, and suggested that he should have an opportunity to respond to the question. She added that during the suspension of the former CEO of MGL, information had come to light that was not previously known. This was currently being looked at as part of the liquidator 's process. This report would go through the democratic process and would be brought to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee if requested by the Committee.
- 6.10 Following the meeting, Councillor James provided a written response to the member of the public which he also asked to be included in the meeting minutes:

“In response to Mr Ford’s question, I would point out the following:

1) I wasn't a Director of UK Digital Retail Innovation Centre Ltd. Neither was I on its advisory board nor was I involved with the management of the project.

2) The only publicly available accounts for the company are for the year to 30th November 2018, posted on the Companies House website on 10th August 2019, and are "accounts for a dormant company".

3) I ceased to be the City Council's nominated director of Marketing Gloucester Ltd in May 2019 and would not be aware if its subsidiary entered into any obligations after that date.

I am unsure which part of this Mr Ford feels is "unacceptable".

Since the last O&S meeting, I have been back through my emails and can see that I was sent an email by a fellow MGL Director which made reference to the existence of a subsidiary for the UK Digital Retail Innovation Centre on 18th January 2019, which I shared with Officers on the same day.”

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7. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

There were no petitions or deputations.

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

- 8.1 The Chair informed Members of a Special Committee Meeting which had been scheduled for the 29th of June 2020. The meeting was being held to consider the options available to the Council as a consequence of the current contract for the delivery of Waste, Street scene and Grounds Maintenance Services coming to an end in March 2022 and the accompanying report.
- 8.2 Committee members discussed how to best structure the Gloucester Recovery Plan workstreams into upcoming Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings with input from the Cabinet Member for Communities & Neighbourhoods and the Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer .
- 8.3 The Chair also noted that the Disposal of HKP and Progress on 66/67 London Road reports had carried forward from the last civic year. He undertook to follow up on the status of these reports outside the meeting.
- 8.4 **RESOLVED:** - the Chair would discuss the different options for how to structure the work programme with the Vice-Chair and Spokesperson and feedback to the Committee as soon as possible.

9. COVID-19 GLOUCESTER CITY RECOVERY PLAN

- 9.1 The Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer introduced the report and highlighted key elements. He brought Members' attention to the eight workstreams which were being developed and implemented as part of the Council 's approach to recovery planning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, he outlined the four Rs around which recovery planning would be based: Return, Retain, Resist, Reimagine.
- 9.2 The Chair thanked the Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer and welcomed the report. The Chair then invited questions from Committee Members.
- 9.3 Councillor Stephens stated that he welcomed the report which he believed was comprehensive, and set out a feasible way forward. He then emphasised the need for a cross-party approach in the recovery planning work across the different streams. He noted that there was already cross-party work taking place in relation to Economic Recovery & Growth through the Economic Recovery & Growth Task Force, and through the Recovery Board in relation to the Visitors and Cultural Recovery. Furthermore, he also noted that there would be cross-party work taking place in relation to Housing Recovery, and hoped this could be replicated across the other workstreams. He added that the way people lived had been fundamentally

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changed as a result of COVID-19, and it was likely that some business would not survive. This would need a reimagining of what the City Centre retail offer looks like. Moreover, Councillor Stephens was keen to see a change in social housing provision and was pleased to see that there were plans for individual transition plans for people currently in temporary accommodation. However, he stated that it would be important to look at the supply side of the debate and increase the amount of temporary housing and houses available for social rent. Finally, he outlined that although the pandemic had been a disaster for the country, it also provided an opportunity to do things differently, for example, with regard to the economy, the delivery of services and the environment.

- 9.4 Councillor Wilson noted that Aspire Trust would be on the Recovery Board for the Visitor and Culture Recovery, and sought confirmation that the Aspire Trust, and more generally, sports and wellbeing would all be key considerations in recovery planning. The Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer reassured him that Aspire Trust and Active Gloucestershire would be an important part of recovery planning.
- 9.5 Councillor Haigh was of the view that whilst the report covered a great deal, it would benefit from having statements on what vision of the City the plan would implement. The Leader of the Council advised that the Council Plan which was being considered at this meeting should cover any blanks. Through the City Plan, Officers and Cabinet had identified areas where the vision of the City could be implemented. Moreover, the proposed City Centre Commission would help with developing the vision going forward.
- 9.6 Councillor Ryall stated that she welcomed the report and the idea of approach recovery planning around the “four Rs”. Nevertheless, she also suggested that Resilience could be added as a fifth “R” to recognise the need for resilience to be built into the recovery planning and to prepare for the possibility of future waves of the Coronavirus. The Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer responded to say that he would be happy to add Resilience as a fifth “R”.
- 9.7 Councillor Pullen submitted that he also welcomed the report, but he had concerns that “Resist” (one of the four Rs) could lead to changes to front facing public services. If this was going to be the case, it was important that the Council first consulted with Service Users. Secondly, if any services were going to be stopped, it was important that the Council communicated with the public the rationale for stopping that service.
- 9.8 The Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer agreed that this was an important consideration, however, it was unlikely that any services would be stopped completely. Rather, if there were to be any changes, it would be to how those services are delivered. He then provided an example of how this was already being done with Customer Services.
- 9.9 Councillor Hilton echoed Councillor Stephens’ comment earlier on the importance of cross-party work during recovery planning especially given that the current Council was on “borrowed time” and only had a year before

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the delayed local elections next year. Councillor Hilton also supported Councillor Ryall 's proposal for a fifth "R".

9.10 The Chair agreed that cross-party work was crucial in the recovery planning. They noted that scrutiny at Gloucester City Council was successful and recognised both regionally and nationally because of the cross-party approach taken. Additionally, they outlined that the Committee would be considering the different workstreams in more depth over the coming weeks. The Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer added that Members would continue to be updated through the Coronavirus Members' Updates as well. The Chair encouraged Committee Members to use the Members' Intranet to access the Coronavirus Members' Updates.

9.11 The Leader of the Council closed the discussion stating that cross-party work would be a feature of recovery planning as it already was in other areas. He added that the administration did not have the monopoly on ideas, and always welcomed ideas from the Labour and Liberal Democrats Groups.

9.12 **RESOLVED:** - that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee **NOTE** the report.

10. COVID-19 GLOUCESTER CITY RECOVERY PLANNING (ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND GROWTH)

10.1 The Chair introduced Councillor Melvin and congratulated her for her recent appointment to the Cabinet Member for Economic Recovery & Growth post, adding that they looked forward to working with her in this capacity.

10.2 Councillor Melvin thanked the Chair and the Committee. She then provided a verbal briefing on the work which had been taken thus far within the Economic Recovery & Growth workstream of the Gloucester City Recovery Plan.

10.3 She highlighted that these were apolitical times, and that collaborative working was vital during the recovery planning. She outlined that within her post she had focused on three key strands. Firstly, the development of a clear and concise action plan to shape the response to the COVID-19 situation. Secondly, the identification of key organisations and individuals who could work with Gloucester City Council to deliver this plan. Thirdly, immediate actions which would have a direct impact on the economic recovery and growth of the City.

10.4 Councillor Melvin explained that as far as the action plan was concerned, she envisioned the process being carried out in four phases. The first of these was 'crisis' and this covered the period from March to June during which the priority had been the issuing of £20,000 in government grants to over 1600 businesses. She expressed her gratitude to the Head of Policy & Resources and the Intelligent Client Officer and their teams who had been played a key role in this process, with Gloucester City Council consistently performing being in the top 10 of local authorities in the country in this regard. Councillor Melvin outlined that over 99% of these grants had now

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been issued, and that the Council had worked closely with colleagues and business organisations such as The Federation of Small Businesses, The Gloucester BID GIFA, GFirst LEP in order to provide accurate and up to date business advice as well as intelligence to Central Government.

- 10.5 Councillor Melvin outlined that the second phase was “Pre-Recovery” which is the period the City was currently in, and would likely run until August. She stated that this phase covered the gradual re-ordering and reopening of the City. This had already started with the proliferation of signs and stickers in City Centre advising on safe distancing. Additionally, Councillor Melvin explained that the third phase, “Recovery” would likely run until the end of 202 and perhaps even into early 2021. This would cover the reopening of the evening economy and a continuing need to support businesses. The fourth phase was “Transformation and Renewal” which would see the emergence of a transformed and renewed City, for example, with new and innovative retail offerings. Councillor Melvin advised that with assistance from Officers, she had established the Economic Recovery & Growth Task Force to act as a consultative body comprised of various individuals and organisations. She added that she was pleased that Councillor Stephens and Councillor Bowkett from the Labour and Liberal Democrats groups respectively, had joined the task force. In addition, she stated that task force would oversee the first three phases whilst the proposed City Centre Commission would oversee the fourth phase if approved at the next Cabinet meeting on the 17th of June 2020.
- 10.6 Finally, Councillor Melvin outlined some of the specific actions which had been taken to support the City ‘s economic recovery & growth. This included working with traders from the indoor market in Eastgate Shopping Centre to facilitate the safe opening of the market on the 15th of June 2020. A further example was rental holidays for tenants in which rent could be recovered over a longer period where appropriate, thus easing cash flow issues. Moreover, she stated that she was working on a concept to reimagine the markets offers and build on this for the rest of the City. For this, work had started with “bridging” to bring the indoor markets on trend with WIFI, rebranding, painting, improved website, new store signage etc. Councillor Melvin hoped to present the new indoor market concept at the next Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting. Councillor Melvin also stated there was work being undertaken on a concept for a monthly street and flea market, although she could not expand on this for the time being. Other developments included the opening of the Farmers Market on the 19th of June and the launch of the Discretionary Grant Scheme alongside Cheltenham, Stroud and Tewkesbury Councils for which the deadline for applications was the 21st of June 2021. Lastly, Councillor Melvin advised that due to the COVID-19 situation, all toilets available under the Community Toilet Scheme in the City Centre were not available except for Eastgate Shopping Centre which would had opened its toilets on the 15th of June 2020. Similarly, toilets at the Transport Hub, Gloucester Park, Westgate Street Car Park were all now open. She added that the Council would continue to work with partner organisations and traders to ensure that the Community Toilet Scheme was fit for purpose during the recovery phase and was acutely aware of the need for more toilets.

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- 10.7 Councillor Haigh thanked Councillor Melvin for the comprehensive update. She added that she had been to the Eastgate Indoor Market in her capacity as Mayor and she was pleased to see Councillor Melvin working hard with the Markets team to ensure a smooth reopening of the market. She added that whilst there, she had been engaged in a discussion about the possibility of having a food market in order to attract people to the gate streets. She noted that a few years ago the Council had experimented with a night market in Kings Square. Whilst this was no longer possible due to the current work being undertaken at Kings Square, attractions such as night markets could help bring people into the City Centre and support the businesses which were currently open until the hospitality industry was back on its feet. Councillor Melvin stated that she agreed with this and would be happy to discuss this with Councillor Haigh in further detail. Moreover, Cabinet was working on several schemes looking at all market offers, and the City benefitted from having incredible manufacturers to help facilitate any such markets.
- 10.8 Councillor Tracey congratulated Councillor Melvin on her new post. She then asked whether it would be possible to have a sign pointing to where the toilets in the City Centre were located. She remained concerned that there was still a lack of toilets available. In addition, Councillor Tracey asked whether there had been many traders at the opening of the Eastgate Indoor Market. Councillor Melvin responded to say she welcomed the idea of having signs pointing to where the available toilets were located and would communicate with Officers about this. Secondly, she outlined that there had been 19 shops open at the Indoor Market with the rest opening on the 6th of July 2020.
- 10.9 Councillor Hilton submitted that it would be difficult to achieve economic recovery, particularly in the city centre. He noted that some retailers had gone into administration during the lockdown and it was possible that others would follow suit. Moreover, he pointed to Germany where there had been a reduction in footfall since the reopening of retail stores, and a similar challenge could be faced in the UK. Secondly, Councillor Hilton queried whether Debenhams, in the City Centre had re-opened, and, if it had not, whether there were any plans to assist it to re-open. Thirdly, Councillor Hilton questioned what plans, if any, were in place to help pubs, restaurants and cafes to re-open for example through alfresco dining. Lastly, Councillor Hilton echoed Councillor Tracey 's concerns over the lack of toilets in the City Centre.
- 10.10 Councillor Melvin advised that Debenhams would be opening on Wednesday 17th of June. In relation to the opening of pubs, restaurants and cafes, she outlined that Cabinet was still waiting further information from Central Government. Nevertheless, Officers were working with businesses to ensure that they are Covid-19 safe when they do reopen, and there were discussions about the possibility of having a "star" system. Moreover, Officers were also working with businesses about the use of outside space, however each case would need to be looked at on an individual basis, and the police would need to be consulted. Furthermore, in relation to the

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economic recovery aspect, she highlighted that she was working with the Economic Development Department and Asset Management on a deliverable plan to fill the high street. This would include first identifying who owns the stores, however, this was still a work in progress. Moreover, the Economic Recovery & Growth Task Force would have some input in this.

- 10.11 The Head of Place highlighted that the City Council did not currently charge for licenses for tables and chairs outside the gate streets, but this was not necessarily the same for Gloucester Quays. However, the Council was considering not charging for tables and chairs at Gloucester Quays to encourage businesses to use outside space. Councillor Hilton suggested that the space outside The Lord High Constable of England (a JD Wetherspoons Pub) could be used as outside eating space by businesses. Councillor Melvin stated that whilst she agreed with this, the space was owned by Peel Land & Property, and under a separate contract. Thus, it would be their decision whether to use that space. However, it was likely that the space would be used by their tenants. The Lord High Constable of England pub was not one of their tenants. Councillor Hilton outlined that he was not just referring to The Lord High Constable of England pub using this space, but other businesses as well, if possible. Councillor Melvin advised that the Managing Director of Peel Land & Property was due to attend the Economic Recovery & Growth Task Force meeting that week, and it was question which should be asked of him.
- 10.12 Councillor Stephens congratulated Councillor Melvin on her appointment to her Cabinet post. He then highlighted that much of the debate had focused on the City Centre and Gloucester Quays and was concerned that the rest of the City was being forgotten. Furthermore, he believed that it was important that Economic Recovery & Growth Taskforce also focused on areas of the City outside the City Centre. Councillor Melvin responded to say that the areas outside of the City Centre were equally a priority. She added that Officers were working with local business across the City to assist them with recovery planning.
- 10.13 Councillor Pullen was concerned that even after the lockdown restrictions have been eased to allow pubs, restaurants and cafes to reopen, people may still not feel safe to go to these venues even with the 2m rule. He added that this could have a negative impact on the already struggling hospitality industry. Councillor Melvin echoed this concern, and stated that some businesses in the industry may not survive. However, the sooner the companies could be helped to reimagine their businesses and perhaps diversify, the better. This was something she was already doing alongside the City Centre Manager and other officers.
- 10.14 Councillor Walford, speaking in his capacity as Chair of the Licensing & Enforcement Committee confirmed that the 28 day consultation period when an application was made for tables and chairs to be used outside was being suspended. This would speed up the process for any businesses looking to make use of outside space in order to comply with the 2m rule.

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- 10.15 Councillor Toleman informed the Committee of an issue which had been raised with him. This was in relation to a café in Gloucester Quays whereby the owners had been told that customers would not be allowed to sit down and drink their beverages, but were allowed to stand only. Councillor Melvin advised that she was not aware of anyone from the City Council doing this. Thus, she would need to look into this issue and get back to Councillor Toleman.
- 10.16 Councillor Melvin concluded her update stating that these were apolitical times, and collaborative work was important. Thus, she welcomed any suggestions which Members had at any time.
- 10.17 The Chair thanked Councillor Melvin for the update.
- 10.18 **RESOLVED:** - that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee **NOTE** the update.

11. COUNCIL PLAN EXTENSION - PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS FOR 2020/21

- 11.1 The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment introduced the report outlining that the Committee was being asked to recommend that the Council Plan extension is approved. This was necessary in light of the fact that a new Council Plan was due to be developed following the local elections in May 2020, however, the elections had been postponed to May 2021 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 11.2 Councillor Haigh questioned whether some of the priorities in the Council Plan were still fit for purpose. Firstly, she suggested that the social housing target in Priority 1.2 could be higher. Secondly, she suggested that Cabinet amends Priority 3.13 to include other community initiatives as follows: “*work with partners to improve the health and wellbeing of our population, in particular through the development of the Blackbridge site and other community initiatives*”. Lastly, she suggested that the reference to “commercial opportunities” in relation to the Shopmobility Service in Priority 4.16 should be removed. She added this would be prudent as a solution to commercial opportunities had never been found in order to meet this aim. Rather, her view was that the Council should look to other ways of cross-subsiding.
- 11.3 Councillor Cook responded to Councillor Haigh’s points in turn. Firstly, in relation to social housing, he noted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, builders were unlikely to be able to deliver the same number of houses as planned before the pandemic. Further, he pointed to some reports which suggested that builders would only be able to deliver 50% of their targets for building houses, for example as a result of social distancing measures amongst other factors. This would also present challenges for social housing. However, the Council would continue to work with builders to aim to deliver as much social housing in the circumstances. Secondly, on the topic

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of White City, he stated that the Council was in ongoing talks with the team there to help them achieve a successful outcome in relation to another facility which they were planning to build. However, he was not sure that there was anything more the Council could do. He added that the Blackbridge site was mentioned in the original City Plan whereas White City had not been. Lastly, he stated that Cabinet was aware of ongoing issues at Shopmobility, and were looking at how improvements could be made.

- 11.4 Councillor Haigh reiterated that Priority 3.13 could be improved by adding “and other community initiatives”, and stated that this would align with the Asset Based Community Development principle. Councillor Cook responded to say that the wording on Priority 3.13 could be agreed upon and then taken forward by Cabinet.
- 11.5 Councillor Hilton queried whether the priorities could be achieved whilst the City was still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, he pointed to Priorities 1.4 and 1.7. Additionally, Councillor Hilton pointed to the fact that there was not a policy on Households in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) on the Council Plan, stating that there should be a policy requiring planning permission for HMOs in the City. Councillor Cook stated that he took on board Councillor Hilton ‘s comments particularly around HMOs, and stated that the Council should be looking to develop a solution for this. The Managing Director highlighted that Councillor Hilton had raised this issue with the Head of Communities when the Committee considered the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and her response was that once completed, the Stock Conditions Survey would assist with identifying where a policy decision needs to be made in relation to HMOs. Officers were carrying on implementing the action plan in the Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy and this would help to decide whether a policy decision such as an Article 4 Direction would be needed.
- 11.6 Councillor Hilton responded to say that he wanted assurance that the Stock Conditions Survey would be carried out as quickly as possible. He suggested that th areas experiencing issues with HMOs could be looked at first before looking at other areas. He pointed to Cheltenham where the ward of St. Pauls had an Article 4 Direction in place and other areas in the City did not.
- 11.7 Pointing to Priority 1.7, Councillor Pullen asked when further information would be made available in relation to the chosen option for the delivery of Place Marketing Function. Councillor Cook advised that the “*Report Into the Future Marketing of Gloucester*” which was being prepared by Steve Brown, the Former Interim Chief Executive of Marketing Gloucester Ltd explored the different options available for a Place Marketing Function. The Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer noted that the report recommended that the City needed a Place Marketing Function. The idea that the City needed a Place Marketing Function was echoed at a Visitor Economy & Cultural Recovery Group meeting held the previous week and would likely be echoed at the Economic Recovery & Growth Task Force meeting that week. Moreover, the Head of Cultural Services was holding discussions with other Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) to find out what has and has not worked for them. From this, it was evident that some DMOs were

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struggling, and thus the approach that would be recommended to Cabinet would be a more sustainable one. Officers were costing up proposals, once completed the proposals and the report would go forward to Cabinet. This report would be brought before the Overview & Scrutiny Committee once ready as previously agreed.

- 11.8 Councillor Stephens stated that he largely welcomed the Council Plan, however, he also noted that the Council would have to be flexible with the Plan due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty resulting from this in different areas. Furthermore, he stated that he welcomed Councillor Haigh 's proposed recommendations in relation to the Council Plan. Lastly, with regard to Councillor Hilton 's comment, he stated that HMOs were also an issue in other areas. Nonetheless, he suggested that amending the Council Plan was not the most conducive way of dealing with this. Rather, he believed that the issue should be addressed as part of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- 11.9 Councillor Hilton re-emphasised that work on the Stock Conditions Survey needed to be completed sooner rather than later. Moreover, he stated that if the Managing Director was able to provide a timeline of work to complete the Stock Conditions Survey, he would be satisfied. The Managing Director stated that he was happy to pass on Councillor Hilton 's comments to the Head of Communities and the Cabinet Member for Communities & Neighbourhoods. He also noted however that the housing team was under a lot of short-term pressure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He believed that the Head of Communities and the Cabinet Member for Communities & Neighbourhoods were in talks with Ark Consultancy to provide them with extra resources to carry out the Stock Conditions Survey, however, he would need to confirm this.
- 11.10 Councillor Haigh reiterated her earlier recommendations. On the topic of Shopmobility, the Managing Director outlined that as recently as last week, Councillor Watkins had indicated that she was in talks with a partner in relation to Shopmobility, and thus she may not be willing to remove "commercial opportunities" as a priority in the Council Plan.
- 11.11 Committee members discussed the merits of Councillor Haigh 's recommendation.
- 11.12 **RESOLVED** that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee **RECOMMENDS** that:
1. Cabinet amends Priority 3 (13) in the Council Plan Extension Priorities for 2020/21 as follows: "*work with partners to improve the health and wellbeing of our population, in particular through the development of the Blackbridge site and other community initiatives*"
 2. Cabinet removes the reference to "*commercial opportunities*" in relation to the Shopmobility Service in Priority 4 (16) of the Council Plan Extension Priorities for 2020/21.

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12. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 12.1 The Chair presented the report and highlighted key elements. They noted the Committee 's achievements in the past year, and the key priorities for the year ahead. Finally, the Chair pointed to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and submitted that the year ahead would be significant for the Committee. They then invited comments from Committee Members.
- 12.2 Councillor Tracey asked if the member attendance record could be amended to reflect the fact that she had attended seven out of eight possible meetings, having been appointed to the Committee later in the civic year.
- 12.3 Councillor Wilson welcomed the report. However, he pointed to the fact that the recommendations of the Special Meeting held on the 10th of March had not yet been approved by Cabinet. He suggested that this should be followed up with Cabinet so that the outcome of the meeting could be recorded in the Annual Report. The Chair advised that they would follow this up.
- 12.4 **RESOLVED that:** - The Overview & Scrutiny Committee **NOTE** the report.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 29th of June 2020.

Time of commencement: 6:30pm

Time of conclusion: 9:00pm

Chair