



## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MEETING** : Monday, 10th November 2014

**PRESENT** : Cllrs. Lugg (Chair), S. Witts (Vice-Chair), Gravells (Spokesperson), Haigh, Hanman, Lewis, Wilson, Ravenhill, Field, Dee, Taylor, Hansdot, Toleman,

### **Others in Attendance**

Councillor James, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture

Councillor Organ, Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Leisure

Ashley Green, Chief Executive of Gloucester City Homes

Ms Sam Chambers, Gloucester City Homes

Ms Jacquie Douglas, Business Development Director, Aspire

Ms Cathy Daley, Operations Director, Aspire

John Topping, Head of Finance, Gloucester City Council

Ms Sadie Neal, Head of Business Improvement and Performance, Gloucester City Council

**APOLOGIES** : Cllrs. Beeley and Pullen

### **44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Lugg, Hansdot, Hanman, and Toleman declared a personal interest in agenda item 6 by virtue of their roles on the board of Gloucester City Homes. Councillor S Witts declared a personal interest in agenda item 13 by virtue of her employment at Gloucestershire College.

### **45. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 15 September and 13 October 2014 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair. Councillor Gravells requested that the informal action notes taken at the meeting on 13 October 2014 could also be published as an accompaniment to the formal notes recorded.

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

There were no questions from members of the public.

### **47. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)**

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There were no petitions or deputations.

**48. GLOUCESTER CITY HOMES ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

The Chair, having declared an interest in this item, retired to the public gallery. Councillor S Witts took the Chair and welcomed Cabinet Member Councillor Colin Organ, and Mr Ashley Green, Chief Executive of Gloucester City Homes (GCH), to the meeting.

The Committee was presented with a report on GCH's performance during the year 2013-2014. Councillor Organ commended GCH on their achievements and remarked that it would be the last report in this format which would be received by Overview and Scrutiny in view of the impending stock transfer. Mr Green thanked Councillor Organ for his comments and summarised the key headlines in the document. Mr Green added that although the new company would be independent, there would still be a monitoring role for the City Council and that he was keen to sustain the strong partnership which existed.

Members of the Committee paid tribute to Mr Green on the excellent performance of GCH and for his engagement with the community and wished the organisation well for the future.

The Chair thanked Councillor Organ and Mr Green for their presentation.

**RESOLVED – That the report be noted.**

**49. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE EVICTIONS APPEAL PANEL**

Councillor Lugg returned to the Chair.

The Chair welcomed Ms Sam Chambers of GCH to the meeting.

Councillor Organ and Ms Chambers presented Members with an annual update in respect of outcomes from the delegation of duties of the Gloucester City Council Eviction Appeal Panel to Gloucester City Homes.

Ms Chambers explained that there had been 18 new cases examined by the Panel during the year and that 6 cases had been reviewed. Members were informed that there had been 8 evictions since the last report, 5 of which had emanated from tenants abandoning their property with the consequent accrual of arrears. Out of the remaining 3 evictions, 2 had been considered by the Eviction Appeal Panel.

Members were advised that this would be the last report to Overview and Scrutiny in this format following the impending stock transfer. Councillor Organ confirmed that GCH as the new landlord would continue the commitment of ensuring that evictions were only undertaken when all alternative courses of action had been explored.

A Member queried what procedures GCH would use in future for determining eviction appeals. Ms Chambers responded that GCH was currently reviewing its

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processes and reiterated that GCH would continue to act reasonably and fairly in assessing each case with the overriding consideration being the importance of keeping tenants in their homes where possible.

**RESOLVED – That the report be noted.**

**50. FINANCIAL MONITORING QUARTER 2**

The Chair welcomed Councillor James, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture and Mr Jon Topping, Head of Finance, to the meeting.

Councillor James introduced a report which set out financial monitoring information including budget variances, year end forecasts, and progress made against agreed savings targets for the second quarter ended 30 September 2014. The report also highlighted some key performance indicators. Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to note the contents of the report and make any recommendations it wished to the Cabinet.

Members discussed the following matters:-

1. Whether the historic budget issue identified in paragraph 6.1 relating to the level of recharges to partners would be addressed. The Head of Finance explained the background to this historic issue and confirmed that work was underway to determine the correct level of income that should be received which in turn would resolve the issue.
2. A Member commented on the presentation of the tables within the report and made positive suggestions to aid the legibility of the tables.
3. The Committee was informed that whilst it was unlikely that all the savings in Appendix A to the report would be achieved in 2014/15 it was anticipated that all of them would be realised in the year 2015/16.
4. There was a discussion on the General Fund. It was noted that the increase in the General Fund was not as high as had been anticipated due to the current forecast overspend of £317K. Councillor James commented that he believed the amount going into the General Fund was adequate.
5. A Member queried the £100K target to be achieved in the Regeneration and Economic Development restructure (paragraph 6.3) and asked where the remaining £80K would be found. The Head of Finance referred the Member to the consultation on the restructure which was currently taking place and stated that he was confident that the remaining £80K savings would be achieved in the year 2015/16.
6. The anticipated reduction in income from catering at the City Museum was discussed. Councillor James explained that this was likely to arise as a result of increased competition and the way the operation was managed.

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7. A Member queried the £356K overspend in the Business Improvement Service and asked for a breakdown of the figures. The Head of Finance agreed to let the Committee have this information before their next meeting.
8. There was a discussion on the investment in IT (paragraph 6.1) with one Member querying how much it was costing to improve systems and network security. Councillor James responded that investment in IT was programmed in the budget.
9. Reference was made to the additional savings target imposed on Amey, the Council's streetcare partner, of £230K which was deemed to be 'at risk' (paragraph 5.4). The Head of Finance confirmed that discussions were still ongoing with Amey in an effort to realise the savings by the end of 2015/16.
10. The Chair asked if the Council benefited from Civica's involvement in other contracts whilst operating from the City Council's buildings. Councillor James confirmed that this was the case with the exception of the IT contract which was only delivered to City Council staff and Members.

**RESOLVED – That the report be noted.**

**51. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

**RESOLVED – That the Cabinet Forward Work Programme be noted.**

**52. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

**RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.**

**53. MEMBER UPDATE ON OUTSIDE BODIES' ACTIVITIES**

There were no Member updates on this occasion.

**54. 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 item there will be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended".

**Agenda Item No.**

**Description of Exempt Information**

**13**

Paragraph 3: information relating to the business or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information)

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**55. ASPIRE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

The Chair welcomed Ms Jacquie Douglas, Business Development Director of Aspire, and Ms Cathy Daley, Operations Director of Aspire, to the meeting.

Cabinet Member, Councillor Organ, briefed Members on the performance report for Aspire Sports and Cultural Trust to its Business Plan for the year ending 2014/14 and introduced Aspire's 5 year business plan for the period 2014/15 to 2018/19. Councillor Organ commended the Trust for its performance during a difficult trading year.

Ms Jacquie Douglas, Business Development Director of Aspire, addressed the Committee. She drew Members' attention to the key headlines in the report.

The Committee discussed the following matters:-

1. Members welcomed the report and the progress made by Aspire and were pleased to note the Trust's charitable aims and the benefits the Trust brought to the City.
2. A Member queried plans for the legacy of the Rugby World Cup. The Business Development Director confirmed that the Chief Executive of Aspire was part of the legacy team and was actively involved in these plans.
3. A Member asked how the Trust attracted a client base from areas of the deprivation in the City. The Business Development Director responded that in addition to GP referral schemes that health trainers worked closely with communities for 12 week periods. After that time a reduced membership scheme was offered. Another pay-limited scheme was an 'HCard' which allowed families to access facilities on a daily basis for £1 or £2 a day without having to commit to monthly membership. The Business Development Director also drew Members' attention to the charity coffee mornings which were arranged which included 'Ladies' Only' free trials on toning tables. The focus of these sessions was on social interaction, with exercise being a by-product.
4. There was a discussion on how Aspire marketed their products with a suggestion that Members could help to publicise the Trust's activities. The use of the 'Hello Gloucester' bus was also mentioned.

**RESOLVED**

1. That the performance report for the year ending 2013/14 be noted.
2. That the 5 year business plan for the period 2014/15 to 2018/19 be accepted.

**56. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 1 December 2014 at 18.30 hours.

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**Time of commencement: 18:30 hours  
Time of conclusion: 20:15 hours**

**Chair**