



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING : Monday, 15th June 2015

PRESENT : Cllrs. Lugg (Chair), Hampson (Vice-Chair), Haigh, Gravells, S. Witts, Dee, Field, Hansdot, Pearsall, Randle, Toleman and Etheridge
Cllr Taylor as substitute for Cllr H. Norman

Others in Attendance

Councillor Paul James, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy

Councillor Jim Porter, Cabinet Member for Environment

Mr Martin Shields, Corporate Director of Services and Neighbourhoods

Mr Ross Cook, Corporate Director

Mr Jon Topping, Head of Finance

Mr Lloyd Griffiths, Head of Neighbourhood Services

Mr Andrew Cummings, Management Accountant

Mr Adam Balding, Rugby World Cup Co-ordinator

Mr Malcolm Cox, Operations Manager, Amey

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. Lewis, Beeley, H. Norman

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The Committee noted the appointments made at Annual Council on 21 May 2015:-

- Chair, Councillor Jan Lugg
- Vice-Chair, Councillor Neil Hampson
- Spokesperson, Councillor Hannah Norman

2. WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Chair welcomed the following new Members to the Committee:-

- Councillor Neil Hampson
- Councillor Hannah Norman
- Councillor Chris Etheridge
- Councillor Laura Pearsall

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3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Lugg, Hansdot, Toleman and Randle declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 by virtue of their roles on the Gloucester City Homes Board.

Councillor Gravells declared a personal interest in agenda item 10 by virtue of his role as a County Councillor.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

There were no questions from members of the public.

6. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

There were no petitions and deputations.

7. AMEY ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Chair welcomed Councillor Porter, Cabinet Member for Environment, Mr Malcolm Cox, Operations Manager, Amey, and Mr Lloyd Griffiths, Head of Neighbourhood Services, to the meeting.

Members were presented with the annual report for the Streetcare Strategic Partnership for the year 2014-15 which incorporated key performance indicators for the service, and Amey's service delivery plan to March 2018.

Mr Cox outlined the challenges for the service and current initiatives being instigated, and stated that going forward Amey was committed to providing a high standard of service whilst increasing recycling rates and achieving further savings.

Members discussed the following matters:-

1. A Member referred to Amey's target for reclaiming unused garden waste bins and queried how the bins would be identified. Mr Cox responded that bins without stickers (indicating that the service had been paid for) would be found and returned by the green waste crews. The Member went on to enquire if the revenue collected met the full cost of the garden waste service. Councillor Porter commented that he believed this was the case and that a small profit was being made, but that he was awaiting a review of the service before confirming the financial position and that there were no plans to increase the cost of the service. A Member queried if there were any plans to

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- reduce the cost of the green waste service. Councillor Porter replied that this could not be considered until he had reviewed figures for the service.
2. A Member asked if there were any proposals to extend the green waste service to those areas of the City that were harder to reach. Councillor Porter responded that this would be considered if there was evidence from consultation that there was sufficient interest in the scheme to justify its extension.
 3. A Member asked if green bins were 'stockpiled' in the City. Councillor Porter commented that the initial stock which was stored at the Eastern Avenue Depot was now diminished.
 4. A Member pointed out a misspelling of the word 'Saintbridge' and an incorrect phone number in the report.
 5. A Member queried the number of prosecutions for fly tipping. Councillor Porter referred the Member to the Environmental Protection Team for this information. Another Member queried fly tipping statistics for the month of December. Mr Cox confirmed that there had been an increase in some parts of the City. Arising from the debate there was a discussion on the 'closed bin' policy operated by Amey.
 6. A Member expressed concern that mixing recyclates with newspapers would reduce the value of the paper. Mr Cox explained the criteria for assessing the quality of the newspapers and stated that currently the moisture content was not resulting in a lower value for the product. Another Member remarked that in Stroud Road many residents did not have lids for their recycling boxes as they had been removed for tobogganing during a previous winter's snowfall.
 7. A Member complimented Amey for the detailed information in the report and presentation to Members and added that it would have been useful to have information on how long it took to deliver recycling boxes. Mr Cox recognised that there had been delays with delivery, but that this would be addressed now that a second vehicle was available.
 8. A Member sought clarification on reasons why the 2 recent projects carried out as part of the review of recycling had not resulted in any budget savings. Councillor Porter acknowledged that savings had not accrued from the projects and said that he would be reviewing with Amey how savings could still be achieved from the exercise.
 9. A Member asked how Amey communicated with the public to inform them of which items could be recycled. The Member displayed a 'bin hanger'. Councillor Porter stated that he encouraged Officers to communicate with residents and that he was disappointed with the results of publicity for the two extra recyclates which were added in March. Councillor Porter said that he was committed to putting a message into every recycling box. Another Member commented that a label should be affixed to every box illustrating what could be recycled. One Member suggested providing a fridge magnet with this information as bin hangers were not robust. Mr Cox added that

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promoting the service to residents by knocking on doors and informing them of what could be recycled was the best way to engage with residents, although he acknowledged that this was resource intensive. Councillor Porter agreed that a recent initiative in the White City involving sifting through the contents of bins with residents had been invaluable. A Member queried the legitimacy of this practice. Councillor Porter responded that it was lawful and that he intended to extend the examination to other areas in the City. Another Member commented that Ward Councillors should have been made aware of this initiative as residents who were out or unwilling to take part in the exercise had broached complaints. Councillor Porter agreed with this remark.

10. A Member sought clarification on which 'bring sites' at City supermarkets were operated by Amey and gave an example of one site which was overflowing with cardboard and appeared to have not been emptied. Councillor Porter expressed frustration that residents often failed to flatten down the cardboard and left it outside the bin whilst the bin itself was half empty and that this gave the impression that the site was not being regularly serviced.
11. During the discussion Councillor Porter informed the Committee that residents could contact the City Council to request up to 4 recycling boxes. Members were unaware of this fact and stated that this information should be advertised more widely to residents.
12. A Member highlighted Mr Cox's remarks about the crews having pride in their work and suggested that this could be better achieved by allocating operatives to specific areas of the City so that they built up local knowledge and forged links with the community. Mr Cox agreed with this comment, but said that this would not be possible because of reduced resources. The Member went on to say that it was important that crews recognised the work they did was important and that litter picking was a key element of the service.

The Chair brought the discussion to a close by thanking Councillor Porter and Mr Cox for their presentation. All Members were pleased with the level of detail provided in the report. The Chair added that the Committee wished to recommend that there should be more publicity to make residents aware of which items could be recycled.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the report be noted.**
- 2. That the Cabinet Member and Officers should explore ways of publicising to residents those items that could be recycled.**

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8. 2014-15 FINANCIAL OUTTURN

The Chair welcomed Cabinet Member Councillor James who was representing the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources, and Mr Jon Topping, Head of Finance.

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Members were presented with a report which informed them of the final Council position against agreed budgets for the 2014-15 financial year. The report also highlighted some key performance indicators.

Councillor James drew Members' attention to the main headlines of the report and placed on record his thanks to the Officers.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to note the report, subject to any recommendations Members wished to make to Cabinet.

Members discussed the following matters:-

1. A Member queried the impact of those savings that had not been achieved as set out in Appendix 1 to the report on the current financial year's savings and outturn and asked if it would be necessary to amend the money plan. Councillor James clarified the position. The Head of Finance further advised that the budget was monitored on a weekly basis by the Senior Management Team.
2. Turning to paragraph 9.2 of the report, a Member requested an update on the assets of the former South West Regional Development Agency which were now in the ownership of the City Council. Councillor James outlined the current position on the various assets.
3. A Member sought clarification on the Members' Allocation Reserve as set out in paragraph 9.4 of the report. The Head of Finance explained that the £14,000 had been moved to an earmarked reserve and was not in addition to the original £36,000 allocation.
4. A Member asked for details of how much other authorities had contributed towards the Gloucestershire Business Rates Pool. The Head of Finance advised the Member that all contributions were proportional.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

9. RUGBY WORLD CUP UPDATE

The Chair welcomed Mr Ross Cook, Corporate Director, and Mr Adam Balding, Rugby World Cup Co-ordinator, to the meeting.

Councillor James presented Members with a report which updated them on progress against the key issues for the delivery of the Rugby World Cup 2015.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to note the progress made so far regarding the preparations as part of Gloucester's Host City arrangements for the Rugby World Cup 2015.

Members discussed the following matters:-

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1. A Member asked how ticket touting would be dealt with. The Rugby World Cup Co-ordinator explained that that would be close liaison between the Police and the Council's Public Protection team to tackle this issue.
2. A Member commented on the flag trial carried out during the recent Tall Ships Festival in advance of the tournament. Councillor James said that the trial had been useful and had resulted in a re-think on how the flags would be hoisted.
3. A Member reflected that this would be a good opportunity to 'sell' the City and asked whether empty shops would be dressed, particularly the former Marks and Spencer store in Northgate Street which was currently an eyesore. Councillor James responded that he was in regular contact with the Head of Property at Marks and Spencer and believed that they had proposals in mind for the store. He added that empty premises would be used for 'pop up' shops and restaurants during the tournament.
4. A Member stated that the Rugby World Cup should be an ethical event and asked Councillor James if he would approach England Rugby to ensure that all staff employed were paid the living wage. Councillor James agreed to write to England Rugby on this matter and confirmed that any staff employed by Gloucester City Council would receive the living wage.
5. A Member questioned the definition of 'acquaintance' as set out in paragraph 3.11.4 of the report relating to the allocation of 2 tickets for Members to give to their chosen 'Unsung Hero' in each ward. Councillor James acknowledged the question and said that it was important for Members to be able to robustly defend their choice.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10. PARTNERSHIP WORKING WITH GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

The Chair welcomed Mr Martin Shields, Corporate Director of Services and Neighbourhoods, to the meeting.

Councillor James presented Members with a report which informed them on the progress made on discussions between Gloucester City Council and Gloucestershire County Council on working together to deliver back office functions and appropriate frontline customer services for the benefit of the residents of the City. The report also sought authority to continue to develop the high level implementation plan regarding partnership working.

Councillor James highlighted the key areas of the report. The Director of Services and Neighbourhoods reminded Members that each case for shared working or outsourcing would be reviewed on its merits and presented to Cabinet for endorsement, thus giving Overview and Scrutiny Committee the ability to call in any decisions made on shared working.

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to note the report, subject to any recommendations Members wished to make to Cabinet.

Members discussed the following matters:-

1. A Member welcomed the report and its transparency and said it was important to consider the role of Members in overseeing the management of the services. The Member questioned whether there would be any joint scrutiny between the City and County. The Director of Services and Neighbourhoods confirmed that meetings would be held after the new Managing Director had taken up his post to explore governance and scrutiny arrangements. The Member responded that the City Council would still have responsibility for the scrutiny of shared services and suggested that the new Managing Director should attend a future meeting of Overview and Scrutiny in order that Members could question him on his plans and vision for the future. This view was echoed by another Member who added that it was important that the role of scrutiny, including joint scrutiny, was recognised.
2. A Member suggested that the cross-scrutiny arrangements in place at Exeter should be examined.
3. During the debate, the Corporate Director of Services and Neighbourhoods reminded Members of a City Council event scheduled for 8 July 2015 which was being led by the Local Government Association to explore Member/Officer relationships. He encouraged Members to attend the event.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

11. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR 2014-15

The Chair presented the Committee's annual report on its activities for the year 2014-15. Members were informed that the report would be submitted to full Council on 23 July 2015 following endorsement by the Committee.

In relation to Member training, the Committee requested that the Democratic Services Officer investigate training opportunities offered by the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

Members were pleased to endorse the report.

RESOLVED – That the report be endorsed for submission to Council on 23 July 2015.

12. CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Members considered the latest version of the Cabinet Forward Plan.

RESOLVED – That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.

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13. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the latest version of its work programme.

As part of the discussion the Committee suggested that all Gloucester City Councillors should be canvassed for their ideas for future Task and Finish Group topics. It was agreed that the Democratic Services Officer would write to all Councillors in this regard and that possible subjects would be discussed at the next meeting of the Committee in July.

RESOLVED – That the work programme be noted.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 13 July 2015 at 18.30 hours.

Time of commencement: 18.30 hours

Time of conclusion: 20.30 hours

Chair