



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING : Monday, 19th October 2015

PRESENT : Cllrs. Lugg (Chair), H. Norman (Spokesperson), Haigh, Gravells, Lewis, S. Witts, Dee, Beeley, Hansdot, Pearsall, Randle, Toleman, Etheridge

Others in Attendance

Councillor Jennie Dallimore, Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods

Councillor Jim Porter, Cabinet Member for Environment

Mr Jon McGinty, Managing Director, Gloucester City Council

Mr Ross Cook, Corporate Director, Gloucester City Council

Mr Meyrick Brentnall, Environmental Planning Manager, Gloucester City Council

Ms Sadie Neal, Head of Business Improvement

Mr Jeff Thomas, Shopmobility Manager

Mr Steve Elway, Chief Executive, Aspire Sports and Cultural Trust

Ms Jacquie Douglas, Business Development Director, Aspire Sports and Cultural Trust

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. Hampson and Field

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Randle declared a personal interest in agenda item 9, Aspire Performance and Updated Business Plan, by virtue of her role as a Board Member of Aspire Sports and Cultural Trust.

41. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

42. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

Mr Andy Berry, a local resident, addressed the Committee in respect of agenda item 6 on the agenda, Shopmobility Service Options Appraisal.

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Mr Berry explained that he was a regular user of the service and relied on it as he was disabled. He added that it was an excellent service and that the staff were helpful. Mr Berry commented that whilst the service cost the Council money to run, it also stimulated the economy in Gloucester and that local retailers benefited from the money spent by Shopmobility users.

Mr Berry asked the Council to retain the current service.

43. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

There were no petitions or deputations.

44. SHOPMOBILITY SERVICE OPTIONS APPRAISAL

The Chair welcomed Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods, Councillor Jennie Dallimore; Mr Ross Cook, Corporate Director; and Mr Jeff Thomas, Shopmobility Manager; to the meeting.

Members were presented with a report which outlined the options for the future of the Shopmobility Service and which recommended that a procurement exercise be undertaken.

Councillor Dallimore acknowledged Mr Berry's comments during public question time and agreed that it was an excellent service and that the Cabinet wanted to protect it. She explained that it was not sustainable to continue to operate Shopmobility in its existing format and that it was necessary to review it in order to protect its future. Councillor Dallimore stated that she was committed to examining this matter in an open and transparent way. Councillor Dallimore concluded her presentation by asking Members for their feedback.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to consider the information contained in the report and to make any recommendations it considered appropriate to Cabinet.

The Committee discussed the following matters:-

1. A Member expressed concern that the Council was not able to continue supporting Shopmobility and referred to the Members' Allocation Fund which was provided to all Gloucester City Councillors for spending in their Wards. The Member suggested that this money could be better spent by diverting it to Shopmobility. The Member also reflected that the Council should be doing more to enable disabled residents to fulfil their lives. Councillor Dallimore acknowledged the Member's comments and stated that the Members' Allocation Fund could not be used in its entirety to support the project, but that the Member was welcome to donate their proportion of it to the service.
2. A Member referred to the recommendations in the report which sought the granting of delegated powers to the Head of Public Protection in order to progress the procurement exercise. The Member requested that a decision of this importance should be referred to full Council. Mr Jon McGinty,

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Managing Director, advised the Member that in accordance with the Council's constitution, this was an executive function which was delegated to Cabinet to determine and that it was not appropriate to refer it to full Council. The Member requested that recommendations 2.2 (2) and 2.2(3) be removed from the report and that any decisions relating to the procurement process be made by Cabinet.

3. The Chair referred to paragraph 3.10 of the report and queried whether any approach had been made to the NHS. Councillor Dallimore replied that the Head of Public Protection had contacted the County Council and also referred to an email from the County Council's Cabinet Member in this regard.
4. A Member voiced the opinion that only Options 2 and 3 were suitable which looked at increasing costs and reducing operating hours. Councillor Dallimore referred the Member to the consultation with users on these two options which had resulted in them not being chosen and reminded the Member the reasons why Option 5 was the preferred option. Another Member agreed that Options 2 and 3 should be combined to make a new Option 9. Councillor Dallimore said that the hours and charges could be examined alongside Option 5, but that she was conscious of the views already expressed by Shopmobility users during the recent consultation.
5. A Member sought clarification on the pre-market engagement exercise mentioned in paragraph 6.1. Mr Ross Cook, Corporate Director, advised that the three organisations referred to might not necessarily express the same interest during an open procurement exercise.
6. A Member referred to the small public health grant given to the City Council by the County Council each year and noted that the City Council had discretion on the use of this funding. The Member also placed on record the Committee's gratitude to Councillor Dallimore for bringing the report before them. Turning to paragraph 3.11 of the report, the Member suggested that the wording in this section should be 'tightened up'. The Member also commented on comparisons between the Gloucester and Cheltenham services.
7. A Member asked the Cabinet Member to consider the social element of the service and expressed doubt that the proposed procurement would enable delivery of the required savings. Councillor Dallimore responded that the Council had a good track record of putting services out and attracting partners.

RESOLVED:

1. **That paragraphs 2.2(2) and 2.2(3) be removed from the report.**
2. **That any decisions relating to the procurement process be made by the Cabinet and not by the Head of Public Protection.**
3. **That the wording in paragraph 3.11 be reviewed.**

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45. MONITORING OF TASK AND FINISH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE MANAGEMENT OF PARCELS OF UNADOPTED GREEN LAND

The Chair welcomed Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor Jim Porter, and Environmental Planning Manager, Mr Meyrick Brentnall, to the meeting.

Members were presented with a report which outlined progress made against implementation of the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny's Task and Finish Group on the Management of Parcels of Unadopted Green Land.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to comment on progress identified in Appendix 1 to the report and to request further monitoring, if appropriate.

The Committee discussed the following matters:-

1. A Member who had also been Chair of the Task and Finish Group welcomed the progress that had been made since the study was undertaken. The Member commented on the Asset Based Community Development considerations shown at 4.1 in the covering report and stated that this was not an accurate reflection of the Group's approach. The Member requested that this paragraph be removed.
2. A Member sought clarification on the 'pilot' which was being carried out with a Councillor on the City Council's intranet mapping system.
3. A Member sought clarification on the costs of maintaining unadopted land. The Environmental Planning Manager explained that this depended on where the site was and that isolated areas might result in contractors having to make special trips.
4. A Member suggested it might be worthwhile talking to the Canal and River Trust about unadopted pieces of land. The Environmental Planning Manager agreed with this idea.
5. Referring to an example within his Ward, a Member sought clarification on which pieces of land went to Crown Estates. Councillor Porter advised the Member accordingly.
6. A Member enquired whether the City Council enlisted the assistance of the County Council in getting pieces of land adopted, particularly those near to roads. The Environment Planning Manager confirmed that this was the case and that the Senior Planning Compliance Officer maintained a list of these types of parcels of land.
7. A Member stressed the importance of identifying who owned neglected pieces of land close to river banks and water courses to avoid silt and debris building up.

The Committee welcomed the progress that had been made to date.

RESOLVED:

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1. That paragraph 4.1 be removed from the covering report.
2. That the Committee's satisfaction with progress made on the implementation of the Task and Finish Group's recommendations be noted.

46. JON MCGINTY, MANAGING DIRECTOR

The Chair welcomed Mr Jon McGinty, Managing Director, who was present to answer questions from Members on his joint role as the Managing Director (Head of Paid Service) for Gloucester City Council and as Commissioning Director for Gloucestershire County Council.

The Committee explored the following topics with Mr McGinty:-

1. The role of the Mayor and Sheriff, their value, and how they contributed to the City as a whole. Mr McGinty was able to draw on his experience after attending his first Annual Civic Service at the weekend.
2. How Mr McGinty saw the role of Members developing and changing with the prospect of devolution and boundary changes to the City.
3. How devolution would result in agencies working together more effectively.
4. Mr McGinty advised Members of his strong support for professional accountability by all Officers.
5. There was a discussion on the management of sickness absence and Mr McGinty shared his views on how he intended to manage such issues.
6. Mr McGinty was asked how he would reach all residents in the City as elected Members tended to listen to those who complained regularly. Mr McGinty responded that it was important to focus on 100% of the Council's customers and not just the high demand users of services.
6. Mr McGinty told Members that he was enjoying the job 100 days in to his role and outlined the challenges of cross-organisational working.

The Chair thanked Mr McGinty for his submission.

47. ASPIRE PERFORMANCE FOR YEAR 2014/15 AND UPDATED BUSINESS PLAN FOR PERIOD 2015/16 TO 2018/19

The Chair welcomed Mr Steve Elway, Chief Executive of Aspire Sports and Cultural Trust (Aspire) and Ms Jacquie Douglas, Business Development Director of Aspire, to the meeting.

Members were presented with a report which set out the performance of Aspire against its business plan for the year ending 2014/15. The report also outlined an updated five year business plan for the period 2015/16 to 2018/19.

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The Committee was advised that this would be the last report presented by the current Chief Executive, Mr Steve Elway, as he planned to retire at the end of the year. Mr Elway advised Members that succession planning was already in place for his departure.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to accept the report as an update on performance against the plan and to note the updated five year business plan.

The Committee discussed the following matters:-

1. Members were pleased to note the excellent performance and financial health of the Trust.
2. A Member sought examples of initiatives taken by the Trust to tackle health and inequality within the City and asked if the Trust knew where its customers lived and whether there were areas in the City that could be targeted to encourage take-up of the facilities. The Business Development Director, Ms Jacquie Douglas, gave examples of the Trust's activities and the concessions that were available. Ms Douglas confirmed that the Trust maintained a database of its customers and informed the Member which areas of the City were targeted to encourage take-up.
3. A Member queried whether the Trust might consider having an 'open day' for City Councillors and pointed out that Ward Councillors provided a valuable resource for publicising Aspire through their newsletters to residents.
4. The Committee placed on record its thanks to the outgoing Chief Executive, Mr Steve Elway.

RESOLVED:

1. **That the report be accepted as an update of performance against the plan for the year ending 2014/15.**
2. **That the update to the five year business plan for the period 2015/16 to 2018/19 be noted.**

48. CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Members considered the latest version of the Cabinet Forward Plan.

RESOLVED – That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.

49. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the latest version of its work programme and amended it in line with suggestions made by Members.

RESOLVED – That the work programme, as amended, be noted.

50. UPDATE ON OUTSIDE BODIES

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There were no updates on this occasion.

51. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 9 November 2015 at 18.30 hours.

Time of commencement: 6.30 pm

Time of conclusion: 8.40 pm

Chair