



CABINET

MEETING : Wednesday, 11th November 2015

PRESENT : Cllrs. James (Chair), Noakes, D. Norman, Organ and Porter

Others in Attendance

Jon McGinty, Managing Director

Shirin Wotherspoon, Solicitor

Martin Shields, Corporate Director of Services and Neighbourhoods

Jon Topping, Head of Finance

Atika Tarajiya, Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. Dallimore

57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

58. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 21st October 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

59. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

Mr Andy Berry addressed the Cabinet outlining his concerns over the future of the Shopmobility Service. He explained that the service was invaluable to him and allowed him regular access to the City Centre reporting that staff consistently offered exceptional customer service. He commented that the benefits of the service outweighed the operating costs and expressed his hope that the service would continue to be operated by the City Council.

Councillor Paul James (Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy) explained that the Shopmobility Service came under the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods (Councillor Jennie Dallimore) who was unable to attend the meeting but had provided comments outlining her intentions for the future of the service. He explained that the City Council were clearly opposed to discontinuing the service but were looking at alternative ways of operating to ensure that the most efficient and cost effective approach was undertaken. He noted that

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efforts were being made across all areas of the Council to streamline existing services and acknowledged the importance of the Shopmobility Service for the City's residents.

Mr Richard Trelfa introduced himself as an ex-manager of the Shopmobility Service from 1990 to 2005 querying whether Members of the Cabinet had found his briefing note outlining risks and suggestions of the Shopmobility Service proposals useful. He requested clarification on whether voluntary staff would be continue to feature in any new proposals and reported that the City Council could expose itself to financial litigation should a customer injure a member of the public whilst using the mobility scooters as result of poor staff training.

Councillor Paul James thanked Mr Trelfa for his briefing note commenting that it had provided greater insight on the issue. He explained that the intention was to put the service out to procurement with social value confirming that volunteers would be included in the proposals. He advised that the City Council held appropriate insurance adding that customers were required to undertake a first use assessment and regular refresher training and were personally liable in the case of any incident.

The Managing Director reported that queries similar to these would be addressed as part of the tendering process and the proposals had been instigated by a need to create a sustainable service in light of the challenging cuts to public sector funding. He noted that public enterprise partnerships and volunteers as mentioned by Councillor Dallimore at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 9th November 15 could play a key role in delivering an efficient service.

Mr Richard Trelfa thanked the Members for their assistance.

60. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

There were no petitions or deputations.

61. SHOPMOBILITY SERVICE OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Communities outlining the options for the future of the Shopmobility Service and which recommended that a procurement exercise be undertaken.

Councillor James explained that the savings were originally planned for the 2015 budget year but were delayed to ensure a thorough and detailed approach was considered. He commented that the Council were required to achieve the budgeted savings but had no desire to discontinue the service or restrict the opening hours. He reported that three organisations had expressed an interest in taking over the operating of the service had already been received and advised that the existing £30,000 legacy would help to secure a sustainable future for the Shopmobility Service. He noted that the proposals had been presented in public and taken to Overview and Scrutiny committee to ensure transparency and accountability acknowledging the importance and value that the service provides for the City's residents.

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Cabinet Members endorsed the proposals noting the transparent and open decision making approach adopted. They emphasised the need to ensure a quality service that would be cost effective and welcomed proposals that considered social value.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Shopmobility Service be put out to open procurement with social value.
2. That the Head of Public Protection be given delegated powers to work in partnership with another District Council for this procurement exercise should a favourable opportunity arise.
3. That it be noted that the Cabinet Member for Communities, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, appoints the successful contractor.

62. FINANCIAL MONITORING QUARTER 2 REPORT

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources updating Members on financial monitoring details including budget variances, year-end forecasts, and progress made against agreed savings targets for the 2nd quarter ended 30th September 2015.

Councillor Norman (Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources) summarised the key areas of the report noting that significant challenges still remained and were being managed pro-actively.

Cabinet Members endorsed the approach placing on record their thanks to the Finance team and Officers involved in achieving the substantial savings. They acknowledged that ongoing shared working arrangements and investigating the viability of outsourcing could improve the quality and range of the services provided and help to achieve the required savings.

RESOLVED:

1. That it be noted that the savings achieved in year to date total £945k.
2. That it be noted that the forecast year end position is currently for a reduction to the Council's General Fund balance of £278k. This is an improvement of the Quarter 1 position of £554k.
3. That the actual and expected levels of income for the Council shown at Appendix 3 be noted.
4. That the details of specific budgetary issues identified by Officers and the actions being taken to address those issues be noted.
5. That the current level of Capital expenditure as shown on Appendix 2 be noted.

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63. TREASURY MANAGEMENT QUARTER 2 REPORT

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources updating Members on treasury management activities for Quarter 2, (1st July 2015 to 30th September 2015).

Cabinet Members endorsed the approach acknowledging the Council's under borrowing position in the current challenging economic environment.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted subject to any comments subsequently received by the Audit and Governance Committee

64. FLOOD IMPROVEMENT WORKS UPDATE

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Environment updating Members of the flood alleviation works which have been completed across the City throughout 2014/2015, those that are currently in progress and to outline future proposed works.

Councillor Porter (Cabinet Member for Environment) advised that 237 properties were now being protected as a result of completed works. He commented that there were now fewer grants and less funding available, noting that Officers were working hard to identify new avenue streams.

Cabinet Members were pleased to note the scale of improvements carried out across the City commenting that effective partnership working with the relevant agencies would need to be considered to help deliver a streamlined service and continued progress.

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of this report be noted.
2. That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director to work in partnership with relevant agencies and landowners to recognise the importance of all flood alleviation works within the City in minimising the risk and impact of flooding events.
3. That the importance of the ongoing partnership working to secure the best possible outcomes for residents and businesses in Gloucester in reducing flood risk, including bidding for external funding and entering into appropriate agreements on terms approved by the Council Solicitor be recognised.
4. That Officers be supported in investigating and utilising additional resources to maximise opportunities to reduce flood risk.

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5. That the continued importance of information, education, consultation and signposting as funding reduces be recognised.

65. INVESTMENT AT BLACK DOG WAY

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning updating Members on progress with a development proposal at Black Dog Way and seeking approval for the use of 'right to buy' receipts as a means of delivering a viable scheme and to secure the delivery a range of types of 'affordable housing' within the City Centre.

In response to Councillor Porter's query regarding the certainty around costings and the required contribution, Councillor Organ (Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning explained that a consultant with a relevant expertise had been employed to provide detailed cost analysis noting that the development would be required to be completed by 2018 as the proposed funding was time limited.

Cabinet Members welcomed the proposals commenting that the site had been derelict for a considerable length of time and would provide a range of affordable housing for residents of the City. They noted that there would be no additional budget implications as the contribution would consist of right to buy receipts that were limited for use in social housing developments.

RESOLVED:

1. That the use of a contribution as, outlined in Appendix 1, be approved to enable a regeneration initiative to proceed at Black Dog Way subject to the following conditions:
 - That relevant planning permissions are obtained.
 - The application to the Homes & Communities Agency for grant funding is successful.
 - The total cost of delivering the scheme is financially viable overall.
 - All documentation securing the use of the grant for affordable housing and the retention of units supported by the grant as affordable housing being entered into; and
 - The receipt of invoices/evidence as to the actual costs incurred.
2. That authority be delegated to the a Corporate Director in consultation with the Council Solicitor to enter into a grant agreement in respect of the grant and all documentation securing the use of the grant for affordable housing and the retention of units supported by the grant as affordable housing and;
3. That authority be delegated to the Housing Strategy & Enabling Service Manager to agree variations to the contribution (should they be required following scrutiny of financial appraisals), subject to consultation with the Cabinet Member for Performance & Resources, and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning.

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66. EXCLUSION OF THE 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 items there will be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended.

67. ENFORCED SALE OF 71 NINE ELMS ROAD, GL2 0HF

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning informing Members of the debt on 71 Nine Elms Road that has accrued as a result of continuing enforcement to clear the overgrown garden and to recommend the Enforced Sale of the property as a means for the City Council to recover this debt.

RESOLVED:

The recommendation as laid out in the exempt report.

Time of commencement: 6.00 pm

Time of conclusion: 6.43 pm

Chair