



CABINET

MEETING : Wednesday, 10th February 2016

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

Others in Attendance

Jon McGinty, Managing Director

Ross Cook, Corporate Director

Jon Topping, Head of Finance

Tony Wisdom, Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES : Cllr Dallimore

90. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made on this occasion.

91. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2-016 were confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

92. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

93. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

There were no petitions or deputations.

94. MONEY PLAN 2016-21 AND BUDGET PROPOSALS 2016-17

An amended version of the report had been circulated which reflected details of the final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2016/17 that had been announced by the Secretary of State on Monday 8 January.

Cabinet considered the amended report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources which set out proposals for the Council's Money plan 2016 -21 and budget proposals for 2016/17.

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Councillor Norman (Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources) highlighted key areas of the report including:-

- Section 4 which set out the objectives of the Money Plan.
- Section 5 which provided details of the Local Government Finance Environment.

He drew Cabinet's attention to the Government's confirmation of transitional relief for 2016/17 and 2017/18 (worth £10,000 per annum) and to a change to the Council Tax increase to whichever was the greater of a 2 per cent increase or a flat £5 increase.

He advised that failure to implement the increase would result in the Council falling below the Government's assumptions regarding locally raised income. Should Council Tax not be increased by the suggested £5 the Council would need to identify a further £500,000 of savings.

The proposed increase would generate additional income of £60,000 per annum which would be placed in reserves to offset any identified savings not achieved the year.

He outlined the new core spending measure and noted that by the end of this parliament it was intended that all government grant would be replaced by local retention of business rates.

He advised that it was intended that the Council would continue to be a member of the reformed Gloucestershire Business Rates Pool.

He drew Cabinet's attention to the cost pressures totally £942,000 detailed at Appendix 2 of the report and the savings identified at Appendix 3.

In conclusion, he thanked the residents of the City who helped the Council achieve its highest ever return in respect of community involvement by either completing our on-line or hard copy surveys.

Councillor Organ (Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning) thanked the team who had prepared the report which he believed would provide a clear way forward for the Council.

Councillor Noakes (Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure) echoed the thanks to Councillor Norman and the finance team. She believed that City residents would understand the need for a £5 increase in the City portion of Council Tax.

Councillor Norman advised Councillor Porter (Cabinet Member for Environment) was advised that the Council would have the opportunity to agree to a four year settlement by October but he could not recommend agreement until further details had been received.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:

1. That the proposals for the 2016/17 budget included in this report be approved.

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2. That the implementation of the target budget reductions set in the Money plan 2016/2021 be approved.
3. That it be noted that consultation has been undertaken on budget savings proposals to achieve the level of savings required in 2016/17.

95. FESTIVALS AND EVENTS PROGRAMME

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure which sought approval for the proposed events, support and associated budgets for the 2016/17 Festivals and Events Programme.

Councillor Noakes (Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure) presented the report and advised that the budget remained the same as last year. She drew Cabinet's attention to Armed Forces Day which had proved to be particularly popular and to the History Festival which had drawn in some of the Council's partners. Specific events for the coming year included the 90th Birthday celebrations of HM The Queen and the 150th anniversary of the birth of Beatrix Potter were expected to bring economic benefits to the City.

Councillor Organ thanked Councillor Noakes for the report and noted that these events were becoming increasingly effective. He stated that it was difficult to prove the effectiveness of marketing activities but much could be achieved working with partners and sponsors.

Councillor Norman welcomed the intention to vire funds between the events listed if required to make more effective use of the budget. He would fully support the proposals but noted the need to account for every penny in future.

Councillor James (Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy) believed that the programme had delivered good value in terms of economic impacts. He noted that the diverse programme included such events as the 800th anniversary of the coronation of King Henry III, HM The Queen's 90th Birthday and the Retro Festival would make 2016 a special year.

(CHECK WITH TD) RESOLVED THAT:

1. It be noted that the criteria set out in paragraph 6.3 of the report are still relevant and should form the basis of any strategic decision making when planning future events and festivals;
2. The outcomes of the 2015/16 Events Programme, as set out in Appendix 1, be noted;
3. The 2016/17 programme of Council funded and supported events as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be approved;
4. The Civic Events Budget for 2016/17 be noted; and

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5. Authority be delegated to the Corporate Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure to authorise the movement of funds between the events listed in Appendix 2.

96. GROWING GLOUCESTER'S VISITOR ECONOMY

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure which presented members with an update on progress achieved against the Growing Gloucester's Visitor Economy Action Plan during 2015.

Councillor Noakes outlined some of the key areas of the report and that it was very much a living document. She noted the change to a blue, red, amber green classification system and stated that the strategy would be revised and a new action plan would be produced next year.

Councillor Organ welcomed the report noting that the gathering of data would assist in identifying areas of risk or those requiring improvement.

Councillor Norman asked if the shortage of hotel rooms and the lack of large venues and event spaces.

Councillor Noakes referred to the forthcoming Cultural Strategy which had identified the need for a new multi-purpose venue that needed to be sustainable. She also recognised the shortage of hotel rooms.

Councillor James mentioned several potential developments and stated that he believed there was a need for more upmarket hotel accommodation.

RESOLVED that:

1. The achievements made in delivering the Growing Gloucester's Visitor Economy Action Plan during its first year of publication be noted;
2. It be noted that the planned activities by various partners are recognised as contributing to the 'Growing Gloucester Visitor Economy' aim and objectives; and
3. The Action Plan be further reviewed and updated on an annual basis, so as to reflect the actions achieved and to identify and agree future actions.

97. GREEN TRAVEL PLAN UPDATE & STAFF BUSINESS TRAVEL PROJECT

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Environment which provided an update on the positive progress made in respect of The Green Travel Plan (2014 -18) and outlined the intention to undertake a Staff Business Travel Project in order to develop a Fleet Options Appraisal Report for future consideration.

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Councillor Porter (Cabinet Member for Environment) drew cabinet's attention to the reductions in costs sine 2010/11 and some of the measures that had been implemented at paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5 of the report.

Councillor Norman referred to the proposals for joint procurement and maintenance and questioned whether there would be any real benefits as the Council only operated a small number of vehicles.

Councillor Porter acknowledged that there would be opportunities to make savings but they would not be large amounts.

RESOLVED that:

1. The contents of the report be noted, and
2. The positive progress in respect of green travel initiatives be endorsed

Time of commencement: 6.00 pm
Time of conclusion: 6.40 pm

Chair