



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING : Monday, 12th June 2017

PRESENT : Cllrs. Coole (Chair), Ryall (Vice-Chair), Finnegan (Spokesperson), Pearsall, Hilton, Lewis, Wilson, Hampson, Hawthorne, Melvin, Smith, Patel, Pullen and Taylor

Others in Attendance

Councillor David Norman (MBE), Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

Anne Brinkhoff, Corporate Director

Anthony Hodge, Head of Place

Jon Topping, Head of Finance

Atika Tarajiya, Democratic and Electoral Services Officer

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. Dee

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED:

1.1 That the appointments of Chair, Vice-Chair and Spokesperson at Annual Council be noted.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

3. DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIPPING

3.1 There were no declarations of an existence of a party whip.

3.2 Councillor Hilton questioned the item's inclusion on the agenda stating that the Liberal Democrat Group did not impose a whip, and its Members would therefore not be declaring an interest.

3.3 Councillor Patel stated that Overview and Scrutiny Committee was apolitical in nature and therefore this item seemed unnecessary.

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- 3.4 The Chair advised Members that he had requested the item be added to the agenda to ensure that the Committee complied with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules Part 4- 17 as stated in the Council's Constitution. He explained that this also complied with statutory guidance issued by the Government and was a practice that had been adopted by a number of different authorities. He noted Group Leaders had raised no objection to the introduction of the item.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

- 4.1 That the minutes of the meetings held on 27th February 2017 and 6th March 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

- 5.1 There were no public questions.

6. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

- 6.1 There were no petitions or deputations.

7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

- 7.1 The Chair reminded Members that they were able to refer any matter for consideration to the Work Programme. He reported that he was in discussion with the administration and senior management team in promoting the Committee's role in the development of policy and hoping to email Members with further details with regards to this in due course.

- 7.2 RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme and Council Forward Plan be noted.**

8. 2016-17 FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT

- 8.1 The Chair agreed to revise the agenda to consider agenda item 11: 2016-17 Financial Outturn Report first. He welcomed the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources (Councillor Norman) to the meeting and congratulated him on his recent election as the County Councillor for Grange and Kingsway.

- 8.2 Councillor Norman congratulated the Chair on his re-appointment to the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He reported that the final outturn position was much improved from the in-year position and thanked the Head of Finance and the wider Finance Team for their efforts and diligence in this regard. He acknowledged that a number of savings targets had not been met and assured the Committee that as Cabinet Members were actively being challenged to think creatively and adopt innovative strategies in order to deliver improvements. He concluded by reminding Members that the economic climate continued to remain challenging and that the Council continued to face significant budgetary pressures.

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- 8.3 Councillor Wilson welcomed the report and the final outturn position. He expressed concern at reports in the local media of the intention of the Information Commissioner's Office's intention to fine the Council £100,000 for a security breach and questioned whether any provision had been made in the finances to accommodate for this penalty. He went on further to query why Members had not been advised prior to the information becoming public and questioned whether the Council were intending to appeal the decision of the ICO.
- 8.4 Councillor Norman advised Members that the Managing Director had made representations to the ICO once they had informed the Council of their intentions. He explained that the ICO had not made any attempt to engage with the Council and had gone on to release a statement to the media without giving the Council any notice that they were planning to do so. He went on further to explain that there had been no opportunity to advise Members on the final outcome as a result of the ICO's actions.
- 8.5 The Head of Finance reported that appropriate provision had been made within the current budget as it had been recognised that the ICO had the powers to issue a monetary penalty notice following the security breach in 2014.
- 8.6 In response to Councillor Wilson's query regarding the budget setting processes, the Head of Finance advised that the draft budget proposals presented to Members at the end of the 2016/17 year had not accounted for the penalty as the Council had not been issued with a notice by the ICO at this stage. He reported that the penalty would be budgeted for in the 2016/17 financial year.
- 8.7 In response to a query from the Chair options to appeal, the Head of Finance advised that One Legal were considering the Council's grounds for appeal and if in a position to do so, the Council would appeal. He confirmed that the fine could potentially be reduced to £80,000 if the full amount was paid by the 27th June 2017.
- 8.8 In response to Councillor Pullen's query regarding setting aside reserves at the time of the incident, the Head of Finance explained that no funds had been set aside as the Council were uncertain if the risk would materialise and as such there was no accounting requirement to do so, noting that the Council had been hopeful that the ICO would choose not to impose a fine.
- 8.9 Acknowledging that a majority of the savings targets within the Communities and Neighbourhoods portfolio had been achieved, the Chair commented that Shopmobility continued to operate at a loss and queried whether it more prudent for the service to be managed by a third party source.
- 8.10 Councillor Norman acknowledged the challenges facing the Shopmobility Service and welcomed changes to allow the service to operate in a more entrepreneurial fashion and generate an income for the Council.
- 8.11 In response to Councillor Pullen's query regarding the continued losses sustained by the markets service, Councillor Norman advised that the relevant Cabinet Member was considering ways to improve the service. The Head of Finance advised Members that following the Together Gloucester restructure the service

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would be managed by the Cultural Trading Services Manager with an aim to becoming income generating.

- 8.12 Councillor Hilton queried whether the Council would make representations to the Government in light of the continued budgetary pressures that the authority was facing. Councillor Norman assured Members that the Council would utilise any channels available to make appeal for additional funding.
- 8.13 Councillor Patel referring to the Markets Service stated that he had been approached by existing and potential traders who had found the process cumbersome and the Council's approach overly bureaucratic. He expressed concerns that the strict and excessive rules and criteria were acting as a barrier to new business.
- 8.14 Councillor Norman assured Members that these concerns would be shared with the relevant Cabinet Member and that issues relating to signage and licensing requirements would be referred to the Chair of the Licensing Committee, noting that some of the issues traders were experiencing were potentially due to licensing conditions the Council were bound to enforce.
- 8.15 Councillor Patel referring to the significant increase in the cost of temporary accommodation, questioned if the Council could enforce limits on the amount charged by guesthouses.
- 8.16 The Head of Finance advised Members that the newly appointed Housing Manger was currently exploring how these costs could be reduced in future, noting that the Council had a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation in certain cases.
- 8.17 Members of the Committee suggested that the availability and cost provision of temporary accommodation in the City be considered by the Task and Finish Group on Homelessness and Emergency Access Provision. The Chair of the Task and Finish Group, Councillor Smith agreed to consider the issue during the group's deliberations.
- 8.18 Councillor Patel noted that paragraph 8.2 contained a typographical error. The Head of Finance assured Members that this would be rectified, prior to publication for Cabinet.

8.20 RESOLVED that:

(1) The contents of the report be noted.

(2) The availability and cost of temporary accommodation in their review be considered in the review of Task and Finish Group on Homelessness and Emergency Access Provision.

9. MONITORING OF TASK AND FINISH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS ON EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

- 9.1 The Chair welcomed the Corporate Director and the Head of Place to the Meeting.

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9.2 The Head of Place outlined the key progress made in implementing the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group on Employment and Skills. He drew Members attention to the significant regeneration projects taking place within the City, including Black Dog Way, Kings Quarter and Bakers Quay amongst others. He noted that these projects were home to market leading employers that contributed to high proportion of jobs in the local economy. He acknowledged that the City needed to continue to enhance its employment offer including the skills and opportunities available.

He reported that the Gloucestershire County Council in partnership with the GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership were in the process of establishing a Gloucestershire Employment and Skills Board and were committed to working with local authorities in developing a Gloucester careers KiteMark. He went on further to explain that the City Council were committed to developing a Business Engagement Programme following an initial meeting with Gloucester Business Forum on the 3rd March.

He reported that the City Council were also looking to develop a social inclusion and skills programme, that focussed on areas of significant deprivation and would adopt a holistic approach, working alongside allied professionals and working partners. Referring to the Kings Quarter Project, The Head of Place advised Members that project was progressing on two key strands that encompassed building construction and physical works and secondly on sustainable employment and skill development. He went on further to explain that in relation to the construction, the Council were committed to hiring contractors who maximised on hiring locally and were looking to develop a project, based on the Gloucestershire Services Model that trained and developed a skill force that developers and contractors could utilise in development projects.

He concluded by noting that the Gloucester City plan, currently out to consultation, also contained obligations in relation to employment and skills noting that no objections had been raised by local businesses in relation to this.

9.3 Councillor Hawthorne welcomed the progress made in improving the City's urban and social landscape. He queried what evidence was available to demonstrate the successes of the schemes that had been referenced.

9.4 The Head of Place advised Members that these schemes were being monitored and evaluated. He acknowledging that the schemes, currently in the early stages had not yet generated significant evidence and provided assurance that evidence collated would be used to inform subsequent delivery.

9.5 In response to Councillor Ryall's query regarding resources and support for managers and officers in delivering engaging work placements, the Head of Place reported that managers developed individual programmes to ensure that work placements were informative. He acknowledged that there was no formal learning programme in place.

9.6 Councillor Ryall questioned whether delivering engagement workshops would be a useful tool in supporting staff to ensure that work placements were effective. The

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Head of Place agreed that staff within the organisation would benefit from a programme such as this, noting that it bore some resemblance to the KiteMark scheme.

- 9.7 In response to Councillor Pullen's query regarding support for vulnerable individuals in obtaining employment, The Head of Place explained that the Council worked in partnership with agencies and organisations that were specialist in providing such support and tailored placements to fit with an individual's skills and abilities. The Corporate Director stated that a systematic and holistic approach that encompassed the Council's broad range of partners in the voluntary and community sector needed to be adopted.
- 9.8 Councillor Hampson thanked officers for their work in relation to the Task and Finish Group. He questioned whether there were any case studies or performance measures that could demonstrate evidence of successful work placements.
- 9.9 The Head of Place acknowledged that the Council did not currently facilitate significant numbers of work placements. The Corporate Director noted that accommodating large numbers of placements would have associated resource implications for officers and managers, who were already handling substantial workloads and commented that the focus would be on delivering beneficial and engaging work placements.
- 9.10 Councillor Hampson, seconded by Councillor Finnegan, suggested that monitoring on the recommendations on the Task and Finish Group on Employment and Skills be supported by the quantitative data and qualitative case studies.
- 9.11 Councillor Hawthorne suggested that options to commit developers and private sector organisations in sourcing local employment when working on the City's capital projects be explored.
- 9.12 The Head of Place confirmed that both suggestions would be explored further, reiterating that the Council would look to work with partners and existing organisations in developing skills and employment in the City.

9.13 RESOLVED that:

1. That the current progress made on implementing the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group on Employment and Skills be noted.
2. Monitoring on the recommendations on the Task and Finish Group on Employment and Skills be supported by the quantitative data and qualitative case studies.
3. Options to commit developers and private sector organisations in sourcing local employment when working on the City's capital projects be explored.

10. ANNUAL REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

- 10.1 The Chair highlighted key areas of the report and advised Members that the report would be presented to Council on the 20th July 2017.

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10.2 Members endorsed the report, noting that there were a number of typographical errors that required correction.

10.3 RESOLVED that subject to the correction of typographical errors the report be recommended to Council.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11.1 The Chair noted that the next meeting would be held on 10th July 2017. He advised Members that himself, Vice-Chair and Spokesperson had agreed to hold a special Overview and Scrutiny meeting at the end of July to consider the emerging Council Plan, details of which would be circulated to Members in advance of the meeting.

Time of commencement: 6.30 pm hours

Time of conclusion: 7.37 pm hours

Chair