



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING : Monday, 3rd September 2018

PRESENT : Cllrs. Coole (Chair), Ryall (Vice-Chair), Hawthorne (Spokesperson), Dee, Finnegan, Haigh, Hampson, Hilton, Lewis, Morgan, Pullen, Taylor, Toleman, Walford and Wilson

Others in Attendance

Councillor Watkins, Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods

Councillor D. Norman MBE, Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

Corporate Director (Service Transformation)

Corporate Director (Partnership Working)

Head of Policy and Resources

Head of Communities

Housing Manager

Cultural Development Manager

Housing Team Leader

Democratic and Electoral Services Team Leader

APOLOGIES : Cllrs.

79. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

79.1 There were no declarations of interest.

80. DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPPING

80.1 There were no declarations of party whipping.

81. MINUTES

81.1 Save for updating the records to show that Councillor D. Brown was in attendance, the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

82. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

82.1 A Gloucester resident asked, in relation to supported accommodation, who oversaw procurement for the Social Impact Bond (SIB) and who the

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
03.09.18

unsuccessful bidders were. He also queried what provision there was for transparency in the provision of supported accommodation.

82.2 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods, Councillor Watkins, advised that certain information pertaining to the procurement process could not be disclosed. She advised that she wanted the process to be as transparent as possible and cited that a landlord was named in the relevant report. Councillor Watkins informed the resident that Gloucester City Council conducted the procurement exercise. She advised that she welcomed queries related to the SIB and would be happy to answer.

82.3 Councillor Stephens asked, in relation to the recent decision to award a contract for works at 92-96 Westgate Street, why the decision to undertake refurbishment had been made prior to designs being circulated.

82.4 The Corporate Director advised that the decision to which Councillor Stephens had referred related to accommodation works including power sources, alarm systems and windows and that the ground floor would remain unfitted. He further advised that there were no finalised plans relating to the fit-out and operation of the ground floor customer contact centre and that these plans would be shared in advance, with Members.

83. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

83.1 There were no petitions or deputations,

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

84.1 The Chair informed the Committee that he had been approached by two housing providers to discuss access to Discretionary Housing Payments. It was suggested that this be examined by the Committee with input from the two providers. He also advised that he would ask the Aspire Trust to appear at a future Committee meeting.

84.2 A discussion took place concerning quarterly Performance Monitoring reports. It was agreed that these would be taken after they had been considered by the Cabinet in order that Cabinet Members be given appropriate notice to attend.

84.3 In relation to the accommodation move, Councillor Haigh shared her view that consideration should be given to a special meeting to consider draft plans for the new reception area. Councillor Hilton requested that this also include plans for the City Council's space at Shire Hall. Following discussion, it was agreed that this would be placed on the agenda for the next Committee meeting.

84.4 **RESOLVED** – That (1) Access to Discretionary Housing Payments and the designs for the new reception and City Council premises be discussed at the next Committee meeting and, (2) the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme and Council Forward Plan be noted.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
03.09.18

85. SOCIAL IMPACT BOND - MIDTERM UPDATE

- 85.1 Councillor Watkins, Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods, provided an overview of the report and thanked Officers for their assistance in preparing the report. Comments and questions were subsequently invited.
- 85.2 Councillor Wilson welcomed the report and stated that it was encouraging to read. In reference to matters pertaining to agenda item 10, he queried whether there was a correlation between downward trends and the work of the SIB. The Housing Manager advised that that correlation could not be made. She advised that there was a different pathway to support through the SIB and this did not feature in the Performance Management report.
- 85.3 Councillor Pullen noted that the report stated that there was not enough housing stock provided by social landlords and asked what the issues were in this respect.
- 85.4 The Housing Manager advised that the SIB worked in parallel with other homelessness work. By way of example, she stated that P3 had a good record in acquiring stock and were very much on course to meet targets. She clarified for Councillor Pullen that, as supply was coming forward, it was not anticipated to be a long term problem.
- 85.5 Councillor Haigh noted that the SIB dealt with a cohort for whom other paths had not been successful. She questioned if the scheme targeted those who were already receiving help.
- 85.6 Councillor Watkins advised that, in order to be eligible for support, individuals would have been homeless for three or more years or have complex needs such as alcohol/drug misuse or mental health issues for two years. The Housing Manager advised that being in supported housing did not preclude people from receiving additional support. In response to Councillor Haigh's query whether people with less severe needs in supported accommodation, were affected by those with more complex needs, Councillor Watkins advised that the research did not indicate it had a detrimental impact.
- 85.7 Councillor Hilton queried how the SIB budget would develop in the future and, by way of example, if P3 identified people in need, would they receive accommodation through other means. He also asked how support for those with mental health or substance difficulties would continue over a number of years.
- 85.8 The Housing Manager advised that the SIB built on additional services that the County Council offered. She stated that funding was in order to source accommodation options for entrenched rough sleepers and those with complex needs.
- 85.9 Councillor Hilton suggested that case studies be included in future updates in order to identify learning points. Councillor Hampson thanked the staff who

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
03.09.18

worked in this area and concurred that case studies would offer a good contribution in fostering a more holistic view.

85.10 Councillor Watkins stated that including this qualitative data would be positive and informed the Committee that Sheffield Hallam and Southampton Universities had expressed interest in conducting research which would include such case studies.

85.11 **RESOLVED:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **NOTE** the report.

86. SERVICE TRANSFORMATION

86.1 Councillor D. Norman MBE, Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources, introduced the report and highlighted key matters. He stated that Together Gloucester was a transformational process and aspects of the process would change as it progressed. He outlined that, in order to transform, it was necessary to initiate a work and investment programme.

86.2 Councillor Pullen queried why, given more than £1.2m in staff savings had been realised, it was now recognised that there was not sufficient staff to deliver the transformation programme. He further queried why there was a need to create three posts for strategic performance design. Councillor Pullen proposed that the Committee recommend to Cabinet that, as an alternative to introducing three new posts, the Senior Management Team be made entirely full time by ending the current arrangement of sharing the Managing Director post with the County Council.

86.3 Councillor Norman stated that the savings made as a result of the organisation review were the start of the transformation process and would be delivering £12.3m in savings over the next 10 years. But to ensure that the change and savings were sustainable it was necessary to invest in the organisation to help implement IT and rationalise processes at pace. Councillor Norman was not sympathetic to the need to revisit the shared MD arrangement with County but was likely to seek to defer appointments to the proposed three new permanent posts pending further reports, in delivering a transformation programme, staffing levels and the organisation direction of travel was the first matter to consider. He further stated that external advice followed. Councillor Norman advised that Senior Management were involved in the transformation process and that he would examine the proposed three new posts and that some or all of these could be filled internally. He stated that it was not the intention to fill these posts immediately.

86.4 Councillor Morgan shared his view that, in relation to Councillor Pullen's proposed recommendation, Members were neither in a position nor in possession of enough information to determine whether to alter the Senior Management structure of the organisation. Councillor Hilton suggested that there was a strong case to reconsider the shared employment of the Managing Director.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
03.09.18

- 86.5 Councillor Pullen's proposed recommendation that: *The Senior Management Team's capacity be increased to three full time posts as an alternative to three new posts* was put to the vote and was lost.
- 86.6 Councillor Hampson welcomed the proposal for investment. He queried how it would be paid for given, according to the report, finance was based on the spending of business rates not yet realised and uncertainty regarding the sale of the Council's current premises.
- 86.7 Councillor Norman stated that it was to be considered as an invest-to-save strategy. He further stated that a commitment had been made to not earmark business rates income but reserves would be used and replaced from HKP business rates.
- 86.8 Councillor Lewis asked if there was an indication of staff morale and how the Council was supporting staff with change. The Corporate Director advised that change management training was in place and effective change management was part of the transformation plan A cohort of staff was being trained as coaches and mentors to assist the change programme. She further advised that a second staff survey would be conducted. With regard to the first staff survey, the Corporate Director informed the Committee that 75% had responded and that there had been a number of honest, constructive comments from staff. She noted that staff were open in their responses.
- 86.9 Councillor Wilson asked for an example of what process would change. The Corporate Director advised that there were an inflated number of ways residents could pay for council services and stated that streamlining these would improve capacity in other areas. He further advised that such processes would be circulated.
- 86.10 In response to a query from Councillor Hilton regarding what would be done to foster a more commercial attitude, the Corporate Director advised that one aspect was making the most of the council's property portfolio. Councillor Hilton also queried what could the council potentially stop doing as a result of process redesign. The Corporate Director stated that the redesign of processes was to explore what could be changed rather than starting from the position of ceasing some operations.
- 86.11 Councillor Haigh suggested that the plans did not sufficiently engage the wider public and shared her view that it would be useful to enquire as to why members of the public transact with the council in particular ways.
- 86.12 Councillor Haigh proposed to recommend to Cabinet that: Customers who interact with Council services be surveyed on their preferred methods of using services. This was carried.
- 86.13 **RESOLVED:-** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that customers who interact with Council services be surveyed on their preferred methods of using services.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
03.09.18

87. PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 1

- 87.1 Councillor D. Norman, Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources, introduced the report. Councillor Lise Noakes, Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, was also in attendance to answer queries from Members.
- 87.2 Councillor Hilton queried why there was a reduction in footfall at the Tourist Information Centre (TIC) and for how long the Events and Marketing Officer position had been vacant.
- 87.3 Councillor Noakes advised that whilst the TIC indicators showed a downwards trend, it was a positive development as increasing numbers used other methods to access tourist information (such as ticket sales for the history festival.) The Cultural Development Manager stated, in relation to the Events and Marketing post, that previous capacity was not sufficient. She advised that some roles had been re-formulated and an underspend was used to fund the post.
- 87.4 In response to a further query from Councillor Hilton regarding plans to preserve historical artefacts, Councillor Noakes stated that there was improved storage but it would be beneficial to have more. She further stated volunteers would be needed for cataloguing.
- 87.5 Councillor Pullen asked whether relocating the TIC to the Guildhall would improve footfall. He was advised that such a proposal would be brought before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 87.6 **RESOLVED:-** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the report.

88. FINANCIAL MONITORING QUARTER 1 REPORT

- 88.1 Councillor D. Norman, Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources, introduced the report and highlighted key points.
- 88.2 Councillor Hilton noted that, according to forecasts, the Performance and Resources portfolio could overspend. He sought assurance that this budget would be balanced.
- 88.3 Councillor Norman advised that there were changes to be made and that he was confident this would be resolved. The Head of Policy and Resources advised that forecasting for the Housing Benefit subsidy could change.
- 88.4 Councillor Pullen noted that the homeless prevention budget had been considered and queried how this figure had been arrived at. The Head of Policy and Resources advised that it had been based on previous monitoring and it was believed to be sufficient.

On the motion of Councillor Wilson, and in accordance with the Constitution, the Committee resolved that the meeting be extended beyond two hours.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
03.09.18

88.5 The Corporate Director advised that the Council was prepared to consider more commercial ventures to improve its financial status.

88.6 **RESOLVED:-** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the report.

89. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

1st October 2018 at 6.30pm in the Civic Suite, North Warehouse.

Time of commencement: 6.30 pm hours

Time of conclusion: 8.35 pm hours

Chair