



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING : Monday, 29th October 2018

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

Others in Attendance

Councillor Jennie Watkins, Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods

Councillor Lise Noakes, Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure
Corporate Director

Head of Communities

Housing Team Leader

Democratic and Electoral Services Officer

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. Finnegan and Walford

98. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

98.1 There were no declarations of interest.

99. DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPPING

99.1 There were no declarations of party whipping.

100. MINUTES

100.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 1st October 2018 were agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

101. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

101.1 A Gloucester resident asked, in relation to the Tourist Information Centre move, whether the new Transport Hub had been considered as a possible venue for the Tourist Information Centre to move into and if so, why was it dismissed as an option.

101.2 The Chair and the resident agreed to allow the relevant Cabinet Member and Officer to answer his question when the item was presented later on in the agenda.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29.10.18

102. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

102.1 There were no petitions or deputations.

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

103.1 The Committee considered the Work Programme and Forward Plan. The Chair informed Members that Aspire had confirmed they will be attending the January Committee meeting.

103.2 In relation to the Accessing the Private Rented Sector report, Councillor Haigh shared her view that it would be beneficial for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discuss this item after it had been to Cabinet. It was agreed that this would be added to the Work Programme.

103.3 Councillor Hilton stated that it would be beneficial for the Committee to scrutinise the Gloucester Culture Trust Annual Report, Regeneration of the Former Fleece Hotel Site and the Disposal of HKP Warehouses once dates had been set. The Chair concurred and it was agreed that these items would be added to the Committee's Work Programme.

103.4 Councillor Hilton shared his view that the Gloucester Culture Trust Annual Report needed more detail than the previous report, including detailed cost breakdown and impact study. Councillor Haigh agreed.

103.5 **RESOLVED:-** (1) That the Accessing Private Rented Sector Report, Gloucester Culture Trust Annual Report, Former Fleece Hotel Site and the Disposal of HKP Warehouses be added to the Work Programme, (2) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the Work Programme.

104. NEW ROUGH SLEEPER SEVERE WEATHER EMERGENCY PROTOCOL (SWEP)

104.1 Councillor Watkins, Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods, provided an overview of the report, detailing the key changes that were being made to the SWEP procedure.

104.2 Councillor Pullen thanked the Cabinet Member for her report and welcomed the changes to SWEP. He queried what measures were in place for those who could not access the existing SWEP shelters. The Cabinet Member replied that 'crash-pads' would be made available across the county to provide emergency accommodation. There were also pop up arrangements available for those who could not access the 'crash pads' for various reasons, such as if a person had a dog or could not go to a particular area of the county.

104.3 In response to a question from Councillor Pullen regarding why flooding had been included in the new definition whereas heavy rain had not, the Cabinet

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29.10.18

Member stated that heavy rain would be covered by the Met Office weather warning which would trigger SWEP.

- 104.4 Councillor Wilson queried how the Council ensure vulnerable people do not fall through the net once SWEP has been called. In response the Housing Team Leader stated that all partner organisations were notified once SWEP has been enacted and there was an emergency duty officer to direct those in need to the correct shelters. There was also the possibility of providing temporary accommodation in Travelodges across the County in emergency situations.
- 104.5 In response to a query from Councillor Hilton regarding how the temperatures were determined and whether wind chill was taken into account, the Head of Communities stated that the Council use the Met Office data as they do not have access to their own monitors. He further stated that wind chill was taken into account when deciding to call SWEP.
- 104.6 Councillor Hilton further questioned how many beds were available in the City. The Head of Communities replied that 25 beds were available in Gloucester and there were a range of other accommodation providers across the County.
- 104.7 Councillor Pullen asked whether SWEP would be called in the event of residual snow, to which the Cabinet Member stated it would be enacted in any severe weather.
- 104.8 The Spokesperson thanked the Cabinet Member for her report and welcomed the changes to the protocol. He questioned how the additional costs would be met from within the existing budget. In response the Head of Communities stated that the cost would be borne across the County.
- 104.9 Councillor Haigh asked how Community Builder and the public would be utilised in the event of SWEP being called. The Cabinet Member stated that it was hoped the public would be vigilant in reporting rough sleepers in the severe weather conditions. She further stated that the County Communication team would be notified when SWEP was called, who put the message on the City Council website and inform the public. Community Builders were also to be informed, as they would be able to provide additional information of people sleeping rough. The Cabinet Member commented that Members would be considered Community Connectors as they would also have extensive knowledge of their wards.
- 104.10 In reference to the George Whitefield Centre contract, Councillor Hilton noted that the planning permission for use for SWEP covered December to March. He queried whether the Council would be able to use the Centre if SWEP was called outside those months. In response the Cabinet Member stated that there were other venues available to the Council if this situation were to arise. She further stated that the Council have an open dialogue with the George Whitefield Centre and was sure a solution would be sought in this situation.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29.10.18

104.11 The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and Officers for their report.

105. TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

105.1 Councillor Noakes, Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, introduced the report and highlighted the key matters. She detailed the changing nature of the Tourist Information Service and the need for the Tourist Information Centre to move to shared accommodation with another cultural venue.

105.2 In response to the public question regarding whether the Transport Hub would be a viable option for the Tourist Information Centre, the Corporate Director stated that this option had been considered but had not been taken forward for a number of reasons. The Transport Hub was less central to City Centre visitors; digital visitor information was being provided at the Transport Hub and transport ticketing was being provided directly by bus operators at the Hub, both factors might lead to duplication or redundancy; and relocation of the TIC at a new site that was not shared with an existing city venue would not yield the expenditure savings and staffing efficiencies offered by co-location at an existing site.

105.3 Councillor Wilson shared his concern that the TIC would lack visibility if it were to merge with another cultural venue. He questioned how the TIC would be publicised when it moved. The Cabinet Member replied that there would be sufficient publicity to ensure the public were aware of the new location. The Corporate Director stated that if Gloucester were awarded the Cultural Development Fund, it would help towards clearer signage for the Guildhall and the TIC, it would also help increase footfall to the Guildhall making it a preferable venue for the TIC.

105.4 The Chair sought clarification regarding accessibility issues in relation to the Guildhall venue. In response the Cabinet Member stated that an accessibility audit had been carried out for both locations, both received a 5 star rating for their accessibility.

105.5 Councillor Pullen shared his view that it would be more beneficial for the TIC to move to the new Kings Quarter development once it had been completed, giving the TIC a central venue or to a venue near the Cathedral. He stated that of the two options laid out in the report, the Museum was more viable due to its tourism function and would help increase footfall to the Museum. The Cabinet Member replied that footfall for the Guildhall would also increase if the TIC were to move there. She further stated that in order to fulfil the budgetary savings, a shared location and combined service was preferred.

105.6 The Corporate Director explained that due to the changing nature of visitor information services a combined service was preferable, with an increase in online ticket sales, the focus had shifted towards events and 'what's on' information. He stated that the synergy between the Guildhall function and TIC was greater making it a preferable venue for the TIC move.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29.10.18

- 105.7 The Chair shared his concern that the Museum proposal had not been given the appropriate amount of consideration by Officers. In response the Cabinet Member stated that the preference of the administration was to have a combined service and the Museum was seen as a valid alternative.
- 105.8 In response to a query from the Vice-Chair regarding the need for a TIC service in light of the reduced footfall and increased online information service, the Cabinet Member stated that there was still a need for a face-to-face service.
- 105.9 Councillor Haigh shared her concerns that the Guildhall would not be a suitable venue for the TIC due to the poor signage and visibility and poor accessibility to the first floor, where the TIC would be located. She further stated that moving the TIC to the Museum would increase footfall and revenue making it the preferable option as it also provides ground floor access.
- 105.10 Councillor Morgan shared his view that there were negatives to both venue options. He queried the urgency of the move and questioned whether other locations had been considered. In response the Corporate Director stated that it was not location change that was the primary driving factor of the move, more the need to for a shared cultural service.
- 105.11 The Cabinet Member clarified that a number of different locations had been considered however the Guildhall and Museum were the most viable options.
- 105.12 Councillor Stephens shared his view that there was a need for a more comprehensive permanent solution and suggested the TIC should be shared between both the Guildhall and the Museum. The Cabinet Member replied that the idea had merit and would make the best of staff knowledge across both venues.
- 105.13 The Corporate Director stated that Officers would consider the practicality of a two venue option if that was the wish of the Committee. The Museum would house the TIC gift shop making a two location TIC possible.
- 105.14 Councillor Lewis shared his concern that the Guildhall interior and lay out was not inviting to visitors, which would result in a decreased footfall for the TIC. He agreed with Councillor Stephens that a two location TIC would be preferable. He further stated in regards to a long term strategy the TIC would be best placed in the new Kings Quarter development.
- 105.15 Councillor Pullen sought clarification on the difference between the TIC and the Tourist Information Service. In response the Cabinet Member stated that the Tourist Information Service was the service of providing visitor information to the public whereas the TIC was the physical centre that the Tourist Information Service operates from.
- 105.16 Councillor Dee shared his view that there was no urgent need to move the TIC, as it was in a prime location presently. He stated that it would be more

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29.10.18

beneficial to wait until the Kings Quarter development was finished and then move the TIC to that location as it was more central.

105.17 Councillor Taylor agreed with Councillor Dee, stating that in long term it would be preferable for the TIC to move to Kings Quarter. He shared his view that neither venue was ideal but he understood the need to make immediate budgetary savings.

105.18 Councillor Lewis proposed to recommend to Cabinet that: The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure compile an additional report exploring the option of having a shared TIC across the Guildhall and Museum and the report be brought before the Committee. This was carried.

105.19 The Spokesperson proposed to recommend to Cabinet that: The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure compile a separate report of the plans for the agreed location and that the plans be made in consultation with the relevant user groups to be brought before the Committee. The recommendation was put to a vote and carried.

105.20 Councillor Hilton and Haigh proposed to recommend to Cabinet that: the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure compile a new report detailing the impact and cost of moving the TIC and other venue options. The recommendation was put to a vote and lost.

105.21 **RESOLVED:-** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that further consideration be given to the option of providing two tourist information spaces at the Guildhall and the Museum of Gloucester with a report being compiled **AND** a separate report be compiled in due course providing the Committee with information on how the tourist information facility (or facilities) will be designed and outfitted and what prior consultation would be undertaken with relevant user groups and clients.

106. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

106.1 Monday 26th November 2018 at 6:30pm in the Civic Suite, North Warehouse.

Time of commencement: 6.30 pm hours

Time of conclusion: 8.05 pm hours

Chair