



CABINET

MEETING : Wednesday, 11th March 2020

PRESENT : Cllrs. Cook (Chair), H. Norman, Gravells, Morgan and Watkins

Others in Attendance

Managing Director

Corporate Director

Corporate Director

Head of Communities

Head of Place

Open Spaces Strategy Officer

Democratic Services and Elections Officer

APOLOGIES : None

108. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

109. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th February 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

110. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

There were no public questions.

111. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

There were no petitions or deputations.

112. LEADER AND CABINET MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

There were no questions to the Leader of the Council or Cabinet.

113. CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

The Leader of the Council reminded Members that this would be the last Cabinet meeting attended by the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods.

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On behalf of Cabinet he thanked her for her remarkable achievements over the years.

114. TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE ROAD MAP

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Environment that set out the actions the City Council, their partners and Gloucester citizens can take to achieve the objectives of the Climate Change Emergency resolution as adopted in July 2019.

The Cabinet Member for Environment summarised the 'quick wins' in the appendix to the report. He noted that £1.4 million was to be allocated to Gloucestershire to address flooding in the Chancellor's Budget. The Cabinet Member for Environment announced that from April all electricity purchased to supply the City Council estate would derive from renewable sources. He commented that this represented a first major step in the Council's determination to tackle climate change. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy informed Members how useful he had found the Planning Policy Sub-Group in allowing specific issues to be concentrated upon and that he commended the proposal to follow this model for a cross-party working group (2.1.3). The Cabinet Member for Environment agreed that climate change was not a party-political issue and emphasised the need to take advantage of all ideas to tackle it.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the report is noted as a roadmap to achieving a carbon net zero Council by 2030 and net zero city by 2050, and that officers continue the work outlined in this report to develop a Climate Change Strategy and bring this back to Cabinet for approval later in the year.
- (2) it supports investigating the projects contained in the 'quick win' section of the appendix, subject to Council agreeing to dedicate funds towards such environmental, carbon reduction or adaptation projects at its meeting on 27 February.
- (3) a cross-Party working group, along the lines of the Planning Policy Sub-Group, is set up to support and advise the lead Cabinet Member in the development of this strategy and to review the investigations of the various projects set out in the appendix to the report.

115. DRAFT SOCIAL VALUE POLICY

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods that presented a draft Social Value Policy intended to allow the Council to formalise its definition of Social Value and explain what its adoption will enable the Council to achieve.

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods advised Members that the proposed policy represented a continuation of the Council's commitment to place communities at the heart of everything it does and empowering them to influence its priorities. She further advised that it would ensure contractors focus on

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achieving the right outcomes for the needs of the city and its people. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods commented that it would place Gloucester ahead of other councils and generate a long-term impact. She proposed an additional recommendation to those in the report that would give contractors additional capacity to deliver effectively. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods noted that the policy could be in place from July, in time to ensure that that funds are targeted in some big contracts to produce great outcomes. The Cabinet Member for Environment stated that it was an opportunity to focus funds towards areas of deprivation. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure informed members that he believed that the policy would be welcomed by the organisations the Council works with as they all bear a social responsibility. He highlighted the importance of the intention for the Social Value Toolkit to identify specific needs for each ward as some needs will be not be common across the city. The Managing Director clarified the financial and legal implications of the report (9.1, 10.1) by stating that the relevant services had been consulted. The Corporate Director confirmed that they had expressed no concerns. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods advised Members that the subscription to the Social Value Portal was £12,000 per annum over three years or £15,000 year by year. She recommended the latter option and further advised that costs would be absorbed by existing budgets. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy expressed approval that the policy would both empower communities and build self-esteem within them. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods placed it within the context of Gloucester's strong track record of achievement for communities which she stated were the achievements of the communities themselves. The Managing Director sought reassurance that a People Impact Assessment would not be required (12.2). The Head of Communities confirmed that it would not.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the draft Social Value Policy be noted and it be agreed for a public consultation to begin
- (2) the creation of a Social Value Toolkit be approved, to be made available alongside the policy. This document will be made in collaboration with the community of Gloucester and will identify the specific needs for each ward of the City.
- (3) the procurement be approved of services from the Social Value Portal, who will provide support in the creation of a social value toolkit and support on all procurements meeting the criteria of the policy.

116. COUNCIL PLAN 2017-20 UPDATE

Cabinet considered the report of the Leader of the Council that updated Members on the delivery of the activities as outlined in the Council Plan 2017-2020 to make Gloucester 'A City that Works for Everyone'.

The Leader of the Council gave examples of achievements against each of the Plan's priorities. These included the Transport Hub, Bakers Quay, City Plan, The

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Gateway and the Property Investment Strategy. He announced that 76% would be completed by May 2020 and 94% next year. The Leader of the Council stated that this demonstrated the ambition of the administration to make improvements and drive Gloucester towards a positive and sustainable future. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources reminded Members that the achievements went beyond physical regeneration and impacted people's lives for the better, not least due to the efforts of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods contrasted the current position with that of ten years ago and commented that the positive progress needed to continue. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy attributed the success to both leadership and officers to whom he expressed gratitude.

RESOLVED that it is noted that progress with delivery of the Council Plan 2017-2020 is welcomed.

117. INCREASE IN PLAY PROVISION 2009 TO 2019

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Environment that updated Members on the increase in number and quality of play areas across the city.

The Cabinet Member for Environment advised Members that in 2006 there were only 36 play areas across the city in contrast to the 80 existing and in development today. He stated that he was enthused by this achievement despite a background of austerity and the benefits it gave to families and children. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure commented that the report demonstrated how much can be achieved in difficult times and thanked officers for their hard work. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods drew Members' attention to the transformation revealed by the photographs in the appendix to the report and stressed the importance of the contribution of play areas to improving health and addressing inequality. She expressed her own aspiration that Gloucester Park be transformed in the future acquires a flagship play area. The Cabinet Member for Environment reminded Members that much of the £2 million invested over the past decade had come from developers and Section 106 contributions extracted by the City Planners.

RESOLVED that the increase in number and quality of play areas across the city be noted.

118. KINGS QUARTER DELIVERY PROPOSAL

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that sought to secure approval from Members to authorise officers to enter into legal negotiations for a joint venture to realise the Council's regeneration aspirations for Kings Quarter.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources summarised the report and progress that had been made. She particularly drew Members' attention to the potential to create employment space and boost the local economy (7.1). The Cabinet Member for Environment emphasised the importance of progressing the regeneration of the area.

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RESOLVED that:

- (1) the Head of Place in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources and the Head of Policy and Resources is authorised to continue to negotiate a joint venture to develop Kings Quarter into a high quality mixed use hub, packed with community features aimed at attracting new companies to Gloucester, based on the latest proposals outlined in this report. Once agreed, officers will bring a final proposal back to Cabinet and Council for approval
- (2) it be noted that progress made on the demolition and enabling activities being carried out at Kings Quarter and the imminent determination of the planning application.

119. HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure that advised Members of the recent award of funding from Historic England (HE) under its High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) programme, and sought to obtain Members' approval to accept the funding, to contribute funding, and to make appropriate delegations of authority to issue grants and other payments.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure advised Members that although final sign off by HE was still awaited, indications were that it would be forthcoming and work to secure additional funding was ongoing. He noted that this approach had proved successful for the Southgate Street Townscape Heritage Initiative and will deliver a considerable improvement to the vibrancy of Westgate Street. The Cabinet Member for Environment commented that the proposed £3.8 million investment in Westgate Street's heritage assets was a step in the right direction between the recent improvements to Southgate Street and a future enhancement of Eastgate Street.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) accept funding from Historic England under its High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) programme should the Council's application be accepted
- (2) become the designated Accountable body in the management and administration of the HSHAZ programme,
- (3) note the existing budgets to be used as match funding, and,
- (4) delegate authority to the Head of Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, and the Council Solicitor to issue grants and payments from the HSHAZ programme and take all necessary steps including the entering into of legal agreements to enable delivery of the programme.

120. CULTURAL STRATEGY 6 MONTHLY UPDATE

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Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure that provided an update on progress made against the Cultural Strategy for the period October 2019 to March 2020 and recommended that the strategy be reviewed and updated to reflect changes and new priorities.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure introduced the report. He informed Members that the Strategic Programming Group (3.3) was about to meet for the first time and begin the process of involving as many people and organisations as possible. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure advised that the transformation of Kings House into a creative hub and incubator (3.6) was progressing to bring activity to Kings Quarter and opportunities for young people to develop their talents in the city. He commented that culture had to be the next big win for Gloucester.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the report is accepted and progress against the objectives noted
- (2) a revision of the Cultural Strategy is undertaken in 2020 to cover the next 10-year period 2021 – 2031.

121. JOINT CORE STRATEGY AFFORDABLE HOUSING PARTNERSHIP AND SELECTION OF PREFERRED PARTNERS

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy that briefed Members and sought approval for the continuation of the Joint Core Strategy Affordable Housing Partnership and to allow for a review of the current list of Preferred Registered Providers delivering homes in the strategic allocations sites of the Joint Core Strategy area.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy reminded Members that meeting affordable housing needs required not just buildings but the right management so that people can be helped, their wellbeing improved and social value added. He emphasised the importance of ensuring that the right policies were in place to deliver the best for people who needed affordable housing. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods referred to recent work done to drive up housing standards in Gloucester and commented on the serious consequences to people of having the wrong providers. The Cabinet Member for Environment informed Members that he had been impressed by the actions of certain individuals in Kingsway and advised them that it was individuals not just companies that made good practice. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy further advised that he had visited housing in Bristol designed to 'passive house' principles with negligible heating costs to tenants. He confirmed that innovations in both public and private rental housing to tackle climate change were being considered for inclusion in the Climate Change Road Map (agenda item 7). The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods noted that social value benefits could be included in the Social Value Policy (agenda item 8) and toolkit.

RESOLVED that:

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- (1) the existing Affordable Housing Partnership with Cheltenham Borough Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council set up to oversee the delivery of affordable homes across the Strategic Allocation Sites within the Joint Core Strategy area over the JCS Plan Period be continued.
- (2) the City Council review the existing list of Preferred Providers of Affordable Housing, inviting current Preferred Providers and other Registered Providers to bid to become a Preferred Provider for a period of up to 5 years from November 2020 across the Strategic Allocation Sites within the Joint Core Strategy Area jointly with Cheltenham Borough Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council
- (3) future arrangements to review the list of Preferred Providers be delegated to the Head of Place in consultation with the cabinet member for Planning and Housing Strategy.
- (4) authority be delegated to the Head of Place in consultation with the cabinet member for Planning and Housing Strategy to:
 - a) evaluate and select Preferred Providers for the delivery and/or management of new affordable housing on the Strategic Allocation Sites noting that the selection will be carried out jointly with Cheltenham Borough Council and Tewkesbury Borough Councils
 - b) agree changes to the Terms of Reference of the partnership and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Councils and the Preferred Providers to take effect from November 2020 and to make any other changes to necessary and
 - c) make further operational decisions in relation to the Affordable Housing Partnership including whether or not to allow or invite other Registered Providers (RPs) to become a Preferred Provider during the 5 year period referred to in recommendation (2).

122. PLOT 1 KINGS QUARTER REDEVELOPMENT

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Environment that sought to approve the marketing and subsequent disposal of the site identified as Plot 1 in the Kings Quarter Planning Application (18/01454/FUL) for affordable homes.

The Cabinet Member for Environment highlighted the 25 affordable homes that Plot 1 would deliver and that any proceeds from the disposal would support the Council's ongoing capital programme. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy commended the application of the aim for 25% affordable homes in the emerging City Plan. He proposed that the recommendation to accept the offer that represents best value for development for affordable homes (2.1.2) be clarified as affordable homes for affordable or social rent. The Managing Director asked if exemplar climate change resilient homes should be included. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods underlined how important it was to demonstrate the Council's progressive ambitions and that it would be an

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opportunity for developers to show how seriously they are taking climate change. The Head of Place advised Members that this would make an impact on receipts and suggested that developers be asked to put forward options. The Cabinet Member for Environment agreed that this was the best way forward and that if an option made the scheme unviable then it would not be chosen.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the marketing and disposal of the site identified as Plot 1 in the Kings Quarter Planning Application (18/01454/FUL) for affordable homes be approved
- (2) authority be delegated to the Head of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Head of Policy and Resources to accept the offer that represents best value for development for affordable homes for affordable or social rent
- (3) authority be delegated to the Head of Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and the Council Solicitor to prepare and agree the terms of the disposal documents.

123. REGENERATION AT ST OSWALDS RETAIL PARK

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that sought Members to note the progress made for the regeneration of the vacant land to the rear of St. Oswalds Retail Park and to approve the continuing negotiations for development of this area.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources gave the background to the report. The Cabinet Member for Environment commented that the recommendations demonstrated the Council's ambitious commitment to deliver housing, including affordable homes. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy noted the scale of residential development envisioned and asked how soon the plans would be concluded. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources responded that it would be as quickly as possible and assured Members that a housing paper would be brought for consideration at a later meeting.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the progress made with the St. Oswalds land regeneration be noted, and in particular that:
 - a) Tesco have undertaken an open tender for the disposal of their land following the withdrawal of the Homes and Communities Agency from purchase negotiations
 - b) negotiations have continued with Tesco for the City Council's consent to vary their lease so that their vacant land can be the subject of an agreed disposal.

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- (2) the Tesco lease is agreed to be varied to enable a sale of their vacant land only for residential purposes and negotiations continue to bring forward a masterplan for the comprehensive residential development of the Tesco land together with the adjoining City Council land.

124. PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 3 - 2019/20

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that informed Members of the Council's performance against key measures in Quarter 3 of 2019/20.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources highlighted the trends in the report. The Cabinet Member for Environment commented that the layout of the report made it easy to focus on particular issues.

RESOLVED that the Quarter 3 Performance Report 2019/20 be noted.

125. FINANCIAL MONITORING - QUARTER 3 2019/20

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that sought Members to note year-end forecasts and progress made against agreed savings targets for the 3rd Quarter ended 31st December 2019.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources outlined the positions and pressures in each portfolio and placed them in context. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure informed Members that officers in his portfolio, especially at the Guildhall, were looking to make positive changes which he would be discussing with them soon. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy acknowledged that there were pressures in his portfolio due to the emerging City Plan and fall in planning application fees. He reassured Members that these matters were being addressed. The Cabinet Member for Environment reminded Members that the overspend in his portfolio resulted from a miscalculation with Amey contract which would not recur. He advised that recycling was increasing and that recent investment in a new metals bailer would make a positive difference to income in the next financial year.

RESOLVED it be noted that:

- (1) the forecast year end position is currently for an increase to the Council's General Fund balance of £55k against a budgeted decrease of £91k
- (2) the details of specific budgetary issues identified by officers and the actions being taken to address those issues
- (3) the current level of Capital expenditure as shown in Appendix 2 of the report.

126. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2020/21

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Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that sought to formally recommend that Council approves the Treasury Management Strategy, the prudential indicators and notes the Treasury activities.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources highlighted the key features of the report. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure raised the question of what the effect might be of the half percentage point reduction in the base interest rate announced by the Chancellor. The Managing Director informed Members that the Accountancy Manager had exploited a brief drop in the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) rate to save the Council £9 million over the lifetime of a loan. The Cabinet Member for Environment asked that he be congratulated on behalf of Members.

RECOMMENDED that the Treasury Management Strategy be approved.

127. CAPITAL STRATEGY 2020/21

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that sought Members to formally recommend that Council approves the Capital Strategy 2020-21.

RECOMMENDED that the Capital Strategy be approved.

128. BUSINESS RATES - RETAIL DISCOUNT

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that proposed a discount scheme commensurate with the written ministerial statement for retail discounts on business rates.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources advised Members that the Chancellor had announced an adjustment to the discount in his Budget speech since the report was published. She informed them that officers had advised the current recommendations be considered and that a further report will be submitted when official guidance had been published. The Cabinet Member for Environment sought clarification on whether the business rates discounts would reduce income for the Council. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources stated that the shortfall would be made up from Central Government.

RESOLVED that the Business Rates Retail Discount scheme (attached at appendix to the report) be the approved scheme for Gloucester City for 2020/21.

129. BUSINESS RATES - PUB DISCOUNT 2020-21

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that proposed a discount scheme commensurate with the written ministerial statement for business rate discount on public houses.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources advised Members that the Chancellor had announced an adjustment to the discount in his Budget speech since the report was published. She informed them that officers had advised the current recommendations be considered and that a further report will be submitted

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when official guidance had been published. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy reminded Members of the importance of pubs to communities and many individuals.

RESOLVED that the Business Rates Pub Discount Policy (attached as the appendix to the report) be the approved scheme for Gloucester City for 2020/21.

130. RISK BASED VERIFICATION

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that sought Members to approve the annual review of the Risk Based Verification Policy in determining evidence requirements for the assessment of new Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources gave the background to the report and reminded Members that the policy had to be reviewed in order to create the best experience for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support customers.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the reviewed Risk Based Verification Policy for verifying Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims as outlined (Appendix 1 of the report) be approved
- (2) Approve the reviewed Risk Based Verification policy as at February 2020 (Appendix 1 of the report) be approved for implementation immediately.

Time of commencement: 6.00 pm

Time of conclusion: 7.25 pm

Chair