



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING : Monday, 6th July 2020

PRESENT : Cllrs. Coole (Chair), Ryall (Vice-Chair), Dee, Finnegan, Haigh, Hilton, Hyman, Lewis, Pullen, Stephens, Taylor, Toleman, Tracey, Walford, Wilson and D. Norman

Others in Attendance

Steve Morgan, Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure

Jennie Watkins, Cabinet Member for Communities & Neighbourhoods

Steve Brown, Destination Management and Marketing Consultant

Corporate Director (Partnerships)

Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer

Head of Cultural Services

Head of Communities

Policy & Governance Manager

Democratic & Electoral Services Team Leader

Policy & Development Officer

Community Wellbeing Officer

Democratic & Electoral Services Officer

APOLOGIES : Cllr Organ.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPPING

There were no declarations of party whipping.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED: - that the minutes of the meetings held on the 29th of June 2020 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

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5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

- 5.1 A member of the public asked two questions. The first question was as follows:

According to the report entitled 'The Future Marketing of Gloucester', section 6.5 to strengthen other aspects of the city's marketing collateral, states how little quality marketing collateral has been left behind with the Tourist Information team with very limited material to hand out. It is proposed to produce a visitor guide for 2021 as a quick fix. Please can you confirm why the Tourist Information Centre has been left with so little material when there was a requirement for Marketing Gloucester to produce this marketing material and would have presumably had a budget attached funded by Gloucester City Council and please can you confirm what the money was spent on instead?

- 5.2 The second question was as follows:

According to the report entitled 'The Future Marketing of Gloucester' section 6.1 to appoint a small but highly focused 'place marketing' team within Gloucester City Council for an initial period of at least two years, states six key tasks for this proposed team. The report also recommends at section 6.8 the development of a really strong events and festivals programme that reflects and builds the city's new narrative. This is not listed as a key task in section 6.1, not is there any indication of a budget to support a really strong events and festivals programme. Please can you therefore confirm who will be responsible for the development of the events and festivals programme and where the funding will come from as Appendix 2, budget for the Destination Marketing function within GCC, paragraph 2 refers to a figure of £215,000 from the Destination Marketing budget being spent on Events and Festivals. Is this £215,000 a historic figure or is this a figure for any future events and festivals

- 5.3 The Chair advised that the questions were likely to be addressed by the Cabinet Member and Officers during the course of the discussion on agenda item 8.

6. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

There were no petitions or deputations.

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

- 7.1 **RESOLVED that:** - that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **NOTE** the Work Programme and Forward Plan

8. REPORT INTO THE FUTURE MARKETING OF GLOUCESTER

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- 8.1 The Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure introduced the report and highlighted key elements. He then welcomed Steve Brown, Destination Management and Marketing Consultant and the author of the report to present his findings. Steve Brown outlined that the report was based on two pieces of evidence; a consultation exercise and an extensive review of place marketing in other cities. From this he had concluded that place marketing was important for a City, and Gloucester perhaps had a weak brand identity despite the City 's rich heritage and history. Additionally, a collaborative approach to any future place marketing activity would be important. Steve Brown added that different models worked equally well in different cities, and thus the model adopted was less important than the resources assigned to place marketing. Further, he explained that many place marketing organisations were struggling with budgets, and increasingly reducing public subsidy, and the COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated these issues. Steve Brown pointed to the recommendations of the report and the principles upon which these were based. Finally, he thanked the City Council for the opportunity to carry out the work and welcomed questions from the Committee.
- 8.2 Councillor Wilson sought to clarify that the reference to grants in the previous recommendations of the O&S Committee meant the grants provided by GFirst LEP towards the UKDRIC rather than the loan facility provided to MGL by Gloucester City Council. He then added that the report was a good piece of work and informative. In particular, he pointed to the feedback from the different stakeholders suggesting that the City had a weak brand identity which he stated was disappointing. His view was that collaborative work was crucial in any future work as well as what he described as repairing the damage left behind by MGL. Lastly, he agreed that prioritising an online presence was key, and asked whether the proposed £25,000 for the Digital Upgrade Project would be enough. In response to the issues raised by Councillor Wilson, the Corporate Director acknowledged and accepted Cllr Wilsons clarification in respect of UKDRIC grants funding. Steve Brown advised that the £25,000 budget for the Digital Upgrade project was enough and was based on a quotation provided by a place marketing digital supplier.
- 8.3 Responding to Councillor Hyman's query on pursuing a City of Culture Bid, Councillor Morgan stated that the City of Culture bid remained an aspiration. However, the City Council would need to wait and see what the government was proposing, and whether there would be assistance for councils who expressed an interest in the bid. The current priority was getting the place marketing arrangement in place. Councillor Haigh submitted that the aspiration to pursue the City of Culture bid was not shared by all Members and suggested that it would be antithetical to the principle in the report of doing a few things well.
- 8.3 Councillor Morgan responded to Councillor Haigh's question about Steering Board accountability by indicating that he would expect the Cabinet Lead to be a member of the Board and to act as a conduit between the Council and the Board. On the topic of staffing, the Head of Cultural Services confirmed the Council's understanding that that TUPE regulations did not apply in

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respect of staff formerly employed directly by MGL, however, these staff would be able to apply for the proposed new roles,

- 8.4 Councillor Stephens stated that he endorsed Steve Brown's report and echoed the proposals put forward. Councillor Morgan agreed with Councillor Stephens that, as a Cabinet Member, he should not be the person to Chair the proposed Steering Board and that this role should be given to the best candidate and he agreed that residents should be involved in the future arrangements for place marketing in the City and stated that this would form a part of the Steering Board's work. Lastly, in relation to the £40,000 contingency fund allocation, Steve Brown outlined that it was expedient to have a contingency fund when embarking on a plan of this nature and it was a general figure.
- 8.5 Councillor Pullen welcomed the report and agreed with many of the proposals including having an in-house place marketing team, building a brand identity for the City, and involving stakeholders and residents in any future plans. Furthermore, Councillor Pullen endorsed the recommendation to develop a suite of KPIs and a baseline for measurement and asked how this would be developed and who would develop this. Additionally, he raised his concerns about the fact that Gloucester did not have a Visitor Guide, for example, in The Tourist Information Centre. Councillor Morgan outlined that Officers would respond to his query about KPIs. On the topic of the Visitor Guide, he agreed that it was an important element of marketing in a City which would be taken on board. It was clarified that whilst there was a map of the city, there was not a Visitor Guide.
- 8.6 Steve Brown responded to a number of points raised by Councillor Hilton. Firstly, the report outlined a plan to have a distinct events team and a distinct marketing team. Although the teams would have different job descriptions and individuals undertaking those roles, he believed there would be an advantage to the teams physically sitting together and having knowledge of the work being undertaken by the other team. Secondly, on the question of the appropriate budget for the place marketing function, he did not believe that there was an easy answer to this. Rather, his view was that the budget allocated depended on the City's ambitions. Moreover, as the plan evolved there was the possibility that the place marketing team would develop a campaign to promote the city which partners could buy into. Thirdly, he outlined that the City of Culture bid was out of the scope of the report and was a consideration for Members perhaps at a future date. Lastly, he explained that developing a strong brand for the City was an important element of building the City's place marketing function. Developing this could involve carrying out consultations with key organisations and residents as well as hiring a specialist. He then pointed to places such as Ipswich and Plymouth which were referred to in the report as good examples of places with a strong brand identity.
- 8.7 Councillor Hilton asked Councillor Morgan for assurance that the Steering Board would have cross party membership and that Cabinet would consult with the opposition groups before finalising the governance arrangements for

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the Board. Councillor Morgan provided his assurances that this would be the case.

- 8.8 Councillor Hyman proposed a recommendation stipulating that the City Council would not proceed with a City of Culture bid for the duration of the current Council. The Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer outlined his view that whilst the Committee could make any recommendations it wished, the City of Culture bid was not on the agenda and the Committee could set a regrettable precedent by bolting other matters onto agenda items. Similarly, the Committee had not received a report on the City of Culture, and Committee Members had not come to the meeting prepared for a debate on the issue. Thus, he suggested that the Committee should proceed with caution before formalising Councillor Hyman's recommendation. Councillor Lewis emphasised Councillor Morgan's earlier comments stating that the City of Culture bid was not being pursued at this moment in time but perhaps in the future, and thus suggested that it was beyond the remit of the present meeting. Councillor Hyman stated that he wished to proceed with the recommendation.
- 8.9 In response to the questions raised by the member of the public during Public Question Time, the Corporate Director outlined that the Steve Brown report identified a lack of quality, up to date and effective marketing collateral material which compared poorly with elsewhere. This had not been a conscious or approved change in the City's requirements of MGL but reflected the overall findings that MGL had lost focus. In relation to the second question raised, he explained that festivals and events did not feature in the report as a decision had been taken by the Council earlier in the year to separate festivals and events from place and destination marketing. Festivals and events and place and destination marketing would each have a separate budget.
- 8.10 **RESOLVED;** - that that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee **RECOMMENDS** that: Gloucester City Council does not proceed with a City of Culture bid between now and May 2021.

9. GLOUCESTER RECOVERY PLAN - ECONOMIC RECOVERY & GROWTH

- 9.1 The Cabinet Member for Economic Growth & Recovery, Councillor Melvin, introduced the action plan and highlighted key elements. She outlined that the plan was a blueprint for driving the City forward as part of the recovery process. Furthermore, she advised that there would be another Economic Recovery Task Force meeting in the next couple of weeks. The City Growth & Delivery Manager added that the action plan dealt with a third of the four stages of recovery as outlined at the Committee meeting held on the 15th of June 2020. It was a short-term plan and largely dealt with the period between now and businesses reopening. He outlined the underlying principles upon which the action was based namely, 1.) Partnership and Collaboration, 2.) Building on activities which were already underway but also inventing new ideas 3.) Transformation. The City Growth & Delivery Manager then brought Members' attention to the four areas of activity on

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page 4 of the action plan and elaborated on each of these. He added that the investment material for the City was key and work had been underway on an inward investment site. It was hoped that there would be a soft launch of this in the coming weeks. Additionally, he stated that the plan was underpinned by data collection and understanding what is happening in the economy. As such, there were plans for a Data Dashboard which would enable ongoing analysis of key opportunities as well as problem areas. This would include areas such as footfall, demographics, business trends, start-up rates and closure rates. Finally, whilst there was a lot of ambition, it would be business-led with the Council assisting businesses to steer them in the right direction.

- 9.2 Councillor Haigh thanked the Councillor Melvin for the comprehensive plan. However, she expressed her concern that there was a contradiction with the reference to a 'Destination Marketing Organisation' on page six of plan with the preceding agenda item (Report into the Future Marketing of Gloucester) which recommended an internal place marketing team. Moreover, she added that whilst there had been a lot of discussion around involving the business community, she also hoped to see residents involved in the economic recovery process. Further, she asked if it would be possible for the data from the Data Dashboard to be shared with the Committee.
- 9.3 In response, Councillor Melvin advised that the data was not yet ready, but the Overview & Scrutiny Committee was perhaps the best committee for this data to be shared. Similarly, she welcomed the suggestion to involve the public in the economic recovery process. She then outlined some other initiatives which had been taken as part of the economic recovery process. This included a jobs fair which was scheduled for September, a meeting which would be taking place to discuss the National Retraining Scheme, and proposals to repurpose premises and reimagine business models where the current model is not working. Similarly, there was also work being undertaken to create a map which could be shared with other service areas.
- 9.4 Responding to a query raised by Councillor Stephens, the City Growth and Delivery Manager advised that the collaboration with GFirst LEP alongside the City Council's own links with businesses helped to provide information on how businesses in the City are doing. Moreover, he agreed with the idea that the Rapid Response Taskforce should include different organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, JobCentre Plus to provide assistance to businesses which ceased to trade and had to carry out redundancies. He added that this was one of the issues he would be raised at the meeting with JobCentre Plus.
- 9.5 Addressing questions raised by Councillor Hilton, Councillor Melvin advised that there were short, medium- and long-term goals which would be presented to the Economic Recovery Task Force at the next meeting after which they would be brought before the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. However, the Stroud Market was back, and there were plans to hold a once a month late afternoon/early evening market through the gate streets. Furthermore, a lot of the work was underway to transform the indoor market. Lastly, she encouraged Members to bring forward any other

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suggestions and ideas they may have and highlighted the importance of cross-party work.

- 9.6 In response to Councillor Pullen 's questions around pubs and the night time economy, Councillor Melvin expressed concern at reports of people not adhering to the rules at a local pub on Super Saturday. Further, she explained that whilst some pubs were open in Gloucester, no clubs were yet open in line with government guidance. The pubs that had not yet opened were either too big or too small, and Officers were working with them to assist where possible. Additionally, she commended the City's pubs for embodying the City's spirit of resilience. Councillor Watkins echoed the disappointment with the reports of people not adhering to the rules at a local pub on Super Saturday. She added, however, it was important to note that this was a more isolated occurrence with most people adhering to the rules at other pubs in the City. Moreover, she highlighted that Gloucester had an organised night-time economy. There was a scheduled night safe meeting to consider any necessary adaptations to the night safe plan alongside the police and other partners.
- 9.7 The Chair thanked Cabinet Members and Officers for the update.
- 9.8 **RESOLVED:** - that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee **NOTE** the update.

10. GLOUCESTER RECOVERY PLAN - HOUSING RECOVERY

- 10.1 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods, Councillor Watkins, introduced the plan and outlined key elements. She outlined that this was the first draft of the Housing Recovery Strategy which was being developed in partnership with partner agencies and through cross-party work. For example, a workshop had been held recently which was attended by several Committee Members, and she expressed her thanks to those who were involved with this. She added that the plan was about how the City would recover from the COVID-19 pandemic specifically in relation to housing. Approximately 300 people in the City had been placed in temporary accommodation under the Emergency Protocol. As of the 1st of July, there were approximately 100 people in temporary accommodation, 66 of whom had been placed by the City Council with Gloucester facing a particular demand as the urban core of the county of Gloucestershire. Councillor Watkins explained that the challenge going forward would be supporting these individuals to find suitable accommodation especially given the wide spectrum of accommodation and support needs.
- 10.2 She reiterated that the plan was a first draft and the areas highlighted in green were the aspects over which the Council had more control over. On the other hand, it was more difficult to be more specific in other areas where the Council worked in collaboration with other stakeholders. Councillor Watkins added that a more detailed update would be brought back before

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the Committee. Finally, she emphasised that she welcomed the cross-party work and expressed her thanks to the housing team and particularly the hotel section for the work carried out during the peak of the pandemic.

- 10.3 In response to Councillor Haigh's concerns about a possible wave of evictions once the current tenant eviction ban was lifted, Councillor Watkins stated that she also shared this concern. However, the housing team was prepared if this happened. She outlined that the biggest issue was likely to be with people falling behind on rent as a result of facing financial difficulties as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. She added that the Council would aim to adopt a preventative approach. Discretionary Housing Payments and other related measures would be used where necessary in order to help people to remain in their tenancies. In terms of housing supply, she advised that this was a challenge even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and the pandemic had exacerbated this. However, work had started prior to the pandemic to address the issue, for example, with the opening of Potters Place, and she was optimistic that these measures would help move the issue forward. She added that the Cabinet Member for Planning & Housing Strategy continued to work hard to advocate for more permanent solutions such as increased social housing. Overall, housing supply was a national issue and Gloucester City Council would continue to rise to the challenge of tackling this.
- 10.4 Addressing Councillor Hyman with regard to his comment about the need for more facilities such as the P3 facility in his ward and ongoing support to enable individuals leaving these facilities to acquire more permanent accommodation, Councillor Watkins highlighted that the Council was working with registered and support providers on this issue. The Complex Case Cell as outlined in the plan would look at the accommodation options and the support that is required to both get people into tenancies and to then sustain these tenancies once there. This was a particular challenge with the complex cohort who required the input of other services due to other lifestyle challenges they may face. She added that whilst progress had been in the county, nonetheless, it remained an area of focus.
- 10.5 Councillor Stephens outlined that he had been involved in the cross-party work to develop the strategy. For him, the strategy was comprehensive and covered a lot of the key areas. However, the challenge now was about turning the strategy into an action plan, finding the resources to deliver this and setting timeframes. In response to the questions raised by Councillor Stephens, Councillor Watkins stated that the City Council was creative with the use of resources and was one of the few councils in the country ahead of the curve with putting support in the temporary accommodation setting to start personalised plans for individuals currently in temporary accommodation.
- 10.6 The Head of Communities explained that with regard to the contract end date with hotels, the City Council had been involved with block purchasing of hotels with the rest of the county and this was being reduced down each time the hotels had been procured , and it was anticipated that by the end of July

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2020 they would block or spot purchase more hotel space but on a smaller scale. Beyond the pandemic, hotels were already used in day to day Council business for emergencies and the aim was to reduce the current use of hotels to these more normal levels. Work would continue to refer people to more sustainable and long-term accommodation, albeit temporary placements. The plan was then to move people who had been in temporary accommodation into permanent accommodation through registered providers. This would make available more supported accommodation for the newer COVID-19 cohort. In relation to personalised assessments, she stated that this was a key part of the process particularly for those with complex needs. A personalised assessment would help to ensure that individuals were placed in suitable accommodation and that the placement did not break down. Lastly, she stated that the majority of the people in the hotel cohort had been assessed by Officers with only the newest few not having been assessed yet. However, they would be assessed as quickly as possible.

10.7 The Chair echoed Councillor Watkins comments earlier stating that the Committee would likely revisit the housing strategy at future date as the situation emerged. They added they were also involved in the cross-party work and had been fortunate to see the strategy the previous week. They thanked Councillor Watkins for the update.

10.8 **RESOLVED:** - that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee **NOTE** the update.

11. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE GRANT FUNDING PROVIDED TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR / VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SECTOR RESPONSE TO THE CURRENT COVID-19 PANDEMIC

11.1 The Cabinet Member for Communities & Neighbourhoods, Councillor Watkins, introduced the two reports and highlighted key elements. Firstly, she explained that the Annual Report on the Grant Funding Provided to the Voluntary Sector considered the grant funding of the previous year and outlined the successes and outcomes. She explained in further detail the activities to which grant funding had been provided which now included COVID-19 funding in response to the ongoing pandemic. Councillor Watkins added that the Committee was being asked to endorse a continued approach for a further year using the budget available and in the format that has been used. She expressed her thanks and gratitude to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) of whom she was proud for the work carried out during the peak of the pandemic. Lastly, she stated that the City could not have operated without the work of these individuals.

11.2 Turning to the VCS Response to the Current COVID-19 Pandemic, she outlined that this report was the cumulation of research carried out by Officers and it was a fantastic piece of work. The research had been carried out through an intelligence gathering exercise looking at the impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic on the VCS in Gloucester. She added that the qualitative feedback was useful and provided information on some of the concerns within the sector, the things which the sector wanted to do more of,

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and how the Council can further help the sector. From this, a series of recommendations had been made, which included providing funding to more grass-roots organisations to help cover the costs of lost income and any adaptations required to enable the organisations to reopen their activities to the public, support and advice from the business sector to the VCS, and increased publicity initiatives and support for the sector. She added that a Community Recovery Strategy report which would be considered before the Committee and would provide further detail on some the areas covered. Finally, she stated that the research was an extensive piece of work and she welcomed any feedback from Committee Members.

- 11.3 Councillor Pullen submitted that the Councillor Community Fund (Councillor Community Fund) was now more streamlined and it was easier to access the funds which he welcomed. In response to this, Councillor Watkins stated that she was pleased that the process was more streamlined. Addressing Councillor Pullen's question on whether interventions should be made with regard to how Councillors allocate the CCF, she outlined that it is an issue which had been debated in the past, and ultimately, Councillors had discretion to decide which causes they allocated the funding to. In line with the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, it was apt that Councillors should work with the community to decide how the money is allocated based on what is important to the community.
- 11.4 Councillor Stephens echoed the thanks and gratitude to the VCS for the work carried out during the pandemic. In response to his question on whether any VCS organisations were facing closure as a result of the impact of the pandemic, Councillor Watkins advised that the Council would likely to be aware if a VCS organisation was facing closure due to the pandemic. The Council remained in contact with the VCS and was able to keep up to date with how organisations were doing for example either through the research carried out for the VCS Response to the Current COVID-19 Pandemic and when organisations applied for funding. Moreover, she added that there were other funding opportunities from partners such as Barnwood Trust and the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner of whom VCS organisations were either in contact with or were being signposted to by the Council. Thus, she believed that the situation was manageable for the time being, however, it was important to not be complacent. Moreover, Gloucester City Council's Recovery Fund would aid those facing financial sustainability and help to fill any gaps particularly for smaller organisations. Councillor Watkins also encouraged Members to keep speaking with VCS organisations and to make the Council aware of any issues. Councillor Stephens was informed that Officers would provide a written response to his question about the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund and the VCS in Gloucester.
- 11.5 Councillor Haigh pointed to page 3 of Appendix B which referred to the pandemic as an 'existential threat' to the VCS and recommended that this is kept under constant review. She added that she welcomed the Gloucester City Council Recovery Fund and other sources of funding, however, she stressed the importance of ensuring funding is allocated appropriately. In her

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view, this would be imperative as VCS organisations start their regular community work alongside COVID-19 related work. She stated that this would be a particular challenge for the organisations, for example, in relation to ensuring that they have enough staff and volunteers to deal with both aspects. Councillor Watkins agreed with this and highlighted that the Community Recovery Strategy report would consider how the Council works with partners to ensure that VCS organisations are coping well. Moreover, the pandemic had highlighted the importance of community work in terms of prevention. It was an issue which the Council would likely have to revisit for example considering whether more investment is needed in the VCS from the Council itself as well as partners.

11.6 **RESOLVED;** - that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee **NOTE** the reports.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 7th of September 2020.

Time of commencement: 6:30pm

Time of conclusion: 8:40pm

Chair