



CABINET

MEETING : Wednesday, 10th July 2019

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

Others in Attendance

Cllrs Haigh and Coole

Managing Director

Corporate Director

Corporate Director

Head of Policy and Resources

Head of Place

Head of Communities

Major Projects Consultant

Principal Conservation Officer

Democratic Services and Elections Officer

APOLOGIES : None

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

14. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th June 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

15. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

There were no public questions.

16. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

There were no petitions or deputations.

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

Cllr Haigh reminded Members of the discussions concerning the layout of the new City Council Westgate Street customer reception (The Gateway) at the special Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S) meeting of 12th March 2019. She asked if the illustrations published on the Council website were accurate as they did not reflect the outcome of those discussions particularly regarding the privacy of people in the interview booths. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources replied that the illustrations were merely conceptual representations and that elected members had been updated on changes by email. The Head of Communities confirmed that, unlike those illustrated, the interview booths would have half solid and half frosted glass screens completely obscuring occupants from those seated in waiting areas and mostly obscuring occupants from those standing. Cllr Haigh stated that she had not been informed of the introduction of full glass panels for the booths. She reiterated the concern expressed at the O&S meeting over occupants being identified from the street and sought reassurance that the matter would be addressed. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources stated that frosted external glazing would prevent individuals inside The Gateway being identified from outside. She commented on the need for compromise in the booths as full solid screens might feel oppressive to occupants. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources gave assurance that feedback around the function of the screens already ordered from suppliers will be very carefully monitored and replacement considered if necessary and cost effective.

18. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY - VISION AND ACTION PLAN FOR 2019-20

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods that updated Members on the work of the Equalities Working Group and the Equalities Action Plan for 2019/20.

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods introduced the report and gave examples of how the relationship between the Council and many residents had improved through active engagement with, and support of, local communities. She noted that the action plan represented the continuing passion and hard work of officers, partners and elected members of all parties and thanked them all.

RESOLVED that the work of the Equalities Working Group (EWG) and the Equalities Action Plan (EAP) for this year be endorsed.

19. COMMUNITY WELLBEING ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods that sought to update Members on the most recent community engagement work within the community wellbeing team.

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods drew Members' attention to the important role of the team in building the positive relationships with partners and communities that enable the root of problems to be addressed and

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effective solutions to be found. She placed this work in the context of the shift to delivering services based on Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) principals empowering communities, an approach which has yielded successes such as the Podsmead Clearance Team social enterprise. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources commented that these could be widely shared as case studies. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods advised Members that other local authorities had already pursued an interest in learning from Gloucester's model of working and how it will be developed further in the city. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure emphasised the breadth of the improvements generated by such a fundamental shift in approach. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy informed Members of the contrast he observed between the process and enforcement driven approach when he was first elected to the Council that left residents in isolation to deal with multiple agencies and the current nurture of partnerships. He further commented on the wider benefits of the approach such as the implementation of the new noise service leading to neighbours talking to each other for the first time.

RESOLVED that the community engagement work undertaken by the Community Wellbeing Team, particularly using Asset Based Community Development and strengths-based working be noted.

20. 2018-19 FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that informed Members of the final Council position against agreed budgets for the 2018/19 financial year and sought that the final outturn position be noted and movement to and from earmarked revenue reserves be approved.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources highlighted the key parts of the report. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure acknowledged the financial pressures on his portfolio but noted that the net spend had decreased by £268,000 since the 2017/18 outturn position. He informed Members that he been impressed by the enthusiasm and willingness to adapt to change demonstrated by officers as challenges continue to be addressed. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods referred to the financial costs associated with homelessness. She reassured Members that work is ongoing to tackle the problem with a broad range of measures including the addition of 48 units of temporary accommodation expected to be secured imminently. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy commented that although progress had been positive, there were nonetheless areas requiring attention.

RESOLVED:

(1) it is noted that:

- i. the year-end position for the financial year 2018/19 is an increase to the General Fund balance of £37k.
- ii. the General Fund balance has increased from £1.636m to £1.673m at the end of 2018/19.
- iii. the savings achieved in year total £150k.
- iv. the level of earmarked reserves has reduced by £152k to £4.567m.

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(2) that the transfers to and from earmarked reserves as detailed in the table in section 6 of the report is approved

21. 2018-19 YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that informed Members of the Council's performance against key measures in 2018-19.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources outlined the most significant trends, the background to them and work being undertaken for improvement. She reminded Members that Cabinet had previously approved (12 June 2019) the establishment of two new posts to deliver effective performance, governance and strategy management and that these would contribute to a sharpening of the data to be presented in future reports. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy referred to the positive progress made against targets for the determination of major and minor planning applications (CDG5, CDG6) and commented that this would be good news for developers considering investment in the city. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods drew Members' attention to the constructive feedback made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting of 1 July 2019 (Minute 18), especially around customer telephone waiting times (CST2). She reassured them that the concerns raised made were being addressed. The Cabinet Member for Environment commended the format of the report. This was reiterated by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy who further stated that it enabled focus to be directed to both successes and areas requiring improvement.

RESOLVED that the Year End Performance Report for 2018-19 at Appendix 1 of the report is noted.

22. COUNCIL TAX - CIVIL PENALTIES

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that recommended the introduction of a Council Tax Civil Penalty Policy for those residents who make incorrect statements or fail to notify a change in their circumstances, fail to provide information or knowingly provide incorrect information therefore obtaining an incorrect council tax discount, reduction or an exemption from their council tax account.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources placed the report in the context of current practice by other local authorities. The Cabinet Member for Environment commented that it was right for people deliberately misreporting to be penalised. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy expressed approval that the proposed policy would account for individual circumstances so that people who had innocently provided incorrect information might not face the penalty.

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RESOLVED that a Council Tax Civil Penalty Policy is implemented from 17 July 2019 which would see a £70 civil penalty imposed on those residents who knowingly obtain an incorrect discount or exemption from their council tax as outlined in Appendix A of the report.

23. GLOUCESTER HERITAGE STRATEGY

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy that informed Members of the approach taken to the production of the Gloucester Heritage Strategy 2019-29, presented the representations received on the draft strategy, and sought to secure Members' approval to adopt the strategy.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy introduced the report and gave the background to it. He emphasised the importance of making the most of the city's rich heritage and advised that an action plan would be prepared to ensure its potential is realised and facilitate bids to outside bodies. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy drew Members' attention to the proposed creation of a 'Local List' as part of the Great Place scheme (Appendix 1 3.4) and reassured them that a report would be presented for Cabinet to consider any nominations for such a scheme following public consultation. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure noted with approval that working with both partners and communities was embedded within the policy. He further commented on what has already been achieved and stated that he was looking forward to what will be achieved in future.

RESOLVED that the Gloucester Heritage Strategy 2019 to 2029 be adopted.

24. KINGS QUARTER REGENERATION

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy that sought to secure approval for the lease surrender of Bruton Way car park, extension of the project management contract and the necessary capital enabling costs to carry forward the momentum generated by the Kings Quarter regeneration project and ready the site for development.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy summarised the report and stressed the importance of continuing the momentum of regeneration for Kings Quarter. He further advised members on the benefits of the proposals to remove buildings in visibly poor condition and conduct archaeological investigations which will inform future development.

RESOLVED that:

(1) the following activities be approved to assist in achieving the accelerated delivery programme for enabling the development of Kings Quarter and ensuring that the pace of change can be continued if planning permission is granted:

a) the surrender back to the Council of the present long lease to NCP Limited for the Bruton Way multi-storey car park at the earliest opportunity,

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upon terms approved by the Property Commissioning Manager in consultation with the Head of Policy and Resources.

b) the extension of the contract for the Kings Quarter dedicated project management resource from 7th July 2019 until 6th January 2020, as envisaged by the original Cabinet approval dated 22nd June 2016, with Reef Estates Limited and to authorise the waiver of the contract rules under rule 6.1.5.

c) the allocation of additional costs required in respect of the determination of the Planning application for Kings Quarter and Kings Square as set out in Appendix A Table 1 of the report.

d) the demolition of Bruton Way Car Park, Bentinck House and partial demolition of the northern end of Grosvenor House.

(2) it be noted that subject to any necessary consents being obtained and the bids from the procurements listed in recommendation (1) and Appendix A, Table 1 in the report being in budget the Council will award the contracts (having first followed the appropriate decision-making process) to enable those works to be undertaken after determination of the planning application.

(3) it be noted that further budget will need to be identified for the next phases of the regeneration programme. Future Enabling Works associated with this have been listed in Appendix A Table 2 of the report.

Time of commencement: 6.00 pm

Time of conclusion: 6.40 pm

Chair