



CABINET

MEETING : Wednesday, 4th December 2019

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

Others in Attendance

Managing Director

Corporate Director

Corporate Director

Head of Place

Head of Communities

Accountancy Manager

Democratic Services and Elections Officer

APOLOGIES : Cllr. Watkins

69. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

70. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6th November 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

71. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

There were no public questions.

72. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

There were no petitions or deputations.

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

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

74. SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ACTIVITY

Cabinet considered the joint report of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods and Cabinet Member for Environment that updated Members on the trial devolution of part of the grass cutting contract in Podsmead ward to the Stewkley Enterprise Agency and requested approval for continuation of the current contractual arrangements and extension of the trial to other wards.

The Cabinet Member for Environment highlighted the benefits of the devolution, such as young people learning new skills, and advantages of extending it to other areas of the city. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy noted that it had been a highly positive move. He sought reassurance that the flexibility to extend would be retained when the contract is retendered in 2022. The Cabinet Member for Environment confirmed that it would be kept going as long as there were social benefits and that opportunities to extend it elsewhere would continue to be taken. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure asked for confirmation that the ride-on mower donated by Amey (8.2) could be easily utilised on sites other than Podsmead. The Cabinet Member for Environment advised Members that it could as it was roadworthy.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the review of the grass cutting trial in Podsmead ward as delivered by the Stewkley Enterprise Agency be noted
- (2) it be approved that the continuation of grass cutting in Podsmead ward and note that the Head of Communities will, following the grant of a waiver of the Council's Contract Rules, in consultation with the Council's Solicitor, enter into a new services contract with by the Stewkley Enterprise Agency following engagement with stakeholders to confirm contract scope
- (3) plans to explore a further trial of the scheme in Matson & Robinswood ward and any other community which comes forward be approved
- (4) it be noted that if the Podsmead Clearance Team and Podsmead Big Local become a legal entity, the Head of Communities will consider whether to terminate the contract with Stewkley Enterprise Agency and enter into a new arrangement with the new entity (subject to the grant of waiver).

75. HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING POLICY

Cabinet considered the joint report of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods and Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy that sought approval for the draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 to go to public consultation and approval of the Rough Sleeping Action Plan 2019.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy introduced the report. He thanked the Head of Communities and her team for the impressive depth of their work and advised Members that the feedback from stakeholders had been positive.

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The Cabinet Member for Environment commented that it was good to combine Homelessness and Housing Strategies to better address need. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure reminded Members of the importance of taking action in what was a complex area. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy drew Members' attention to the range of measures to raise standards in private sector accommodation (Appendix 1) and commented that it was right to explore all options and work with private landlords to address issues. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy stated that although it was important for the administration to be ambitious and challenge itself, the expectations for vulnerable people must not be unrealistic and that it was essential that their voices be listened to.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) it be noted that the engagement work carried out to create the draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and the involvement of key stakeholders, including pre-consultation engagement
- (2) the Draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy can go out to public consultation
- (3) the Rough Sleeping Action Plan be adopted.

76. PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTERS 1 & 2 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 Quarters 1 & 2 of 2019/20.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources summarised the key points and trends of the report. She thanked the recently appointed Performance and Improvement Officer for his work. The Cabinet Member for Environment commented that the clarity of the presentation of data enabled problems to be readily identified and addressed. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy noted the trends for planning applications (CGD5, CGD6) and advised Members that these should be seen in the context of the overall customer experience and advised that the number of complaints had reduced dramatically. He further commented that he and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy had been working hard to build relationships with applicants and improve their experience of the process.

RESOLVED that the Quarters 1 & 2 Performance Report 2019/20 at Appendix 1 of the report be noted.

77. MONEY PLAN 2020-25 & BUDGET PROPOSALS

Cabinet considered the report of the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that sought to review the Council's Draft Money Plan for recommendation to Council.

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The Leader of the Council stated that there were no proposed savings required over the period of the Money Plan and placed this achievement in the context of progress made against the Council Plan despite a difficult financial climate. He thanked everyone who had contributed, not least the previous Leader, and confirmed that the administration would continue to focus on supporting people in need. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources highlighted some of the pressures since the Chancellor of the Exchequer deferred the full spending review and noted that the healthy performance of the Property Investment Strategy had helped mitigate these. She further emphasised that the Council must continue to be prudent in uncertain times. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy drew Members' attention to the investments to address housing need (Appendix 3) and noted that these combined with the affordable housing initiatives being worked on would make a real difference to people's lives. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy commented that having taken difficult decisions early, the Council was in a position to make investments such as those in Kings Quarter and Kings Square.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the assumptions contained in the Council's draft Money Plan from 2020/21 to 2024/25 and revisions to the draft revenue budget be approved.
- (2) the uncertainties regarding future incomes, as shown in this report and Appendix 1, and the need to update the Draft Money Plan when there is more certainty regarding Central Government financing, be noted

78. FINANCIAL MONITORING QUARTER 2 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 2nd Quarter ended 30th September 2019.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources summarised the position in each portfolio. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure noted that the overspend in his own portfolio was relatively small. He commented that it should be seen in the light of the successful relocation of the Tourist Information Centre and advised them of increasing footfall in the Museum of Gloucester and staff efforts to raise income. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy expressed disappointment that the major project planning fees expected had not been received and stated that these were beyond the control of the Council. The Cabinet Member for Environment reminded Members that this reporting period ended in September so that the positive impact of the recent arrangement with the environmental and waste services contractor Amey was not reflected in the report.

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RESOLVED it be noted that:

- (1) the forecast year end position is currently for a decrease to the Council's General Fund balance of £222k 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.

79. TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that updated Members on treasury management activities for the six month period of 1st April 2019 to 30th September 2019 in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Code of Practice for Treasury Management.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources highlighted the key features of the report and especially the borrowing position. The Cabinet Member for Environment referred to the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) interest rate forecasts in Appendix 2 and asked if they had increased since the report had been published. The Accountancy Manager confirmed that they had and advised that approximately 1% be added to each for a more current picture. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure stated that he was very impressed with the level of funds available for investment purposes (3.2) and thanked both Accountancy Managers for their work.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

**Time of commencement: 6.00 pm
Time of conclusion: 6.25 pm**

Chair