



CABINET

MEETING : Wednesday, 13th October 2021

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

Others in Attendance

Cllr Radley

Head of Policy and Resources

Head of Communities

Democratic and Electoral Services Officer

APOLOGIES : Cllr Hudson

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

35. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15th September 2021 are confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

36. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

There were no public questions.

37. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

There were no petitions or deputations.

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

Councillor Radley addressed the Cabinet regarding the proposed disposal of public open space on the junction of Armscroft Road and Barnwood Road known as Cross Keys Rest Garden (agenda item 7).

Councillor Radley referred to paragraph 3.3 of the report relating to the location of a new bench which would be provided by the developer. She asked if the recommendations in the report could be expanded to include where the bench would be sited. She further asked if there would be a guarantee from the developer to ensure public access to the bench and that it would be maintained.

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The Leader of the Council advised that retaining the small section of the open space would create challenges to the existing planning permission and this was not a valid reason to strengthen the recommendations further. He would ask the Asset Management Officer to liaise with Councillor Radley to look at options as to where the bench could be sited ensure Councillor Radley is updated on progress. The Leader of the Council thanked Councillor Radley for her attendance.

39. PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE ARMSCROFT ROAD/BARNWOOD ROAD

Cabinet considered the report of the Leader of the Council that presented the points raised at the Cabinet Meeting of 14th July 2021 regarding the disposal of Public Open Space at Armscroft Road/Barnwood Road.

Cabinet was asked to resolve that further information and objections be noted and that the disposal of the whole site be approved after consideration of the objections.

The Leader of the Council advised that the report had first been considered in July and after reviewing objections and allegations regarding the proposed disposal of the site, further information had been sought so that Cabinet could be assured that the process had been dealt with appropriately. A timeline of events formed Appendix 2 which provided the information necessary to validate the appropriateness of the process.

It was noted that the developers had been keen to proceed which caused them to start before all the processes had been dealt with. The Developer had been advised to stop the works on the site once the Council became aware.

The public open space had been described as low quality, low community value and low biodiversity value and was costly to maintain. The recommendation therefore was to dispose to permit the provision of much needed new housing. A condition had now been attached that the Developer provide a bench for local residents to use and consideration would be given on where the bench would be sited.

Cabinet Members recognised this would be a sensible approach to provide much needed housing at a suitable location.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the further information and objections received in response to the s123 notices are noted
- (2) the disposal of the whole site is approved following consideration.

40. ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT UPDATE

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Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods that provided an update to Members on the support offered to current and former members of the armed forces, reservists and their families as part of our commitment to the Gloucestershire Armed Forces Community Covenant.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources presented the report on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods who had been engaged at an LGA course and unable to attend the meeting.

The report summarised the commitment of the authority towards the Gloucester Armed Forces community covenant. Gloucester City Council were a member of this covenant and voluntarily pledged the mutual support between the people of Gloucester and the local Armed Forces community.

The sole purpose of the Armed Forces Covenant was to encourage organisations and local communities to support the Armed Forces community, promoting understanding and increasing awareness among the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces, and to recognise and remember the sacrifices that members of the forces had made.

The covenant was part of the UK wide Armed Forces Covenant which set out the principles that veterans and those serving be treated with respect, supported and ensure fair treatment.

Among the Gloucester based covenant commitments, was a pledge to provide support for ex-armed forces members who become homeless and ensure their war disablement pensions were not taken into account if they had been receiving benefits.

Cabinet noted that Gloucester City Council had been working in a county partnership to create a 'SERVICE LINE'. This would be a dedicated telephone line for any serving military personnel or veterans, where assistance would be provided relating to housing, justice or benefits, whilst cutting through the red tape of certain mental health issues, which many veterans could suffer from.

It was highlighted that during the Autumn, Gloucester City Council would apply for the Bronze Defence Employer Recognition that would encourage employers to support members of the forces and would see the Council commit to a range of requirements which included providing support to those with links to the forces applying for jobs.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure commented on the proactive approach and referred to paragraph 7.4 of the report and asked if Gloucester City Council front line staff would be offered online training.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources advised that the Customer Services team had regular training sessions on Wednesday mornings. Discussions would take place with HR to have this included in the training programme.

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The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy, commented that in his capacity as the Armed Forces County Council Champion, he had been approached by the LGA to participate in the Community Covenant which would work closely with the City Council. He added that an Armed Forces Bill was due to be presented to Parliament .

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy expressed his thanks to the Community Wellbeing Team and the Housing Teams for all their work.

RESOLVED that work undertaken to support current and ex-service personnel as part of the Council's ongoing commitment to the Covenant is endorsed.

41. ANNUAL REPORT FOR ENERGY COSTS AND ENERGY REDUCTION PROJECTS

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Environment that sought to inform Members of the Council's energy costs and projects to reduce energy usage.

The Cabinet Member for Environment advised that in 2012 a revised energy management strategy had been introduced which committed to reduce energy use across the Council's buildings by 2% per annum and to reduce its annual spend by £50k per annum.

The Council had a large number of buildings which used a considerable amount of gas and electricity. In 2019-20 gas and electricity costs had averaged to £1549 per day. The costs for 2020-21 were not yet finalised but were estimated to drop significantly to £969 per day. It was possible that the result of a marked lower use of gas and electricity had been a result of Covid. Although it was noted that general energy prices would rise sharply over the next year, the Council was shielded for the 12 months by a price cap. This would give the Council an opportunity to look at other opportunities to introduce more energy saving initiatives.

A detailed CLS report commissioned in 2020 recognised a number of high consuming energy sites as being available to deliver optimum fuel and energy savings, such as the Oxstalls Tennis Centre, Crematorium, GL1, North Warehouse and The Guildhall. These projects were in the process of development and evaluation.

It was noted that the pool fleet vehicles had reduced the Council's carbon output and the implementation of pure electric vehicles would extend this. The new RCV fleet that will be purchased by Ubico would include electric vehicles. The installation of the ground source heat pump and solar panels at Plock Court was estimated to make energy savings of £35K.

The Cabinet Member for Environment commented that it was hoped that the demonstrated success of the Council projects would encourage others to start

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making their own savings which would start Gloucester on the road to being Carbon neutral by 2045 which had been driven by changes at Government level.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) progress in the reduction of energy usage and consumption in the year 2020-21 is noted
- (2) continued implementation of projects to save energy in the Council's main buildings as set out in section 4 of the report is supported.

42. TOGETHER GLOUCESTER 2 – PROGRAMME REVIEW

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that provided an update and summary of the work undertaken as part of the Together Gloucester Transformation Programme (Phases 1-2) and sought Members to note that capacity has been created to support ongoing transformation work in support of the Council's priorities and objectives.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources asked Cabinet to note the work of the programme and endorse the progress made and confirm the adoption of transformation being built into the day to day makeup of the authority, ensuring that it does not stagnate and that the Council could continue to respond to changing resident needs.

Within the structure of Together Gloucester there had been an opportunity to work smarter, not harder and to ensure that the revised authority footprint had improved efficiencies to ensure continued strong services to the residents of Gloucester. Although the financial savings which had been achieved as part of the programme were substantial, it was key to remember that the objectives of the programme were to also ensure that GCC was fit for the 21st century and beyond.

The work within the Together Gloucester programme had seen many milestones many of which were summarized in the report.

The programme had been designed by officers of the authority with specialist support from Ignite, ensuring that the structure of GCC was fit for purpose for the challenges faced in the future. This had seen secondments from various GCC departments and upskilling of officers in transformation or website skills. As we moved into 2021/22 financial year, the decision to embed transformation in the DNA of the council was taken and this was now seen as a business-as-usual activity.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources expressed her thanks to several key figures in the Together Gloucester Programme; all of the Senior Leadership Team, Service Managers, HR, Communications and Customer Services. She also thanked the Transformation and Commercialisation Manager who had worked at the forefront of the transformation journey, along with his team of business architects.

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It was noted that the My Gloucester functionality had been long promoted by the Deputy Leader of the Council within the Councillor population. One Member had confirmed that he had become a convert and had found it much easier to track casework and to ensure that residents were receiving regular updates. In conjunction with the efficiency savings made from reducing the Here to Help emails, showed that Gloucester City were on the right pathway.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the information set out in the report is noted
- (2) the action taken by the Council as part of the Together Gloucester Transformation process is welcomed and endorsed
- (3) the closure of Together Gloucester Phase 2 and the incorporation of future work into ongoing “business as usual” is formally endorsed.

43. ICT SERVICES: OPTIONS REPORT

To consider the report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources that presented options for the delivery of ICT services beyond the current contract end date of 30 April 2022.

Cabinet noted that the Civica ITO contract had been extended in 2020 for a period of one year to enable additional time to consider options for the provision of IT services to Gloucester City Council, including the possibility of combining in a shared service IT provision with the County Council. Both authorities had worked hard to identify how to work more closely together, on reflection the recommendations placed to Cabinet are based upon the authorities appetite for risk.

The options considered by the authority were outlined in section 4 of the report and explain in detail the pro and cons of each option. As per the introduction to the report, the appendices were excluded papers. Cabinet were made aware that they would need to go into private session if they wished to discuss the contents of the report.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the assessment and analysis set out in the report are received and noted
- (2) the option to procure the services via a compliant framework agreement is taken forward as the preferred option
- (3) Gloucestershire County Council is thanked for their co-operation in reviewing the shared service option
- (4) delegated authority is given to the Head of Policy and Resources (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

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and the Council Solicitor) to determine procurement route, contract duration, conclude contractual negotiations, and implement these decisions.

44. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the following item of business (Agenda item 13) on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public are present during consideration of this item there will be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended.

45. ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY TO MEET TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION NEEDS

Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy that sought the acquisition of a property to provide temporary accommodation.

RESOLVED as per the recommendations in the confidential report.

Time of commencement: 6.00 pm
Time of conclusion: 6.30 pm

Chair