



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING : Monday, 27th February 2023

PRESENT : Cllrs. Pullen (Chair), Durdey (Spokesperson), Ackroyd, Campbell, Castle, Dee, Evans, Gravells MBE, Hilton, Kubaszczyk and Wilson

Others in Attendance

Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor Richard Cook

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources, Councillor Hannah Norman

Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, Councillor Andrew Lewis

Director of Policy and Resources.

Head of Culture.

City Archaeologist.

Open Spaces Strategy Team Leader.

Democratic and Electoral Services Officer.

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. Field, Hudson and Sawyer

97. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

98. DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPPING

There were no declarations of party whipping.

99. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 30th January were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

100. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

There were no public questions.

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101. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

There were no petitions nor deputations.

102. ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- 102.1 The Director of Policy and Resources provided a verbal update on the latest position on the webcasting of City Council meetings. He advised that the City Council had commenced discussions with Civica and that the preferred option of the council was to facilitate meeting recordings through the Modern Gov application as this had been identified as the best value and most effective option. He further explained that the City Council would be one of a number of pilot councils testing the software over the coming months.
- 102.2 The Chair, Councillor Pullen, asked for an estimated timeframe as to when the webcasting of meetings was likely to be in place. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources, Councillor Hannah Norman, advised that she had recently discussed the matter with members of the IT team during a Performance Portfolio meeting and had stressed the importance of moving webcasting forward. She confirmed that a provisional timetable would be circulated to Members when available.
- 102.3 Councillor Norman noted that there were challenges with the acoustics of the Civic Suite in North Warehouse which would make installing alternative streaming equipment very expensive. She advised that the Modern Gov option would involve webcasting council meetings through the camera on individual Members' laptop machines.
- 102.4 Councillor Hilton raised concerns that Members might not be visible through laptop cameras as many Members chose to stand up when making speeches at Council meetings. Councillor Norman responded that options such as laptop stands were being considered.
- 102.5 In response to a further query from Councillor Hilton regarding the webcasting budget, Councillor Norman confirmed that it was likely to be between £25k and £30k. The Director of Policy and Resources further explained that the City Council would be receiving a discount from Civica on the full cost of the streaming software as it was a pilot scheme, and that the package included provision to record 72 meetings. Councillor Norman pointed out that with this package, there would therefore be the potential to webcast other meetings outside of full Council.
- 102.6 Councillor Wilson queried how members of the public would be able to view the meeting recordings. Councillor Norman advised that members of the public would be able to view meetings via a link on the City Council website.
- 102.7 Councillor Wilson commented that the City Council was one of two of the Gloucestershire Councils which did not have webcasting facilities in place and noted that he was pleased that a concept had been identified. Councillor Norman reiterated that she had made it clear to colleagues in the IT Team that webcasting should be a key focus, however recovery from the cyber

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incident which the City Council experienced in December 2021 had taken priority.

- 102.8 The Chair reiterated his request for a timescale for meeting webcasting which Councillor Norman stated she was not in a position to provide at the moment.
- 102.9 In response to a further query from the Chair, Councillor Norman confirmed that she would be willing to make enquiries and provide an indicative timescale to Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members at a future meeting. She noted that it was important to ensure that the correct Officers were consulted and invited to the meeting to assist with Members' questions, and it was agreed that the update would take the form of a stand-alone agenda item.
- 102.10 Councillor Hilton asked whether an options appraisal had taken place and expressed the view that Members should have sight of the analysis of the options which were considered for webcasting. Councillor Norman noted that the IT Service Manager had undertaken an appraisal looking at a range of options, and that the outcome of that options appraisal was that the Modern Gov solution was the most cost-effective. It was agreed that follow-up enquiries would be made with Officers with a view of sharing the options appraisal with Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members. Councillor Norman reiterated that it was important to be mindful of the council's budget for this facility.

RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **NOTE** the update.

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

RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **NOTE** the Work Programme.

104. PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 3 REPORT

- 104.1 Councillor Norman introduced the Performance Monitoring Quarter 3 Report for 2022/23 and invited questions from Members.
- 104.2 Councillor Wilson referred to the Key Performance Indicator concerning the footfall at the Museum of Gloucester (CD & VE-1) and the narrative in the report noting that the exhibition programme had reached its income target for 2022/23 by the end of December 2022. He queried whether this suggested that the City Council was charging too much and asked how often prices were assessed. The Head of Culture explained that although footfall through the museum was measured, retail income from exhibitions was not necessarily linked to footfall. He noted that footfall at Gloucester Museum was still less than pre-pandemic levels but was increasing. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, Councillor Andrew Lewis, noted that

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increased income generated from exhibitions could be partly down to effective online promotion.

- 104.3 Councillor Hilton referred to H-25 concerning the number of affordable homes delivered and raised concerns that the City Council appeared to be struggling to meet the current target of 58.5. He asked what the administration intended to do meet this target. Councillor Norman advised that if Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members wanted detailed answers on a particular portfolio area, they needed to invite the relevant Cabinet Member to meetings. The Chair acknowledged that the Committee had had the opportunity to raise this question when the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy attended a previous meeting.
- 104.4 In response to a question from Councillor Wilson concerning PG-24 and the percentage of information governance responses compliant with statutory deadlines, Councillor Norman confirmed that it was possible that if a small number of individuals made a high volume of information requests, this could have an impact on response times.
- 104.5 In response to a follow-up query from Councillor Wilson, Councillor Norman explained that where several complex requests were issued to a particular service area, this could potentially cause a pressure point. She expressed the view that Members were privileged to have good working relationships with Officers and encouraged Members who were looking for information to interact with Officers at first instance before making an information governance request.

RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **NOTE** the report.

105. GLOUCESTER COVID-19 MEMORIAL PROGRESS UPDATE

- 105.1 The Leader of the Council, Councillor Richard Cook, advised Members that the progress update outlined the current position on the creation of a Covid-19 Memorial in Gloucester city. He stated that a location for the memorial had been agreed and the proposal was to erect the memorial in Gloucester Park opposite the Spa Road entrance gate. Councillor Cook further informed Members that the proposed concept was for a circle of stones and that each stone would represent a group of key workers providing essential services throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Councillor Cook confirmed that the Ecclesiastical Insurance and Financial Services company was involved in the project and it was hoped that local stone and local stone masons would be sourced in the construction of the monument. He added that the provisional title for the monument was 'We Stood Together' and that signage would be provided to explain the symbology.
- 105.2 Councillor Dee asked how the memorial would commemorate residents who had lost their lives during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Open Spaces Strategy Team Leader confirmed that the final design would commemorate individuals who has lost their lives to Covid-19, however the memorial was

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still in the planning stage and that stone masons at Gloucester Cathedral were still currently working on the design.

- 105.3 Councillor Dee expressed concerns about the provisional title for the monument 'We Stood Together', noting that proximity to other people was not permitted under Covid-19 restrictions. Councillor Cook noted that he understood Councillor Dee's point and that he would be willing to listen to alternative suggestions.
- 105.4 In response to a further question from Councillor Dee regarding involvement from the local community in the scheme, the Open Spaces Strategy Team Leader confirmed that once the design was in place, the council would engage with communities and seek their input. He provided an overview of the proposal at that stage, which consisted of a circle of stones representing each group of key workers as outlined in the progress update.
- 105.5 The Chair expressed the view that the proposed location in Gloucester Park was a good one and noted that he was pleased that Ecclesiastical Insurance and Financial Services were involved in the project. Referring to the proposed wording on the stones, he queried whether this wording would represent individual sectors, noting that it was important that the language could be clearly understood by all members of the public. The Open Spaces Strategy Team Leader reiterated that the monument was still in the planning stage, however there were plans to involve local apprentices in the image design.
- 105.6 In response to further comments from the Chair recognising the huge community effort throughout the pandemic and whether the memorial would pay tribute to volunteers such as those who assisted with food distribution, the Open Spaces Strategy Team Leader confirmed that the voluntary sector would be one of the groups of key workers included in the memorial.
- 105.7 Councillor Dee queried whether the memorial would refer to the contribution made by the private sector. The Open Spaces Strategy Team Leader explained that the groups of key workers set out in the progress update included all groups from the official Government list.
- 105.8 The Chair noted that he would like to see the voluntary sector recognised in its own identity and Councillor Gravells noted his agreement. Councillor Gravells further noted that it was important that the wording of the memorial was sensitive, and suggested that public health officials and faith leaders should also be tributed.
- 105.9 The Chair commented that Overview and Scrutiny Members wanted to be helpful and supportive of the project. He reflected on the major impact the Covid-19 pandemic had had on the lives of everyone in the UK and stated that it was important that the memorial was inclusive and recognised all contributions.
- 105.10 In response to an additional suggestion from Councillor Evans as to whether consideration might be to include the wording 'Gloucester' in the

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design, The Leader indicated that any suggestions or input from Overview and Scrutiny Members would be welcomed, and that explanatory signage would be key to explaining the context of the memorial. The Open Spaces Strategy Team Leader noted that the current plan was to make use of materials sourced from a local quarry in the Forest of Dean area.

105.11 A discussion ensued and Councillor Gravells suggested that if Members wanted to make any further suggestions, they provide details in writing directly to Councillor Cook and the Open Spaces Strategy Team Leader.

105.12 The Chair asked whether there was an indicative timescale for the memorial development. The Open Spaces Strategy Team Leader confirmed that he was not in a position to provide a timescale at that stage but would be in a position to update Members once he had discussed the latest developments with the stone masons. Councillor Cook expressed the view that the Covid-19 Memorial was not a project which should be rushed, reflecting on the amount of time taken to design and build fitting WWI and WWII memorials.

RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **NOTE** the update.

106. GLOUCESTER MONUMENTS REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

- 106.1 Councillor Cook introduced the report and explained that it sought to provide an update on progress made by the City Council on implementing the recommendations of the Gloucester City Monuments Review. He stated that the report had been produced in response to the recommendation made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when the report was initially submitted back in January 2022, that an update on progress be provided to the Committee in 12 months' time.
- 106.2 Councillor Cook advised Members that a summary of the recommendations made in the main Monuments Review report was provided in section 2 of the report and that an update on progress to date was included in section 4. He further informed Members that section 5 of the report set out the latest conclusions, suggestions and project risks.
- 106.3 The City Archaeologist advised the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of some additional updates which had taken place since the report was written in January 2023. He confirmed that a temporary exhibition exploring the life of George Whitefield was due to open at the Museum of Gloucester on 7th March 2023. The City Archaeologist further noted that the City Council was holding an exhibition in partnership with the University of Gloucestershire around June or July 2023. He also referenced the Blue Plaque on St Mary De Crypt School Room which he confirmed had now been edited in line with the recommendation of the Monuments Review.

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- 106.4 Councillor Wilson referred to the narrative in the report at 5.1 stating that ‘the first year of the implementation has seen mixed results.’ He expressed the view that the initial results were very positive and reflected on the challenges of implementing changes where the monuments were not in the ownership of the City Council, such as the United Reformed Church. Councillor Wilson noted that he was impressed with the progress to date and thanked the City Archaeologist for his work in attempting to implement the recommendations.
- 106.5 Councillor Wilson queried whether the Monuments Review implementation was putting pressure on the City Archaeologist’s workload. The City Archaeologist advised Members that the City Council had recently succeeded in obtaining some additional funding and it was hoped that this funding would be used to fund additional support from the Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology team.
- 106.6 In response to an additional question from Councillor Wilson regarding the artefacts pertaining to George Whitefield, the City Archaeologist explained that the creation of the permanent display at the Museum of Gloucester had been delayed as a result of the cyber incident however Museum of Gloucester staff had obtained the relevant artefacts. He noted that he was grateful to colleagues at the Museum of Gloucester for their assistance.
- 106.7 In response to a further query from Councillor Wilson, the City Archaeologist explained that the University of Gloucestershire had already funded some research and that he was cautiously optimistic that they would agree to funding the consultation exercise for education or interpretation projects.
- 106.8 The Chair referred to Councillor Wilson’s comments around the City Archaeologist’s workload and time, and expressed the view that it was very important to make sure that sufficient funding and resources were put in place to carry the implementation of the recommendations forward. The City Archaeologist expressed that in his view, National Lottery funding would be key to producing the education or interpretation resource but reiterated that the University of Gloucestershire might be in a position to fund the consultation element.
- 106.9 In response to a query from the Chair regarding the recommendation from the initial Monuments Review report for the City Council to engage with the owners of Baker’s Quay to discuss options for the repurposing of the public space, the City Archaeologist confirmed that the City Council had held discussions with the site owners and their preference was to gradually distance the development from the Baker’s Quay name.
- 106.10 In response to a follow up question from the Chair regarding plans to repurpose the public space, the City Archaeologist noted that the square itself was privately owned, however the City Council was considering options around the nearby footpaths.
- 106.11 Councillor Wilson referred to the recommendation to consult with residents on each of the two identified Whitefield Street names. The City Archaeologist confirmed that one consultation with residents was complete,

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however the preferred approach to one of the Whitefield Streets was to develop an educational resource.

106.12 Councillor Hilton queried whether the City Archaeologist was certain that the streets in question were named after George Whitefield. The City Archaeologist confirmed that he was happy to check again but was confident that both streets were named after George Whitefield as 'Whitefield' was historically spelt in two different ways.

106.13 In response to an additional query from Councillor Hilton regarding Russell Street, the City Archaeologist noted that although it was always possible that the Monuments Review might have missed a site, he was not aware of any link with Transatlantic Slave Trade.

RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **NOTE** the update.

107. CULTURAL STRATEGY UPDATE

107.1 Councillor Lewis introduced the report and explained that the Cultural Strategy was a strategy for the whole city of Gloucester and delivered in partnership with the Gloucester Culture Trust (GCT). He reflected on some of the achievements which had been made against the Cultural Strategy, such as Gloucester Guildhall obtaining National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) Status and the completion of the Kings Square redevelopment which he felt had made the city centre more vibrant and had embedded culture in the city.

107.2 Councillor Lewis further noted that the latest residents' survey had shown a 9% increase in the level of pride in the city and felt this illustrated increased customer satisfaction. He advised Members that the strategy aimed to focus on increasing participation in the cultural life from the city from a diverse range of communities, including a focus on young people in particular.

107.3 Councillor Wilson referred to cultural events which had taken place at Kings Square and asked whether there were plans to repeat successful events from 2022, such as Polish Heritage Day, and whether there were plans for any new events in 2023. Councillor Lewis explained that event bookings at Kings Square were commissioned outside of the City Council however it was his understanding that events such as Polish Heritage Day would be repeated in 2023. He noted that the Kings Square event space was a public space to be used and that the Culture team welcomed ideas on new events. The Head of Culture further added that the City Council was assisting with the development of funding bids which would help develop the cultural event programme for Kings Square.

107.4 Councillor Campbell thanked Councillor Lewis and his team for improving the display of culture in Gloucester. She referred to the Mecca Bingo hall building which was currently vacant following the hall closure in 2022 and asked whether the City Council might have any interest in assisting with the development of the building into a cultural venue. Councillor Lewis confirmed

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that the team were aware of the closure of Mecca Bingo and confirmed that they would be very willing to support any organisation interested in developing the venue by assisting with funding applications.

- 107.5 Councillor Durdey noted that it was good to see the development of culture in the heart of Gloucester city and queried whether there was enough understanding of the views of residents across all council wards. Councillor Lewis noted that there was always more to be done and agreed to take away the point on considering more targeted consultation. The Head of Culture explained that as part of Gloucester Guildhall's new NPO status, there was a requirement to provide accurate and detailed reporting into audience demographic. He stated that this would help provide more detailed reporting which would assist with targeted consultation.
- 107.6 Councillor Ackroyd asked for an update on how the 2023 Retro Festival was progressing. Councillor Lewis responded that the City Council was in dialogue with the late Councillor Organ's family and that retro car owners would be invited back to take part in the festival. He noted that the current position was that Kings Square might not be the right location for the Retro Festival.
- 107.7 Councillor Hiton asked whether there were any proposals to make better use of the event space at Llanthony Secunda Priory. He reflected on his recent experience of attending a concert at the venue and noted that it could be used to host large events effectively. The Head of Culture confirmed that the City Council did have aspirations to hold more large-scale events in the future and intended to make use of Llanthony Secunda Priory as a large event venue. He noted that the Culture team would be scaling up the Guildhall event programme and had the option to move larger events over to alternative sites which could accommodate high capacity.
- 107.8 Councillor Castle expressed the view that the Tree of Light festival was an excellent event, particularly for school children and asked whether there were any plans to hold similar events in the future. Councillor Lewis confirmed that similar events were held on an annual basis however there were different themes each year. He noted that his preference would be to combine a future event with the Christmas Tree light switch-on.
- 107.9 Councillor Kubaszczyk asked whether there were any plans to measure footfall at events in Kings Square through counting the number of attendees. The Head of Culture noted that there was a facility to track footfall based on mobile phone data which could provide an indication of footfall in a certain area and noted that this data was available on the Visit Gloucester website. Councillor Lewis noted that where events took place over a wider area, such as Tall Ships or Gloucester Goes Retro, calculating footfall was more of a challenge.
- 107.10 The Chair referred to the objective in Appendix 1 of the report to broaden the cultural offer to support social and economic development. He noted that he had picked up on some criticism amongst smaller local and grassroots arts organisations who felt that larger organisations tended to be

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the preferred options for hosting events. Councillor Lewis noted that many of these organisations were Gloucester based, including the Music Works and Strike a Light, however he confirmed that smaller organisations who had an idea were more than welcome to approach the council and the Culture team would listen to their suggestions and help wherever possible.

107.11 In response to an additional query from the Chair regarding support for solo practitioners, Councillor Lewis advised that the Gloucester Culture Trust would be best placed to help those artists.

107.12 The Chair referred to the changes to the Board of the Gloucester Culture Trust and noted that the Board had recently appointed five new trustees and were still in the process of recruiting a new Chief Executive Officer and Chair. He asked whether Members should be concerned about the stability of the Trust. Councillor Lewis noted that he was very satisfied with the quality and skills of the new trustees and noted that the new NPO status had drawn interest from candidates further afield. The Head of Culture confirmed that the first interview for the position of Chief Executive Officer had taken place, and the interview for position of Chair was due to take place on Friday 3rd March.

107.13 In response to further comments from the Chair regarding the changes to the Board and whether the Cabinet Member could provide Members with assurances, Councillor Lewis confirmed that he had confidence in the new trustees.

107.14 Councillor Durdey referred to the narrative in the report concerning environmental implications and expressed that he would like to see environmental sustainability at the forefront and planning of any cultural event. Councillor Lewis noted his agreement with Councillor Durdey's comments and confirmed that the council would do as much as possible to facilitate environmentally friendly measures at cultural events, however this often depended on the type of event.

107.15 In response to additional comments from Councillor Durdey regarding single use plastics and recycling provision at events, the Head of Culture explained that no single use plastics were used in events ran by the City Council directly, and that the council did ask external organisers how they were making sure that their event was as environmentally friendly as possible. He confirmed that he was happy to take Councillor Durdey's comments back to the team.

107.16 Councillor Kubaszczyk noted that he was aware that smaller cultural organisations sometimes struggled to gain access to funding, noting that advertisements tended to be directed towards larger and more established organisations. He asked whether consideration could be given to creating a separate funding stream for smaller organisations. Councillor Lewis agreed that he would be willing to look into this request.

107.17 Councillor Gravells requested an update on the current position on the Picturedrome Theatre and former Ritz building. The Head of Culture

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confirmed that the building was being used by the SVA organisation as a studio and premises to develop artistic workshops. He noted that although the building was no longer being used as a theatre, it was still being used for creative purposes.

107.18 Councillor Gravells noted that the Picturedrome Theatre was situated in an ideal location with good parking facilities and queried how the City Council might be able to encourage the owners to work with the council. The Head of Culture noted that the City Council did not own the building, however the Culture team had engaged with the SVA on a number of occasions and had funded activities at the venue. He reiterated that it was no longer being utilised as a performance space however it was up to SVA as the users what they did with the space.

107.19 Councillor Gravells expressed the view that City Council could be more proactive in its involvement with the building and commented that he would follow the matter up with Councillor Lewis outside of the meeting. Councillor Lewis reiterated that the City Council had sponsored activities at the venue despite it not operating as an events space at the moment.

RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **NOTE** the report.

108. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 13th March 2023.

Time of commencement: 6.30 pm hours

Time of conclusion: 8.10 pm hours

Chair

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