

Cabinet

Tuesday, 16th November, 2010
6.00 - 6.42 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Colin Hay (Cabinet Member Corporate Services), Steve Jordan (Leader of the Council), Andrew McKinlay (Cabinet Member Sport and Culture), John Rawson (Cabinet Member Built Environment), Klara Sudbury (Cabinet Member Housing and Safety), John Webster (Cabinet Member Finance and Community Development) and Roger Whyborn (Cabinet Member Sustainability)

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none declared.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of 26 October were approved as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

None received.

5. STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING

The Leader invited the Chief Executive to introduce his report. The Leader explained that the report had been prepared for the Staff and Support Services Committee and was due to go to Council in December for a final decision. In view of the importance of the issue he had requested that it was considered by Cabinet to enable them to give their opinion.

The Chief Executive explained how Strategic Commissioning provided a pragmatic response to meet the challenges both nationally and locally. These included the Government initiatives regarding the Big Society and Community Based Budgeting as well as budgetary pressures at a local level, including the need to review discretionary services. The council had already had some good success in joining up with others to deliver shared services and this formed a good basis for Strategic Commissioning going forward.

His report outlined how Strategic Commissioning would provide a framework for future strategy, based on what would work, and how it would provide better outcomes to local people. The new structure would enable strategic choices to be made over the next few years. Strong political leadership would be very

important, as would effective scrutiny so it was essential to get members fully engaged. He was aware that some members objected to the title of 'Strategic Commissioning' and in response he would encourage them to understand the process rather than the name.

He was aware that several members had expressed concern about the organisation's ability to cope with the reduced capacity if the senior management structure was reduced too quickly. To address this concern, he referred to the amendment which had been circulated at the start of the meeting. This recommended that a one-off resource of £80,000 would be made available to fill any capacity gaps. This sum had originally been allocated to the sourcing strategy work streams but had not been spent.

In response to a question from a member, the Chief Executive explained how the council would cope if residents had opposing views regarding how services should be delivered. He suggested that in this situation it would be necessary to take a step back and first clarify the objectives before trying to bring agencies together to reach a common understanding.

Several members of Cabinet spoke on the proposals and covered the following points.

- A member commended Strategic Commissioning as a systematic approach to determine how services should be delivered and achieved cost savings at the same time. This made good sense regardless of the budget situation.
- Member input would be key, particularly in helping to provide the public view on service delivery.
- The additional funding would provide extra capacity and give the project the best possible start.
- Strategic Commissioning was a difficult concept to sell and this could be facilitated by giving examples where options for service delivery had been considered recently, e.g café provision in the parks.
- It would be important to emphasise that Strategic Commissioning was not another word for privatisation and there were no assumed outcomes. The approach would allow service requirements to be analysed and decisions made on how best to satisfy those requirements in the current economic climate. High-quality services would be maintained.
- The decision to set up a new resources division was welcomed and would provide significant savings and more cost-effective management.
- It was acknowledged that some Members were not happy with the term "strategic commissioning" and it was important that they understood the process. When a service was being reviewed, clearly the Cabinet Member would have a role but it was important that the involvement of other members in the process was clearly defined.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. The Chief Executive's proposals for a Strategic Commissioning Council and supporting new Council structure as set out in this report and in Appendices A and B be endorsed**
- 2. It be recommended that Council approves the Chief Executive's proposals for a Strategic Commissioning Council and supporting**

new Council structure as set out in this report and in Appendices A and B

- 3. It be recommended that Council set aside a 'one off' resource of £80,000, funded from a virement of the unspent allocation to fund sourcing strategy work streams, to support the significant business change required during 2011/12 in order to deliver some of the councils key projects including GO.**

6. REVIEW OF NORTH PLACE & PORTLAND STREET DEVELOPMENT BRIEF & CIVIC PRIDE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The Cabinet Member Built Environment introduced the report. The report explained that on 27 July 2010 Cabinet had approved a consultation exercise on the proposed revisions of the North Place and Portland Street Development Brief and its associated technical appendix; the Cheltenham Civic Pride Urban Design Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). These revisions were considered necessary by the Cheltenham Development Task Force in order to reflect current market conditions and enable greater flexibility in the type and mix of uses that could be accommodated on the site.

He stressed that whilst the SPD was far more flexible than before, there would still be high standards set for the quality of the development.

Consultation formally took place between 23rd August and 1st October 2010 and the comments have now been considered and the documents revised accordingly. The key changes are set out under paragraph 4.3 of this report. A full schedule of the comments received and the proposed changes to each document is provided at Appendix A (for the SPD) and Appendix B (for the Development Brief).

This consultation had been key to the development of the brief and a wide range of comments had been received. He was pleased that many of the suggestions had now been incorporated. He thanked the Strategic Land Use Team for their work in carrying out the consultation and drafting responses.

He referred to the proposed amendments to the recommendations which had been circulated at the start of the meeting. The first one related to car parking where he said it was important to maintain a stated minimum of public car parking spaces. The reference to underground car parking as an option had also been reinstated. The second amendment was in response to comments from the Civic Society that Portland Street may not be the best site for the 6-bay bus node as it could impair the vision for this street becoming a green gateway into the town. The amendment gave flexibility to the developers by suggesting that the bus node could be located anywhere in the North Place/Portland Street site and potentially in North Place.

Members of Cabinet supported the Development brief and SPD. They welcomed the flexibility but emphasised that quality must not be compromised and good design was essential if the vision was to be achieved.

RESOLVED THAT:

1. **That the revisions to the Cheltenham Civic Pride Urban Design Framework Supplementary Planning Document and the North Place and Portland Street Development Brief be approved, subject to the additional amendments set out at (2) and (3) below, and that it be recommended that Council adopts them as amended**

2. **That the proposed wording at 3.39(ii) of the Supplementary Planning Document, “About 300 public car parking spaces” is not approved and that the previous wording be reinstated, namely:**

“A minimum of 300 public car parking spaces. Developers are likely to be asked to consider two different options for the public car park: one underground and the other over-ground.”

with consequent changes being made wherever the number of car park spaces is referred to in the Development Brief.

3. **That the proposed wording of the Development Brief in Design Principle D, sub-section e. be amended as follows:**

“A 6-bay bus node for local and national services, to include appropriate interchange and support facilities, will be accommodated at the southern end of the North Place/Portland Street site, potentially in North Place.

with a consequent change being made to Design Principle E, sub-section h(i) to delete the words “including the bus node”.

7. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS

Leader Briefing

The Leader informed members of his visit to Malvern Hills District Council along with the Chief Executive and the Cabinet Member Corporate Services. They had discussed a range of options for sharing services and although it had only been an exploratory meeting, it had been a useful visit.

Regarding Local Enterprise Partnerships, he advised that the status of the Gloucestershire/Swindon/Wiltshire bid was currently amber. He understood that the county council had received some government advice on how the bid could be improved. Consequently the bid was still ongoing.

Chairman