

Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 11th July, 2011

6.00 - 7.45 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Anne Regan (Chair), Chris Coleman, Rowena Hay, Diggory Seacome, Duncan Smith, Jo Teakle, Jon Walklett and Simon Wheeler
Co-optees:	James Harrison and Karl Hemming
Also in attendance:	Richard Gibson (Policy and Partnerships Manager), Jane Griffiths (Director of Commissioning), Craig Mortiboys (Healthy Communities Partnership Manager), Pat Pratley (Executive Director), Klara Sudbury (Cabinet Member Housing and Safety) and Wilf Tomany (Urban Design Manager)

Minutes

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Vice-Chair, Councillor Hay, confirmed that Councillor Smith had resigned as Chairman of the committee; she thanked him for all of his hard work whilst in this role.

The Vice-Chair was aware that Councillor Regan was a willing volunteer.

Councillor Hay proposed Councillor Regan as Chair of the Social & Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Smith.

Upon a vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED that Councillor Regan be the Chair of the Social & Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Regan took the chair and thanked members for inviting her to take the seat of Chair, of which Councillor Smith would be a 'hard act to follow'.

2. APOLOGIES

The Cabinet Member Sport and Culture had given his apologies.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

4. AGREEMENT OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THE 9 MAY 2011

The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated with the agenda.

Upon a vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 9 May 2011 be agreed and signed as an accurate record.

The Chair, signed the minutes on behalf of those that had been present at the last meeting.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

No public questions or petitions had been received.

6. MATTERS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

No matters were referred to the committee.

7. CABINET MEMBER BRIEFING

Cabinet Member Sport and Culture had given his apologies.

The Cabinet Member Housing and Safety did not intend to discuss items which formed part of the agenda and raised no additional items.

No questions were put to the Cabinet Member Housing and Safety.

8. OLYMPICS 2012 UPDATE AND ASSOCIATED PROJECTS

The Chair introduced the item and remarked how exceptionally lucky the town of Cheltenham was to have been selected as part of the Torch Relay.

The Healthy Communities Partnership Manager stressed that he had endeavoured to include as much detail as possible given that he was not yet at liberty to share all of the details. He proceeded to highlight key points within the paper.

On the 18 May it was announced that Cheltenham had been selected as one of the 66 sites to host the Torch Relay which would commence from Lands End on the 19 May 2012 and embark upon a 70 day tour across the length and breadth of the UK.

Work had been underway since 2009, when a countywide proposal was submitted to attract the Torch Relay into Gloucestershire. The proposal identified Cheltenham Racecourse as the most appropriate venue to host the evening celebration within the county. At this point official confirmation that this venue would play host to the celebration was still awaited.

Thus far the only detail to have been officially confirmed was the date on which the Torch Relay would arrive in Cheltenham, Wednesday 23 May 2012. The route across the UK was as yet, unknown, this would not be publicised until next year and this demonstrated the tight parameters within which Officers were working.

In total, 8,000 Torchbearers would carry the torch, with half of those being aged between 12 and 24 years of age and all of whom would be identified through various nomination processes.

The original Olympic Legacy Working Group formed part of the 'Olympic Torch Relay Community Task Force', which now included Gloucestershire Highways, Police, local media and local representatives of the three national sponsors of the 2012 Olympics.

The cost of the evening celebration would be funded by LOCOG and the national sponsors but the financial responsibility of staging the events needed to be met locally and included the cost of policing and stewarding the celebration event, managing crowd safety along the route of the Torch Relay and the clean up operation. There would be a cost associated to CBC but a figure had not yet been established.

Item 5 onwards of the paper detailed other associated developments and/or discussions.

The following responses were given by the Healthy Communities Partnership Manager to questions from members of the committee;

- As host communities for the Torch Relay in Gloucestershire, both CBC and Gloucestershire County Council were able to nominate one guaranteed torch bearer.
- The 'Summer Sport Programme for Young People' provided a broad range of opportunities for young people aged 8 to 16/17 years, with different aspects of the programme specifically aimed at different age ranges.
- The cost of staging the event would be met by CBC and GCC and it was being suggested that the Police would not pass on the cost of policing the event.
- No association with local sponsors was permitted but volunteers would be used to steward the event.
- LOCOG had proposed a route through Cheltenham to the evening celebration venue, but did not intend to make this public until approximately 3 weeks before the event for security reasons, although for planning purposes the final route would be shared with the Task Force in the autumn. This made it difficult to justify approaching community groups across Cheltenham at this stage and raising their hopes with no guarantee of the final outcome.
- Efforts would be made to avoid main routes at rush hour, although the final decision was ultimately with LOCOG and was therefore out of the Council's control.
- At this stage it was impossible to estimate how popular the Torch Relay and evening celebration would be. The celebration would take place between 6pm and 8pm and the assumption was that the Torch Relay would be during the event. It was envisaged that the route would be animated and community groups would play a key part in this.
- Each local authority was invited by LOCOG to submit a proposal to attract the Torch Relay into their respective areas. Given the existence of the 'Olympic Legacy Working Group' it was felt that a County bid would present a stronger case in order to secure an Evening Celebration event within the county.

A member queried whether it would be possible for the committee to consider an exempt (pink) paper on the proposed route through Cheltenham, in advance of its announcement. Officers would explore whether this would be possible.

The Chair thanked the Healthy Communities Partnership Manager for an informative update despite the restrictions placed upon him.

9. BUILDING RESILIENCE IN PROVIDERS OF COMMUNITY-BASED YOUTH WORK

The Cabinet Member Housing and Safety and the Policy and Partnerships Manager introduced the paper as circulated with the agenda.

Members were aware that the financial pressures faced by GCC had driven them to withdraw from direct provision of general services for young people in Gloucestershire.

GCC agreed to invest £50k in each of the six Gloucestershire districts in 2011-12 for the delivery of positive activities for young people, by the voluntary and community sector (VCS). In addition to the GCC funding the Cheltenham Community Safety/Stronger Communities Partnership and Cheltenham Health and Wellbeing Partnership, each agreed to contribute £5k, resulting in a total fund of £60k in Cheltenham.

The draft commissioning brief attached as Appendix A of the report had been slightly amended since its circulation. The intention had been to achieve as broad criteria as possible so as not to narrow its accessibility, though admittedly this process was reliant on the submission of bids. There remained a question mark over the funding limit.

As part of the 2011-12 budget, CBC agreed to allocate a one-off sum of £50k to support the sustainable development of additional capacity and expertise within the VCS providers of community-based youth work.

The Cabinet Member Housing and Safety was happy with progress of the commissioning process to date. Four expressions of interest were received in the first instance, which culminated in three detailed proposals (two organisations made a joint proposal).

The three proposals were equally interesting and representatives of each were invited to a question and answer session and whilst not in a position to reveal the successful bidder at this time, an announcement would be made at Cabinet on the 26 May. Members were offered a brief overview of each proposal.

Councillor Teakle commented as a member of the working group that was tasked with considering the bids. Whilst she had been unable to attend the question and answer session with representatives of the three proposals, she had received a copy of the papers and had been very impressed by the quality of each of the bids. She also appreciated the difficulty of the decision faced by the group, given the diverse nature of the bids received.

The Cabinet Member Housing and Safety and Policy and Partnerships Manager gave the following responses to questions from members of the committee;

- The Cheltenham Strategic Partnership and Stronger Communities Partnership had received £48k from the Home Office, of which they had agreed to allocate £18k to address Anti Social Behaviour (ASB). The funding will be allocated by the ASB Group, to communities to implement solutions to outbreaks of ASB in their area during the summer. Members would be sent full details of the criteria in order that

they could assess whether it was appropriate to direct people to the funding.

- The ASB Group was a sub group formed by both the Community Safer and Stronger Communities Partnerships and included CBC Members, Police and VCS representatives. Full membership details would be circulated along with the funding criteria and process for the £18k ASB monies.
- Whilst GCC, in relation to the £50k they had provided, would need to endorse the criteria, allocation of the funds would be a Cabinet decision.
- Appropriate monitoring of successful bids would be undertaken and successful applicants would be made aware of their obligations in relation to performance monitoring. A summary report could be produced for consideration by the committee at an appropriate time.

The Cabinet Member Housing and Safety agreed with the suggestion of a member of the committee that, the definition of how the GCC funding could be used needed to be amended to clearly reflect what the monies could and could not be used for.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member Housing and Safety and the Policy and Partnerships Manager for their attendance.

10. PUBLIC ART REVIEW

Councillor Seacome, Chair of the Public Art Review Working Group introduced the report as circulated with the agenda.

The working group was formed by the Social and Community O&S Committee in September 2010, when Councillor Hay queried the effectiveness of delivery of public art in Cheltenham.

The working group discussed a range of issues and agreed upon a series of recommendations (A-J) which it considered would improve provision. He proceeded to highlight some of the recommendations.

The working group proposed that the core size of the Public Art Panel be reduced, to include co-opted members on an ad-hoc basis.

Where generally the panel was chaired by a council member, currently the Cabinet Member with a cultural brief, the working group felt that this hindered continuity and therefore proposed that the panel be chaired by an independent "lay-member".

Another recommendation was that rather than the current intermittent nature of the meeting schedule, the panel should have a regular programme of meetings within the Council's municipal calendar, with more regular ad-hoc meetings where necessary.

The working group found that funding was rarely of an adequate level to achieve the objectives and expectations of each project.

Finally, the Council had collected a number of Section 106 contributions of between £300 and £700 over the years and it had proved difficult to find suitable projects for this level of funding. The working group wanted to see

these existing monies pooled and whilst this was not possible in legal terms, advice had been that this could be further explored through contact with the relevant developers. In future there would need to be a system which enabled the collection and pooling of smaller contributions

Councillor Hay, a member of the working group expanded upon the legal advice that had been provided on the pooling of Section 106 contributions. The suggestion had been that in future, a developer could be asked to agree to their individual contribution being pooled at the planning stage. However, if negotiations did not take place at this stage, the monies could not be pooled. Where existing contributions had not yet been used, contact could be made with the developer in question to ask consent to pool the monies. There was a risk associated with this approach that the developer ask for the money back.

Members agreed that there was a misconception of what constituted public art, not necessarily a statue, etc, though admittedly the topic evoked differing opinions. A member felt that there was a need for more clarity on where the funding for public art was derived.

Members of the Public Art Review working group and the Urban Design Manager gave the following responses to questions from members of the committee;

- It was not for the working group to decide how the various appointments to the Public Art Panel would be made, this was a Cabinet decision. There were mechanisms in place for the appointment of Independent Members and this information would be circulated to Cabinet Members ahead of their meeting.
- Section 106 contributions were utilised to address the impact of a development and whilst an argument could be constructed for using the monies in the town centre, it could be difficult to justify using it in an entirely different ward.
- The report contained more detail in support of the recommendations and clearly explained what they aimed to achieve and why.

Councillor Smith highlighted Swindon Borough Council as an example of where Section 106 contributions were pooled for general use across the borough rather than limited to a specific area. He also felt strongly that Officers needed to demonstrate more innovation and use existing and future monies for other projects including play areas, etc.

James Harrison, as a member of the working group, had been struck by the level of discussion and got the impression that the Public Art Panel had, in the past been rather reactive and suggested that the aim of the recommendations was that the panel be more proactive.

Members were comfortable with the recommendations in their current form, on the understanding that Cabinet considered the comments of the committee.

Upon a vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the recommendations of the Public Art Review Working Group, as set out in the report to Cabinet, be endorsed by the committee

and recommended to Cabinet for approval in conjunction with the comments made by the committee.

11. TOWARDS A COMMISSIONING STRATEGY FOR LEISURE AND CULTURE OUTCOMES - PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS (JULY 2011)

Councillor Coleman offered his apologies and left the meeting.

The Cabinet Member Housing and Safety introduced the paper which she was presenting on behalf of her colleague, the Cabinet Member Sport and Culture who had been unable to attend the meeting.

She invited feedback from members prior to its consideration by Cabinet on the 26 July, before highlighting some of the conclusions which would be of particular interest to the committee.

The Leisure and Culture Commissioning Review was one of three strategic projects using the commissioning principles.

The services cost around £4million a year, with net operational expenditure running at around £2.5million a year and the net spend representing 21% of the Council's net revenue budget. The services performed well and since 2007 the net cost had been reduced by nearly £600k.

Despite the cash reduction in central government support, members have been clear that their priority was maintaining the level and quality of front-line services.

The review was set a challenging financial target of reducing the costs of the services by £690k by 2013-14, which represented approximately 30% of the net cost of the service and asked whether the current service could deliver the outcomes needed with less money.

Section 7 of the report outlined conclusions and recommendations, which rather than map out the final destination, set out the direction of travel and formed a 'roadmap' of the next steps.

The recommendations were discussed and subsequently endorsed by members of the Cabinet Member Working Group (Councillors Barnes, R. Hay, Regan, Seacome and Smith and Cabinet Member Sport and Culture).

Importantly, the report reaffirmed the Council's commitment to high quality, value for money leisure and culture provision in the town.

The council was an important provider of leisure and culture services and the public perception of these services, gained through the budget consultation last year, demonstrated that the services were held in high regard (in particular Leisure@ which was placed in the top 5 of services to protect).

Despite the fact that it has not been possible for the savings target (£690k) to be achieved in the first phase, almost a third has been identified as deliverable, mainly from Leisure@.

The Art Gallery and Museum (AG&M) would be a priority area for further focussed work, the principle reason for the AG&M having been excluded was the timing of the review alongside the outcome of the second round Heritage Lottery Fund application. Ultimately the bid was successful and the redevelopment was underway, which provided an opportunity to assess whether alternative delivery arrangements might be appropriate for the future during the period of closure.

In response to a question from a member of the committee, the Strategic Director advised that another priority of the next stage would be consultation with local partners and other stakeholders, providing an update on the review and to consult on the outcomes and priorities for future work.

There were no further questions or comments made by the committee.

The Chair recognised that the review was a sizeable undertaking and thanked those that had compiled and presented the report. The committee were aware that the review was ongoing and in its initial stages and that there were a number of further discussions to be had.

Upon a vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the recommendations as set out in the report to Cabinet, be endorsed by the committee and recommended to Cabinet for approval in conjunction with the comments made by the committee.

12. COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The Chair referred members to the work plan as circulated with the agenda.

The committee requested that a briefing note on Anti Social Behaviour be prepared for consideration in the Autumn.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN DETERMINES TO BE URGENT AND WHICH REQUIRES A DECISION

There were no urgent items for discussion

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for the 5 September 2011.

Anne Regan
Chairman