

Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 9th January, 2012

6.00 - 8.35 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Anne Regan (Chair), Chris Coleman, Rowena Hay, Diggory Seacome, Duncan Smith, Jon Walklett and Wendy Flynn
Co-optees:	James Harrison and Karl Hemming

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Teakle and the Cabinet Member for Sport and Culture.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2011 were signed and approved as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

There were none.

5. MATTERS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

There were none.

6. CABINET MEMBER BRIEFING

The Cabinet member Housing and Health updated the meeting on the second phase of the allocation of youth funding. Bids to the value of £56k had been received. Successful bids were focussed on where there had been little coverage to date, gender gaps and ethnic groups. It was hoped that the County Council would continue to provide £50 k funding in subsequent years. CBC was working closely with CCP in developing youth services in the borough.

In her capacity as a governor of Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Trust the Cabinet member Housing and Health informed members of the proposed changes to the hospitals trust in terms of how specialist services were being taken forward. Paediatric emergency assessment would be directed to Gloucestershire Royal hospital, outpatient breast care would be directed to Cheltenham General Hospital. The new proposals were for stroke based and major trauma services to be based in Gloucester and vascular care to be based in Cheltenham. The Trust was committed to keeping an accident and emergency at Cheltenham. Cllr Hall was the CBC representative on the County Health, Community and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) and members should give their feedback on these proposals directly to her.

When asked whether the proposals would involve staff redundancies the Cabinet Member replied that she had not been informed that this would be the case. The details would be worked up with staff in terms of the suitability of particular wards. The strength of general older age medicine would be directed at Cheltenham as the town serviced an older population. Members highlighted the importance of maintaining the Accident & Emergency at Cheltenham due to the degree of older age people at Cheltenham, many of whom did not have transport.

The Cabinet Member was asked whether CBC was doing anything to respond to a campaign recently televised on encouraging local people to report housing voids. In particular it was asked whether CBC was intending to use its powers in taking over privately owned voids and bringing them in to use for those that are homeless. In response the Cabinet Member confirmed that she had raised this issue with the Private Sector Housing Manager and they would be examining this within the context of the developing housing strategy. This issue would also be discussed by the housing review group and via this means a briefing could be brought back to this committee.

7. INTERIM BUDGET AND HRA PROPOSALS 2012-2013

The Cabinet Member Finance and Community Development explained that the budget process had been easier this year despite the continued recession. This was partly due to the targeted decisions that had been made in the last budget round but also due to the Icelandic bank decision which had been dealt with more expeditiously than expected. In addition £250 000 of New Homes Bonus had been built into the 2012/13 base budget and the impact of HRA self-financing was positive. In addition the projected overspend in 2011/12 of £476k had been avoided due to the immediate freeze on recruitment and supplies and services.

The Cabinet Member highlighted the following structural issues, which included low level investment interest. Car parking income continued to decline, as was the case nationally. Concessionary fares also played a role in this decline. The Garden Waste scheme had not generated as much income as envisaged and whilst the scheme funded itself the estimated revenue had been reduced in next year's budget.

Whilst this year's budget saw the continuation of the council tax freeze the Cabinet Member warned that the situation would be very difficult in the following financial year as there would effectively be 5 % uplift in the level of council tax.

In terms of the Housing Revenue Account the Cabinet Member stated that it was a huge year of transformation for housing revenue and capital would be liberated by coming out of the national subsidy system. He did however express concern for tenants who, as a result of government policy, would be faced with increasing rents whilst benefits would be decreasing. Officers would be monitoring this closely.

Sarah Didcote, Group Accountant, gave a brief presentation on the budget, which is attached to these minutes for information.

The following responses were given by the Cabinet Member Finance and Community Development and the Group Accountant, to questions from members of the committee :

- The grant to the Cheltenham Festival for the Performing Arts had been reduced last year.
- Funding for the Arts Council would no longer exist in 2012/13 but £6 k had been given as a one off grant in 2011/12.
- The budget for Cheltenham Festivals had been entirely cut in 2011/12 but the Festivals had been awarded £50 k in New Homes Bonus funds and they would be eligible to bid for the same funds in the coming financial year.
- Bids had been received and analysed for the renewed Single Advice Contract and the results would be made public in the very near future.
- CBC had a good record of financial management. Producing a balanced budget was a statutory requirement. Quarterly monitoring reports were produced to flag up any deviations so that remedial action could be taken.
- Usage of the concessionary fares scheme had increased and this had an impact on reduced income from car parking. Cheltenham had a higher percentage of over 60s who were eligible for the scheme.
- Rents from allotment sites had been built into the base budget.
- In the context of the New Homes Bonus funding and in particular the Promoting Cheltenham Fund the purpose of this fund was to promote the image of the town on the back of enterprise. Government was examining the possibility of phasing in rates for new start ups. This would ensure that the town was an attractive place for small businesses.
- In terms of the £50 k allocated to youth work CCP was working closely with CBC and this money funded a youth worker. The scheme would be reviewed next year to evaluate its effectiveness and a decision would be made at that stage as to whether this arrangement should continue. In addition the County had allocated £50 k to CBC for youth projects and a second bidding round had just been concluded which had addressed certain gaps in the town.

The Cabinet Member was asked to explain why Cabinet had deemed it appropriate to freeze Council tax this current year bearing in mind that a 5 % increase would be necessary next year due to the time limited allocation from government. He said that the funding allocated by government had been built into the Medium Term Financial Strategy. In taking the decision this year Cabinet was mindful that there could have been a less steep transition for council tax payers next year but on the whole felt it was what government had intended. Cabinet had however written to central government explaining that this would put extra pressure on next year's budget.

With regard to housing commitments a question was raised as to whether there was any correlation with housing targets in the Joint Core Strategy (JCS). In response the Cabinet member replied that the commitments were based on the five year period of the MTFS in terms of the number of planning permissions and recent history of building and not against JCS targets but the Government drive for new build and perceived demand.

Concern was expressed by members that the risk analysis did not take account of the risks associated with the introduction to the base budget of part of the new homes bonus, the impact of the 0 % council tax freeze and the timing of the delivery of key projects.

The issue of Grosvenor Terrace car park was raised. Funds were, in one members view, continually invested in the car park but it was asked at what point the council would agree that this was not the right location for a car park. In response the Cabinet Member explained some of the funds were directed at providing cctv on the site and that with the future development of North Place and Portland Street car parks this car park would be required.

Members also requested details of the equality and diversity impact assessment to be reassured that this had been undertaken correctly.

8. EVERYMAN THEATRE

Geoffrey Rowe, Chief Executive, Everyman Theatre, gave a presentation to the committee which is attached to these minutes for information.

Members congratulated the Everyman for the success it had in putting on a wide variety of performances, the good value for money that it represented and its major contribution to the town. They also congratulated the theatre for having completed its refurbishment works on time and within budget. Members also recognised the valuable work the theatre undertook with the community in terms of schools and community organisations.

A member commented that some critics regarded a trip to the theatre as elitist but ticket prices did compare favourably with entry to local sporting events. The Chief Executive responded to this by saying in an ideal world there would be a funded scheme which would give every young person in the borough the opportunity to visit and experience a theatre performance for free.

Members requested a breakdown of concessions as 52 % of all tickets were sold as concessions. It was also asked whether concessions included group discounts. The Chief Executive undertook to send members this information.

Members commented that whilst the Chief Executive had identified 2017 as being a tough financial year for the theatre where difficult decisions would have to be made, profit was significant in 2010/11 and it was asked whether the theatre could meet its losses without external help. In response the Chief Executive replied that the surplus was one off and the anticipated loss this year would be more than £200 000 due to the closure for refurbishment.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for his presentation and wished the theatre well.

9. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR UPDATE-FOCUS ON IMPACT OF YOUTH CENTRE CLOSURES IN THE BOROUGH

The Community Safety Manager outlined his report and explained that at this stage it was a little premature to link the closure of youth facilities to any rise in anti-social behaviour committed by young people. He was however working

closely with the police to obtain the information in the coming 12-24 months and this issue had also been raised countywide.

Members understood that statistics may take time to be formulated but were concerned that youth related anti social behaviour was not captured in some form. This was a vital issue and a failure to record what was going on on the ground must mean there was a lack of understanding of what was actually happening. They made reference to the Community Orientated Police Scheme (COPS) and asked whether they provided any such data in terms of records of COPS resolutions. In response the Community Safety Manager explained that he had consulted widely but to date there were no figures coming through.

Members were also concerned that the safeguarding young people work previously carried out by the youth service was no longer being undertaken. They asked whether monitoring and signposting was still being done bearing in mind that there was now only one dedicated youth worker in the borough.

The Community Safety Manager responded to Members by saying that CBC worked closely with the Police. The County Council ran an Anti Social behaviour strategy group which was seeking funds to set up a database to record issues. It was however not just a question of finding an IT solution. He also reported that in Cheltenham the Crime and Disorder partnership facilitated information exchange between stakeholders and intervention was starting to be put in place before enforcement.

Members could not understand why it was possible on the Gloucestershire Constabulary website to access the number and nature of particular crimes in a particular area and that neighbourhood watch leaflets also reported crime statistics yet it was not possible for a report to be provided to Councillors.

The Community Safety Manager acknowledged that it was difficult to get the information down to the right level. It was suggested by members to invite an officer from Gloucestershire Constabulary to a future meeting to explain why incidences were not being recorded properly.

When asked how the Committee could take forward its strong views the Director of Commissioning suggested that the Committee submit a recommendation to Cabinet expressing its concerns with regard to the lack of reporting figures and that Cabinet should take this issue up directly with the Police. Members felt that this was the correct approach but that in addition to this the wider issue of lack of youth provision in the town and the lack of coordination of new projects being undertaken should be raised with Cabinet.

The Director Commissioning explained that the Cheltenham Strategic Partnership had a Positive Lives Partnership under its umbrella which should capture the impact of the cuts to youth activity. The Community Safety Manager added that if there was a link between the withdrawal of funding and the rise in incidences of antisocial behaviour he would help bringing the right people together.

Resolved

To express the Committee's concerns to Cabinet regarding the lack of data on the impact of the reduction in funding for general/universal youth provision in the town with a particular focus on incidences of antisocial behaviour.

The Committee recommends that Cabinet

- 1. takes this issue up directly with Gloucestershire Police**
- 2. works with the CSP Positive Lives partnership to address the wider issue of lack of youth provision in the town, particularly in terms of coordinating new youth projects being undertaken**

10. DEVELOPMENT OF THE CORPORATE STRATEGY 2012-13

Richard Gibson, Strategy and Engagement Manager, explained that early views were being sought from scrutiny on the first version of the draft corporate strategy and the 2012-13 draft action plan. He highlighted that SLT had introduced a change to last year's strategy which included adding value for money as a core objective running across all outcomes. Given the resource challenge the draft strategy recognised that commissioning should also help to deliver outcomes and the strategy reflected the commissioner-provider split. Section 4 of the report outlined a list of 6 priority areas that partners had identified where there was scope for more collaborative working. A number of improvement actions had been identified in the draft strategy and views were sought on these.

Members questioned whether officers had the capacity to deliver all the outcomes identified in the draft strategy and wondered whether there was duplication of the work being undertaken by the partnerships. In response the Strategy and Engagement Manager explained that CBC was working alongside the partnerships and the priorities were aligned to those of the partnerships as opposed to duplication. Even in partnership members still commented whether the council could achieve these outcomes.

Members commented on the consideration for 2012-13 on how best the council can work in partnership to tackle burglary in the town through the burglary task and finish group. Members believed that the council should commit to this work as burglary was a high issue of community concern and the council should be seen to be taking the lead on this. The partners involved should be clear on what they are doing with tangible milestones and performance indicators.

The Strategy and Engagement Manager thanked members for their input. The issue of capacity and resources would be taken on board and a clearer, more specific document would be taken to full Council at the end of March.

11. COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The Chair informed members that the February meeting of Social & Community would be the last meeting in this format before the new scrutiny arrangements were introduced following the elections.

The cooptees were unaware of the scrutiny changes. The Director of Commissioning apologised for this oversight and undertook to send them the

report which had gone to December council and the excerpt of the minutes from that meeting.

Karl Hemming, cooptee, commented on Cheltenham Tenants and Leaseholders Voice (CTLV) which was on the agenda for the February meeting. He reported that by the February meeting members of that committee would have only just finished their training. The Director of Commissioning understood this but felt that it was important for members to understand what arrangements had been put in place by Cheltenham Borough Homes for liaising with its tenants.

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

None.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 27 February 2012

Anne Regan
Chairman

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Budget Consultation 2012-13




The Council's Budget

In 2012/13 CBC's Government cash grant will fall by a £0.534m; this will result in a total cash cut of £1.624m over 2011/12 and 2012/13.

Funding Gap =
Cost of Maintaining Current Service Levels plus growth *minus* Funds Available to Spend
(grant settlement + achievable income)

2012/13 estimate £1.115m






The 2012/13 'Funding Gap'

- Economic downturn continues to impact on the Council's budgets:
 - **Car Parking** income continues to fall: a further £100k less than budgeted in 2011/12, with similar trend continuing in 2012/13.
 - Estimated income from sale of **garden waste** bins down by £272k in 2011/12, with a similar trend continuing in 2012/13.
 - Low bank base rate resulting in low levels of **investment interest**.



Cabinet general approach

- No increase in Council Tax - Band D £187.12 (using Government funding);
- A reduction in number of staff – 5 jobs will be lost;
- Flexible retirement and voluntary reduction in employee hours;
- Internal restructures to increase efficiencies – part of becoming a 'commissioning organisation';
- Continued promotion of shared services;
- Reduction in cost of council assets e.g. sale of surplus assets.

Key areas for Growth – Appendix 3


Social & Community:

Ongoing Revenue Growth:

- Continued provision of town centre **taxi marshall** service - £17,000 pa.
- No inflationary increase to **lettings fee income** at Town Hall and Pittville Pump Room - £11,700 pa.

One-off Revenue Growth:

- Carbon reduction – **new LED Lights** at Leisure@
(funded from Property R & R Reserve)



Key areas for Savings – Appendix 4

Social & Community:

- Reduction in grant to **Everyman Theatre**, as part of renegotiated lease and support towards funding of refurbishment costs – £5,000 savings.
- Reduction in grant to **Performing Arts Society** - £10,800 savings.
- Re-tender of **Single Advice Contract** - £25,000 savings.
- Reduction in grants to **Oakley & Hesters Way regeneration partnerships** - £4,000 savings.




Key areas for Additional Income – Appendix 4

Leisure & Culture Commissioning - Leisure@

- New income streams in partnership with University of Gloucestershire - £18,000 additional income.
- Increased volume of children's activities - £3,000 additional income.
- Price increases for some services above inflation - £14,000 additional income.
- Staff restructuring - £45,000 savings.



Town Hall:

- New income stream from Box Office system and staff restructuring - £48,000 additional income / savings.



New Homes Bonus

2012/13 allocation of £574k to be used:

1. £250k built into base budget.
2. £50k to fund youth work issues.
3. £137k for small environmental works costing up to a max. of £15k per application.
4. £137k towards a Promoting Cheltenham fund.



Questions?



EVERYMAN THEATRE

Geoffrey Rowe
Chief Executive

CBC Scrutiny Committee 2012



Introduction

- 1. The year's activities 2010/2011
- 2. The year's results 2010/2011
- 3. Funding
- 4. The Restoration
- 5. The future

1. The Year's Activities

46 weeks of performance
Pantomime, opera, ballet, drama,
dance, variety, musicals
2 amateur companies
Festivals
Youth Theatre
ONS
Studio season
Education and community
programme

2. The Year's Results 2010/2011

- 240,000 attendances
- Up 3.6%
- £160,000 surplus
- Anticipating loss in 2011/12
- Concessions 52%
- Performances/Events 534

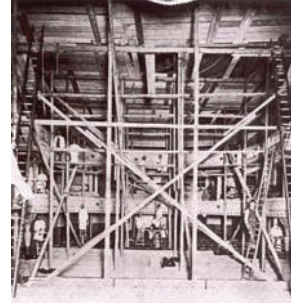
3. Funding

- 14.5% of turnover but £575k in 2012/13
- Lost GCC £52,000
- Arts Council agreement to 2015 – standstill
- CBC continuing gradual loss
- 2017!

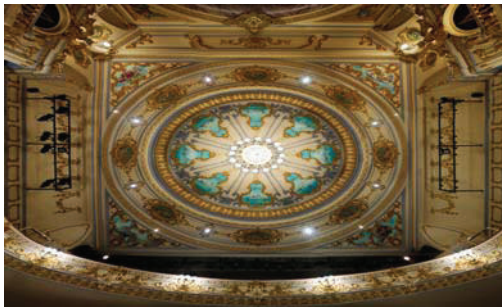
4. The Restoration

- 1. Cost £3.2million
- 2. Re-opened on time and within budget
- 3. Net cost to CBC £250,000
- 4. Historic and beautiful
- 5. Economic importance to CBC
- 6. Economic importance to ET
- 7. Heritage

Decorating the auditorium



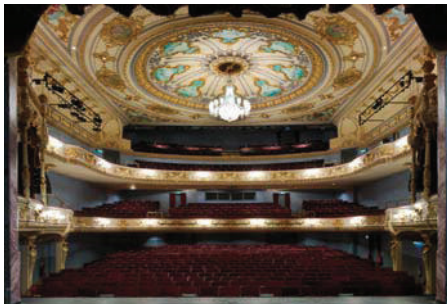
The Ceiling



The Auditorium



A View from the stage



The Angel returns!



The Future

- 1. Survival
- 2. Quality productions
- 3. A Wide range of shows
- 4. Improved customer experience
- 5. Heritage
- 6. Education and Community
- 7. Own productions?
- 8. Touring?

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