

Cabinet

Tuesday, 13th January, 2015
6.00 - 6.25 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Steve Jordan (Leader of the Council), John Rawson (Cabinet Member Finance), Rowena Hay (Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles), Peter Jeffries (Cabinet Member Housing), Jon Walklett (Cabinet Member Corporate Services) and Chris Coleman (Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment)

Minutes

- 1. APOLOGIES**
Councillor McKinlay
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
There were none.
- 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS**
The minutes of the meeting held on 9 and 16 December 2014 were approved and signed as a correct record.
- 4. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**
None.
- 5. TRANSPARENCY POLICY**
The Cabinet Member Corporate Services introduced the report which sought Cabinet approval of a new Local Government Transparency Code which was mandatory on all local authorities from October 2014 and which identified what information must be published quarterly before 31 December 2014 and annually no later than 2 February 2015.

The Cabinet Member highlighted that the aim of the code was to ensure citizens have improved access to data from major public service providers in order to strengthen people's trust in government and encourage greater public participation in decision making. He said that fortunately CBC, as evidenced by the recent LGA peer review, had maintained a principal of full and open transparency - a philosophy that could be seen to be working with all relevant information readily obtainable from the website. He reported that CBC would conform to the government's timetable for publication data in three star format, then would strive to attain four star standard as soon as possible. The Cabinet Member explained that with the mandatory status there were additional detailed requirements and highlighted the following :

- 1) publication of a list of property assets - including buildings and car parks – (with no current requirement for valuations)
and

2) publication of a list of contracts and tenders exceeding £5000 - this figure represents a lower threshold than the previous £10000'

Members supported the approval of the Transparency Policy statement.

RESOLVED THAT

- 1. A Transparency Policy statement be approved.**
- 2. An amendment be approved to the description of one of the Council's Core Values so that it will align to the Policy Statement.**
- 3. An approach that will lead to the publication of all mandatory data to a minimum 3 star format be approved.**

6. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT UP UNTIL END NOVEMBER 2014

The Cabinet Member Finance introduced the report which updated Members on the Council's current financial position for 2014/15 based on the monitoring exercise at the end of November 2014. The report covered the Council's revenue, capital and treasury management position and identified any known significant variations (minimum £50 000) to the 2014/15 original budget and areas with volatile income trends.

The Cabinet Member Finance reported that it was expected that the overall position for the council would be within budget for 2014/15 despite a difficult year. He highlighted that due to the sale of North Place and Portland Street car parks, car parking income had been affected but the reduction was not as great as originally feared and thus there was no draw on the reserve. Longer term shortfalls would be offset by savings on NNDR. He also reported that there had been a downturn in income at the Cemetery and Crematorium in comparison with the same period in the previous financial year. He explained however that initial forecasts have improved and the estimated shortfall in income had been somewhat mitigated by improved performance in the last few months. The Cabinet Member Finance also highlighted that the £248 k use of reserves from the Business Rates Retention Scheme was listed as this could only be credited a year after it had been received.

In terms of savings the Cabinet Member Finance said that due to changes in the way that vehicles were financed there had been a one-off saving of £297.3k in leasing costs in 2014/15. An underspend from the provision of Ubico services was also anticipated. Overall he said that coming in under budget was an achievement in a difficult financial year.

The Leader highlighted to members that the third recommendation would be considered by Council as part of the budget setting process.

RESOLVED THAT

- 1. The contents of this report including the key projected variances to the 2014/15 budget and the expected delivery of services within budget be noted.**
- 2. The budget virements to the 2014/15 budget, as detailed in Appendix 4 be approved.**
- 3. Council be recommended to approve a one-off contribution from general balances of £178,250 as part of the budget setting process for 2015/16.**

7. UBICO EXPANSION OF PARTNERSHIP

The Leader introduced the report and explained that in April 2012 Cheltenham Borough Council and Cotswold District Council created Ubico to deliver services to both councils. The subsequent cost efficiencies and service improvements delivered by the company have attracted significant interest and locally four other councils have applied to join the company. He explained that in September 2014 revised governance arrangements for an extended partnership were approved and now Cabinet was being asked to formally approve the extension of the partnership to other partners based on the business cases attached to the report.

The Leader explained that Tewkesbury BC had been involved in the process of establishing Ubico from the outset and was intending to join in April 2015. The proposal for TBC to join Ubico would provide the opportunity to rationalise space leading to operational efficiencies at the Depot. The financial benefits were outlined in paragraph 2.3 of the report. The Leader reported that West Oxfordshire and the Forest of Dean would at this stage only join part of the business due to existing contractual arrangements. Stroud DC hoped to join in 2016.

The Leader highlighted that the financial implications of extending the partnership meant that once all partners were on board Cheltenham BC would increase its annual savings to £129,825 and the Council would recover £90,667 of its share of Ubico set up costs.

Finally, the Leader added that in terms of scrutiny, the Ubico board had a member observer. The Board has confirmed that it would continue this arrangement but was due to look at broader scrutiny options to ensure continued member involvement.

Members welcomed the achievements of Ubico in positively delivering its services at the same time as generating efficiencies and savings. Thanks were given to all those who had been involved in the process.

RESOLVED THAT

- 1. The business case for Tewkesbury Borough Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Forest of Dean District Council and Stroud District Council as appended to this report be approved**
- 2. It be agreed that a £1 share in Ubico Ltd be issued to each of the above mentioned councils on the date each council enters into a**

contract with Ubico Ltd for the delivery of services to their council, such date not to be before 31 March 2015.

8. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS

The Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment reported that there had been a good response to the cemetery and crematorium feasibility study. Tenders had now been evaluated and a shortlist drawn up. Alongside this a heritage statement had been drafted. The Cabinet Member working group were next due to meet in February.

The Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment also informed Members that a refuse and recycling campaign would be launched in February comprising a redrafting of the promotional literature to highlight service improvements and information on other initiatives.

Finally, the Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment reported that all Members should have received an email with regard to waste and recycling collections during periods of bad weather. He urged members to pass the message on to residents that waste and recycling containers should be presented as normal and Ubico would endeavour to collect them if possible.

The Cabinet Member Finance reported that more than 120 letters and emails had been received as responses to the ongoing budget consultation. Interest had been stimulated by the discussion on the future capital programme of the council. He informed members that an open forum on the budget would take place this Thursday, 15 January at 7 pm.

The Cabinet Member Finance also reported that an invitation to tender had been issued yesterday for qualified conservators of the War Memorial project. He reported that a meeting had taken place with the Heritage Lottery Fund in November where the Council was encouraged to submit a grant application by early May. A report to Cabinet was scheduled in June which would provide more detail on costs and how additional funding would be raised.

The Leader confirmed that CBC's response to the Western route rail study consultation had been submitted last week. He thanked the scrutiny task group for their input and informed that the response emphasised the importance of Cheltenham Railway Station and the endorsement of the wider county strategy.

The Leader then reported that at the Vision 2020 Programme Board meeting which had been held last Friday the appointment of Andrew North as interim lead commissioner and David Neudegg as interim managing director had been confirmed. He added that there was no increase in salary being proposed. He informed that the position of programme director, which was initially being ring fenced to the four councils involved, was currently being advertised.

Chairman