



CHELTENHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Notice of a meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 24 February 2020
6.00 pm
Pittville Room - Municipal Offices

Membership	
Councillors:	Chris Mason (Chair), Klara Sudbury (Vice-Chair), Sandra Holliday, John Payne, Paul Baker, Max Wilkinson, Dilys Barrell, Iain Dobie, Jo Stafford and Dennis Parsons

The Council has a substitution process and any substitutions will be announced at the meeting

Agenda

1.		APOLOGIES	
2.		DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
3.		MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING 13 January 2020	(Pages 3 - 20)
4.		PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS, CALLS FOR ACTIONS AND PETITIONS	
5.		MATTERS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE	
6.	6.05 pm	MARKETING CHELTENHAM David Jackson, Manager – Marketing Cheltenham	(Pages 21 - 26)
7.	6.35 pm	THE RETAIL ENVIRONMENT IN CHELTENHAM Jeremy Williamson, Managing Director – Cheltenham Development Task Force (with support from David Oakhill, Head of Planning – CBC and Kevan Blackadder, Director – Cheltenham BID)	(Pages 27 - 30)
8.	7.05 pm	SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - EVENTS Report of the Events Scrutiny Task Group and a minority report from Councillor Parsons	(Pages 31 - 52)
9.	7.20 pm	SCRUTINY REVIEW Report of Campbell Tickell to be presented by Darren	(Pages 53 - 68)

		Knight, Executive Director of People & Change	
10.		<p>FEEDBACK FROM OTHER SCRUTINY MEETINGS ATTENDED</p> <p>Gloucestershire Health and Care O&S Committee (14 January) – verbal update from Councillor Horwood</p> <p>Police and Crime Panel (3 February) - verbal update from Councillor Jonny Brownsteen</p> <p>There has been no meeting of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth O&S Committee since the last meeting of this committee.</p>	
11.		<p>CABINET BRIEFING</p> <p>An update from the Cabinet on key issues for Cabinet Members which may be of interest to Overview and Scrutiny and may inform the O&S work plan</p>	(Pages 69 - 70)
12.		<p>SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE TASK GROUP - ONE PAGE STRATEGY</p> <p>Agree the aims and objectives as set out on the One Page Strategy</p>	(Pages 71 - 72)
13.		<p>UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY TASK GROUPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third Sector Rent Support Grant 	
14.		<p>SCRUTINY TOPIC REGISTRATION FORM</p> <p>Consider the topic registration form (no implications were provided) and decide if and how scrutiny will be undertaken</p>	(Pages 73 - 74)
15.		<p>REVIEW OF SCRUTINY WORKPLAN</p>	(Pages 75 - 78)
16.		<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>30 March 2020</p>	
		<p>BRIEFING NOTES (not for discussion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGA Peer Review – update on progress 	

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Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**Monday, 13th January, 2020
6.00 - 8.25 pm**

Attendees	
Councillors:	Chris Mason (Chair), Sandra Holliday, Paul Baker, Max Wilkinson, Dilys Barrell, Iain Dobie, Jo Stafford, Dennis Parsons and Paul McCloskey (Reserve)
Also in attendance:	Councillor Matt Babbage (Chair of BSWG), Hilary Gardner (Campbell Tickell), Richard Gibson (Strategy and Engagement Manager), Councillor Rowena Hay (Cabinet Member Finance), Gareth Jones (Senior Environmental Health Officer), Councillor Steve Jordan, Councillor Matt Babbage, Councillor Flo Clucas, Councillor Rowena Hay and Councillor Andrew McKinlay

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

Councillors Payne and Sudbury had given their apologies. Councillor McCloskey would substitute for Councillor Sudbury.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

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 18 November 2019 be agreed and signed as an accurate record.

4. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS, CALLS FOR ACTIONS AND PETITIONS

None had been received.

5. MATTERS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

The Chairman reminded members that having considered the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) in December, some members had raised the issue of payments for members appointed to outside bodies as non-executive directors or trustees. It was decided that this matter should be referred to Overview and Scrutiny and that it was for the committee to decide how it wished to consider the matter.

A member suggested that a key consideration should be whether any other authorities made such payments.

Members acknowledged the complexities of the issue and decided therefore that a task group would be the most appropriate way in which to give consideration to this matter. Draft objectives would be agreed between legal and the Chairman, and these would be tabled at the next meeting for approval.

6. **SCRUTINY REVIEW**

The Chairman welcomed Hilary Gardner, an Associate with Campbell Tickell (CT). For the benefit of members who had enquired as to why her findings had not been circulated in advance, she explained that CT preferred not to present their findings in advance, as it provided no context and often raised lots of questions amongst those members with whom they had not met (interviewed). She then proceeded to talk through a PowerPoint presentation (attached at Appendix 1) and made the following key points:

- CT, one of the UKs leading consultancies, had worked with more than 800 organisations, and in the last two years this had included CBH and Ubico.
- CT had been tasked with assessing the current arrangements and ways of working in the context of the Statutory Guidance and make recommendations about how the committee could be more effective and how resources could be better focussed or increased.
- There was no single, definitive description of the role and purpose of scrutiny, and information as to the expectations of O&S lack focus, clarity and sometimes consistency.
- A role description for the committee chair should be drafted that outlined key skills and responsibilities.
- Focussed member training sessions should be arranged and this should be held within a meeting, so as to provide real focus.
- Formal feedback from the Leader (Cabinet) to O&S should be introduced.
- With finite resources the committee needed to consider its topics for scrutiny more carefully and focus more on the council's priorities, though this would not preclude them from prioritising other topics.
- Although dedicated resource for the committee had improved since the review was commissioned, officer support more generally, needed to be better focussed.
- Some of the reports she had reviewed were far too long. The committee should consider introducing a maximum page limit for reports.
- She welcomed news that PowerPoint training for officers had been arranged and proposed that presentations at the meeting should be consistently managed by the chair.

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- It was suggested that the chair should sense check all reports before publication.
- All members should be encouraged to contribute and feel comfortable to do so, as the meeting that had been observed had been dominated by a small number of members.
- A coversheet would give clarity on the purpose of the report and the action(s) the committee were being asked to take.
- She felt that decisions and actions should be tracked but was aware that was already in hand following the introduction of Clearview.
- To make better use of member energy and time, items for scrutiny should feature higher up the agenda than those that simply provide an overview.
- The duration of meetings should be limited to two hours.
- A wrap-up session at the end of each meeting would give members the opportunity to discuss positives and negatives.

Hilary gave the following responses to member questions:

- There was no suggestion of political bias within the committee, however some members had commented that call-in was infrequently used as it was considered that given the political make-up of the council and the large majority, there was little point in challenging some decisions.
- It was important that the committee focussed on prioritising its time and focus on council objectives, though this was not to say that it shouldn't prioritise other topics as appropriate.

In summing up, Hilary summarised what she considered to be the key recommendations:

- The need for a single clear description of the role of the committee.
- The need for additional training and support for members and for any sessions to be held within a meeting.
- A formal process for getting feedback from the Leader.
- Shorter reports.
- An agenda front sheet which sets out why an item has come to committee and what the committee are being asked to do.
- Splitting the agenda into scrutiny items at the start and overview items at the end.
- A wrap up session at the end of each meeting.

A member expressed their support for more focus on council priorities and less on members' personal interests. However, another member felt that the committee should be cautious when dismissing any such topics as these things often came to light in one ward before it quickly transpired, as a result of having considered the issue, that it was an issue facing residents in other wards.

She commended the committee for how openly they had approached the review and for their obvious commitment to improve.

The Chairman thanked Hilary and Campbell Tickell for their work on the review and accepted that the committee had to work smarter. He looked forward to seeing her final report and recommendations.

The Executive Director of People & Change felt reviews were valuable, refinements important and having shone a spotlight on the scrutiny function, he too looked forward to taking forward any recommendations.

7. URBAN GULLS

Mark Nelson, Enforcement Manager reminded members that he had last reported on progress in August 2019 and the paper that had been circulated with the agenda aimed to provide a further update in respect of the recommendations of the Urban Gull Task Group. He assured the committee that egg-oiling was an extremely effective method of preventing eggs hatching, as well as breaking the two year cycle of chicks returning to lay their own eggs and felt that the introduction of surveys to identify nest locations had been invaluable. It was therefore proposed that income above the pest control income target, up to a maximum of £10k, combined with the base budget of £9.4k would fund an expanded egg oiling programme in 2020/21. The success of the gull control programme would determine the emerging strategy, though priority actions would ultimately be determined by the budget available.

The Enforcement Manager and Pest Control Manager gave the following responses to member questions:

- Egg oiling had proved effective in Cheltenham. On a survey of four commercial premises, in the year that egg oiling took place only two eggs hatched, the year that those properties did not form part of the programme, 35 had hatched, and given the two year cycle, any surviving chicks would return to Cheltenham to lay their own eggs. The Enforcement Manager had no doubt that egg oiling was the most effective means of managing the urban gull population in Cheltenham.
- Leaflets had been produced and officers were planning a media campaign. These officers were also in discussion with the Comms Team regarding the most effective way of using the council's media platform to raise awareness of the issues around gulls and provide residents with advice.
- The gull nesting season would start between the 12 and 21 May.

- There were some practical issues to be worked through, in terms of how waste would be collected, before the re-usable hessian sacks could be trialled.

The Chairman invited the Cabinet Member Development and Safety to address the committee. He had commended the work of the STG and their recommendations at the time that it was presented to Cabinet. Using Tivoli as an example, nesting birds were not an issue but rather those travelling to and from Wingmoor Farm for food; he stressed that there was no exact science to gull control. He expressed his disappointment that it had not been possible to use drones to identify nests, as this would have been quicker and less expensive than having to use cherry pickers.

The Chairman thanked the Officers and Cabinet Member for their attendance and suggested that the draft strategy should be considered by the committee at the appropriate time.

8. SOCIAL VALUE POLICY

The Strategy and Engagement Manager introduced initial thoughts on the draft social value policy, further to it having been raised at the October meeting of the committee. The council sought to use legislation, which came into force in 2013, to secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits when commissioning or procuring services. This was particularly important given the substantial procurement activities that would be undertaken as part of the cyber central project and the housing investment plan and would also allow for additional resources towards helping us deliver a carbon neutral Cheltenham and tackling child poverty. As an organisation CBC were also more aware of the importance of the 'Cheltenham pound' in recognition that the more that was spent locally, the more this would benefit the town. He talked through the proposed definition of social value and priorities, as well as the practical support and outcomes that may be sought, in addition to how it could be delivered. He proposed that this committee would have a role to play in ensuring that the policy was working.

The Strategy and Engagement Manager and the Director of People & Change gave the following responses to member questions:

- The current Procurement Policy was adopted in 2015 and did include reference to social value but this had never been actively promoted. Given the level of investment that was planned as a consequence of the cyber park and housing, there were some major gains to be made, though obviously all subject to VfM.
- In the past tenders had been evaluated using a percentage split between cost vs quality, but with the adoption of a social value policy it could be that 10% of the weighting could be applied to social value outcomes
- By increasing the threshold for informal procurement from £10k to £25k, the council had made it easier for small local businesses to bid for contracts.

- The social value element could take the form of simple yet creative practical solutions to help our priority communities.
- Any bids would be judged against the core priorities, of which carbon emissions is one and therefore the distance and means by which a contractor would have to travel to do the job, would be a consideration.
- In acknowledgement that some children and families have had adverse experiences in the past, 'trauma informed' described the more rounded approach to working with such families CBC will adopt.
- A member mentioned that we had to be careful that suppliers did not see social value as a levy and just put up their prices.
- Larger contractors expected to be challenged on social value, but the council spent £23m a year and CBH spent £4m and this in itself provided scope to deliver additional value.

A member commented that the tender process would still be a competitive one and that contractors would simply get more points for having a social value mind-set.

The chairman thanked the Strategy and Engagement Manager for his attendance.

9. REVIEW OF AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA

This item was taken after agenda items 10, 11 and 12.

Gareth Jones, Senior Environmental Health Officer referred members to the PowerPoint presentation that had been circulated in advance of the meeting and proceeded to talk through key points of that presentation.

He started by explaining the difference between local air quality and climate change: climate change was a global issue, the effects of which would not necessarily be visible locally and air quality effected areas of up to 20 to 30 meters from a road. The solutions however, were very similar: fewer private cars, particularly diesels and increased cycling, walking and public transport, as well as cleaner energy production and reduced consumption.

The council's responsibilities were set out in law, specifically the Environment Act 1995, which also included the relevant limits, though he noted that these would likely change in the near future. The main concern in Cheltenham was NO₂ which derived entirely from traffic and levels were measured using NO_x tubes at 29 locations around the town and AQ station at St. George's Street. Particulates came from a wider range of sources, including tyres and brakes, even those of electric vehicles and were of increasing note. Measured by mesh pods at 9 locations across Cheltenham, levels were not close to (current) limits.

In 2011 the borough-wide AQMA was adopted, because there were 5 failure areas and it was felt that it would be counter-productive to write 5 separate plans and risk displacing the problem from one area to another. Results showed that whilst the annual average of NO₂ had breached the limit, the short-

term limit had not and PM10 levels were nowhere near breaching, however, the limits were likely to be reduced. It was noted that these results were all available on the website.

The outline was approved by DEFRA in 2018/19 and the detailed assessment confirmed the need to re-define the AQMA. By law the council had to revoke the existing borough-wide AQMA and simultaneously declare a new, smaller one. The map showed the sausage shaped area that the new AQMA would cover and this would include all properties with a façade onto the roads (29 commercial and 79 residential properties) and approximately 120 residents. It would take another 12 months to develop a new action plan and outline ideas included working with Stagecoach, though their fleet was comparatively cleaner than others, Royal Mail and works to the traffic lights. He stressed that this would require input from GCC, who coincidentally had a large Climate Change fund and any action in terms of climate change would positively impact the air quality in Cheltenham.

The Senior Environmental Health Officer gave the following responses to member questions:

- Results in January, February and March were worse because more people drove in colder weather and the cold weather meant pollutants would take longer to dissipate.
- Longer-term results showed a small decline, which was consistent with the rest of the country.
- Whilst the AQMA would be smaller, no existing monitoring points would be removed, except the 6 that were strategically located to monitor the diversions that were in place for Phase 4 of the Cheltenham Plan. In fact, monitoring would increase to 38 locations, from 29 at present.
- The mesh pods were able to measure PM down to 2.5 and these were easily recalibrated.
- The action plan was out of date and required significant revision to reflect areas suffering the worst problems. Efforts needed to be focussed on areas where levels were in breach or marginal.
- The AQMA reflected the areas where legal limits were being breached and other locations reflected areas where limits were marginal or changing areas where a level of verification was needed. It was possible to monitor any area but this would prove very expensive. Members were welcome to contact him directly with questions about particular areas.
- Colleagues at Stroud District Council were monitoring the area around the new incinerator very closely and would flag any concerns with CBC if further investigation was required.
- There were baseline figures for the AQMA and the areas around it.

- Pollutant levels by vehicle were available online, but members were warned to take account of who had commissioned a particular study.
- The traffic lights would go towards addressing the number of vehicles but there was also a question about how to address the different types of vehicle using these roads.
- A mesh pod would be located outside of a school on a busy road in Cheltenham and it was possible to increase the frequency at which it sent data, from the standard 15 minutes down to every minute, but there would create a resource issue in terms of the data handling required. It was always possible to redeploy pods to other schools if required. It was noted that GCC, who were ultimately responsible for Schools, had done a project with schools in the town, whereby they had taken measurements during term-time and again at half term, but he personally, didn't feel this had been the most scientific of projects.
- He agreed with various members that dealing with the school run would be key in dealing with climate change and air quality and whilst it was not possible to force people not to drive their children to school, he felt that the data would help persuade people to make different choices.

The committee agreed that they would make a formal request that Cabinet consider funding short-term monitoring outside of schools across the town.

The Chairman thanked the Senior Environmental Health Officer and asked that he, and colleagues from GCC be invited to come back in 6 months to talk about schools specifically.

10. BUDGET PROPOSALS (FOR COMING YEAR)

Councillor Babbage, the Chair of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group (BSWG), referred members to the briefing that had been circulated as a supplement. He explained that the BSWG had met on the 7 January to discuss the Cabinet's interim budget proposals for the coming year and had a range of questions. He noted that ordinarily the HRA was less contentious, as it was much 'business as usual' but that given the potential for a vast increase in housing, there had been many more questions this year.

There was specific request that, despite budget having been allocated, the business case for in-cab technology for the Ubico fleet, should be considered fully.

Councillor Babbage gave the following responses to member questions:

- The BSWG scrutinised the process, as much as the detail, but it was not their budget.
- In their absence from the meeting, CBH had been asked to provide a written response to the question about the expected increase in the number of Universal Credit claimants as per the HRA budget papers and the possible 'bad debt' implications this could have, as CBC officers were not able to provide an answer.

The Cabinet Member Finance gave the following answers to member questions:

- CBH were undertaking a piece of work which looked at the impact that building carbon neutral houses would have on their budget. Cabinet Members would likely be presented with a range of options by March. However, CBH were also looking at existing programmes of work, in terms of boiler replacements and door and window replacements. Considerations were largely around expenditure, rather than necessarily doing less (carbon neutral work), for more money.
- Norwich was an interesting example, as whilst the commitment to build eco-friendly estates was to be commended, it was proving to be less sustainable in the longer-term.

Councillor Babbage took the opportunity to thank the Cabinet Member Finance, Executive Director of Finance & Assets and the Chief Accountant for their ongoing advice and support for the BSWG.

11. FEEDBACK FROM OTHER SCRUTINY MEETINGS ATTENDED

The Chairman advised that Councillor Horwood had not attended the HOSC meeting on the 19 November and therefore there was no update, neither had there been any meetings of the Police and Crime Panel since the last meeting of this committee.

Councillor McCloskey had produced a written update on the 20 November meeting of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee and this was taken as read. There were no questions from members.

In view of the feedback from Campbell Tickell, the Chairman questioned the value in these updates forming part of the agendas for this committee, given that there were rarely any questions and though some members agreed, some felt that they provided members with an opportunity to pose further questions on matters of interest.

12. CABINET BRIEFING

The Leader acknowledged the complexities surrounding the question of SRAs for non-executive directors and trustees of outside bodies, pointing out that it was in-fact illegal for the council to make payments to councillors representing the council on the board of the Gloucestershire Airport.

He highlighted a slight amendment to the constitution. Given the number of planning issues relating to the cyber-park, the decision had been taken to, for the foreseeable future, move responsibility for the local plan and development control, away from the Cabinet Member Development & Safety, to the Leader, so as to avoid any confusion.

13. UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY TASK GROUPS

Councillor Parsons, as Chair of the Events STG, advised the committee that the group had met for the fourth time earlier today for a meeting which focussed on enforcement. Prior to this, the group had met with stakeholders and he felt that this had been a productive meeting which identified the need for the council to

engage with residents groups more effectively. The last meeting of the group was scheduled for the 30 January and it was hoped that the group would be in a position to agree their conclusions and any recommendations at this meeting, with a view to being able to table their final report with the committee at the February meeting.

Due to the lack of any volunteers for the Third Sector Policy Review STG, the Chair proposed that he and the other lead members for O&S (Councillors Payne and Sudbury) undertake a desktop review and report back with their findings. The committee agreed that this was a sensible proposal.

14. REVIEW OF SCRUTINY WORKPLAN

A copy of the work plan had been circulated with the agenda.

The Chairman confirmed that there had been some changes to the work plan since its publication. The demonstration of Clearview had been pulled from the February meeting and moved to the March, to accommodate the final report and recommendations of the Events STG. He also noted that the LGA Peer Review progress report would be in the form of a briefing note, which would not be discussed.

The committee were also advised that the Residents Satisfaction Survey would not be taken to the March meeting and instead members were asked to contact the Director of People & Change with any specific questions or concerns about any of the feedback and the committee would then take a view on whether any of those issues needed to be considered further. The Director of People & Change would email all members inviting feedback.

A member queried what was being done with regards to the Climate Change Emergency. The Director of People & Change confirmed that funding would be in place from April 2020 and specific initiatives would commence from that point. The suggestion from the Chairman was that this be added to the work plan as an annual item.

15. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXEMPT INFORMATION

Upon a vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100A(4) Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining agenda items as it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, if members of the public are present there will be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in paragraph 3, Part (1) Schedule (12A) Local Government Act 1972, namely:

Paragraph 3; Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

16. EXEMPT MINUTES

Ten exempt minutes of the last meeting had been circulated with the agenda.

Upon a vote it was unanimously

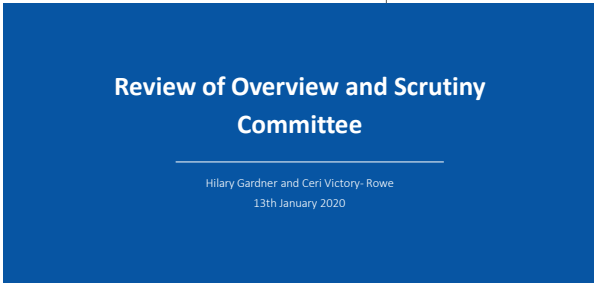
RESOLVED that the exempt minutes of the meeting held on the 18 November 2019 be agreed and signed as an accurate record.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for 24 February 2020.

Chris Mason
Chairman

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Review of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Hilary Gardner and Ceri Victory-Rowe
13th January 2020

Outline

- Purpose & process
- Our overall findings
- Conclusions and recommendations
- What next?

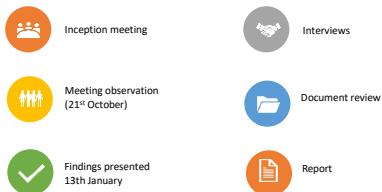
Campbell Tickell: Our experience

- One of the UK's leading consultancies focusing primarily on the statutory and non-profit sectors
- Operated for 20 years
- Recognised expertise in governance, regulation, business transformation and improvement, financial and risk analysis, human resource and recruitment.
- Worked for more than 800 organisations including many local authorities.
- Over the last 2 years have worked with the Boards of CBH and Ubico. Recently recruited new independent chair and 2 independent board members for Ubico

Brief

- Assess current arrangements and ways of working...
- ...in the context of the Statutory Guidance published by MHCLG in May 2019
- Make recommendations about how Overview and Scrutiny can become more effective
- Consider how resources to support Overview and Scrutiny could be better utilised or increased

Process



Context of review

- 2011 number of scrutiny committees reduced from three to one
- Current committee last reviewed in 2013
- May 2019: Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities published by MHCLG:
 - "Effective overview and scrutiny should:
 - Provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge;
 - Amplify the voices and concerns of the public;
 - Be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role; and
 - Drive improvement in public services

The status of the statutory guidance

"This is statutory guidance from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Local authorities... must have regard to it when exercising their functions. [This]... does not mean that the sections of statutory guidance have to be followed in every detail, but that they should be followed unless there is a good reason not to in a particular case"

CAMPBELL
TICKELL |

Overall findings

"Scrutiny works best when it has a clear role and function. This provides focus and direction".

- Consistent view of key purpose of committee
- **But** no single, definitive description of its role on paper...
- ...nor expectations set about the benefits scrutiny should deliver
- So difficult to know what effective looks like?
- Potential value of committee not being fully realised
- Ultimately, it is difficult to demonstrate tangible outcomes: 'a lot of effort for what?'

CAMPBELL
TICKELL |

Detailed findings

Culture and ways of working

"The prevailing organisational culture, behaviours and attitudes of an authority will largely determine whether its scrutiny function succeeds or fails".

- Political make up of council perceived as potential barrier to effective scrutiny and discharge of ToR
- Overall low level of understanding and support for scrutiny

CAMPBELL
TICKELL |

Detailed findings

Culture and ways of working (continued)

- Lines of sight and communication between committee and executive not clearly articulated
 - Few working group reports to Cabinet with too many recommendations? How do scrutiny monitor delivery of accepted recommendations. Is this regularly reported
 - Scrutiny of Cabinet reports: how are members comments taken on board and how is feedback received and monitored
 - Council leader regularly attends scrutiny meetings but contribution not clear or maximised
- Scrutiny not really visible to full council, rarely referred to in council meetings, not valued
- Call-in rarely used

CAMPBELL
TICKELL |

Detailed findings

Resources

"The resource an authority allocates to the scrutiny function plays a pivotal role in determining how successful that function is and therefore the value it can add to the work of the authority".

- Resources improved - but could be better focussed/organised and prioritised . Over reliance on one person?
- Work of committee not valued sufficiently to merit priority for resources
- Additional resource may be required to support development/training

CAMPBELL
TICKELL |

Detailed findings

Committee membership

"Selecting the right members to serve on scrutiny committees is essential if those committees are to function effectively. Where a committee is made up of members who have the necessary skills and commitment, it is far more likely to be taken seriously by the wider authority".

"When selecting individual members to serve on scrutiny committees, an authority should consider a member's experience, expertise, interests, ability to act impartially, ability to work as part of a group, and capacity to serve".

- Appointment to committee is political or self-selected
- Limited role description for committee chair, with no reference to skills and attributes required
- Little support or training offered/provided to members

CAMPBELL
TICKELL |

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Detailed findings

Access to information

"Scrutiny members should have access to a regularly available source of key information about the management of the authority – particularly on performance, management and risk".

- No evidence of resistance to members having information they need;
- **But**
- Information request often not clearly understood or presented well
- Inconsistent evidence of members understanding how to use that information in the best way in carrying out their role

CAMPBELL
TICKELL

Detailed findings

Planning work

To "make a tangible difference to the work of the authority...scrutiny committees need to plan their work programme, i.e. draw up a long-term agenda and consider making it flexible enough to accommodate any urgent, short-term issues that might arise during the year".

"While scrutiny has the power to look at anything which affects 'the area, or the area's inhabitants', authorities will often find it difficult to support a scrutiny function that carries out generalised oversight across the wide range of issues experienced by local people, particularly in the context of partnership working. Prioritisation is necessary".

- No evidence of a strategic approach to work planning, nor of systematic prioritisation, responds to cabinet work plan
- Work plan is relatively short-term
- Scrutiny workgroups focus on individual members (or their constituents) interest or concerns rather than agreed priorities of council
- Agenda planning involves Chair, vice chair and independent member supported by Democracy Officer
- Agenda items often not clearly articulated or thought through, no clear focus or recommendation

CAMPBELL
TICKELL

Detailed findings

Meetings and evidence sessions

- The majority of agenda items/papers lack focus
- Large volume for information only
- Often little clarity as to why items are presented and what the committee is being asked to do
- Chair should provide stronger and consistent leadership in managing specific agenda items, look to provide a clear introduction and summary of each item

"Good preparation is a vital part of conducting effective evidence sessions. Members should have a clear idea of what the committee hopes to get out of each session and appreciate that success will depend on their ability to work together on the day".

- evidence sessions not observed but feedback to committee could be improved

CAMPBELL
TICKELL

Conclusions

- Current ways of working need to be improved to evidence good regard/ following the new Statutory Guidance
- But in reality the guidance is just re-enforcing good practise. You should be looking to achieve this as a minimum if you (and the wider council) want to be good at Scrutiny!
- Overall need a re-focussing of purpose and the resourcing and delivery of a number of practical actions

CAMPBELL
TICKELL

Questions

CAMPBELL
TICKELL

But...

...our field work and in particular our interviews showed a desire to improve.



CAMPBELL
TICKELL

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Culture and ways of working

- Develop and agree a **single, clear and measurable** definition of the role and purpose of the committee
- Develop a specific role description for the committee chair to include skills, attributes and key responsibilities
- Consider how the members of the committee can be suitably supported and trained to be skilled and effective members who clearly understand the purpose of the committee and their contribution to it
- Arrange focussed training session(s) for **all** members (within a meeting) specifically on how to be an effective O and S member. Possible areas of training : how to promote and build visibility of scrutiny; how to effectively challenge and scrutinise information and decisions

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Culture and Ways of working (2)

- Introduce a formal feedback/link from Cabinet to O and S. (The Leader attends O and S, and nobody asked him anything!)
- Consider how you select your enquiry topics should they be focussed more on delivery of the Council's corporate plan. Better use of finite resources and could help to evidence added value to the wider council
- Consider how the Chair and committee can widen it's visibility in the council? political makeup should not be a barrier to effective scrutiny, its about using information and looking at decision making in a smarter way

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Resources

- Although dedicated resource to O and S has improved, general officer support needs to be better focussed and respected
- Report writers need to be given clearer brief and expectation and time frame and this needs to be robustly adhered to and managed by the Chair
- Consider introducing a maximum page limit for reports with use of appendices by exception
- Consider training for officers on pp presentation
- Chair to sense check all papers before dispatch
- Chair to consistently manage presentations at meeting

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Effective Meetings

- Ensure that all members are encouraged to contribute and feel comfortable doing so
- Introduce a front cover sheet for each report/agenda item to provide clarity on the purpose of the report, why it is coming to O and S and what recommendations/action the committee are being asked to make. This should be made available to report authors after agenda planning meeting. Chair to use this to 'top and tail' each agenda item at meeting and can also be useful for minutes
- Introduce an action tracker so that all decisions/actions made by the committee can be tracked at each meeting. This should also include tracking of recommendations to Cabinet or other committees/groups

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Effective meetings (2)

- Re-order agenda (recognising issues with public attendance) between items for Scrutiny and items for overview in order to make better uses of meeting time and member energy
- Re-introduce maximum meeting time of 2 hours , linked back to agenda planning, quality of reports, length of presentations, management of external speakers
- Introduce a wrap up session at the end of each meeting to consider 'positives and negatives' from meeting

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Questions?

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Recommendations: Summary and next steps

- *Our recommendations are not just about showing adherence to the Statutory Guidance*
- *They are more than that, if accepted and delivered they will help make the committee more effective, members feel valued and improve the standing of the committee within the wider council*
- **Next steps:** Written report to be finalised including feedback from this presentation
- Action plan to be developed and agreed by committee
- Committee to track progress on implementation of recommendations

Thank You

Hilary Gardner and Ceri Victory-Rowe
020 8830 6777

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Information/Discussion Paper

Overview & Scrutiny - 24th February 2020 Marketing Cheltenham

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

- 1.1 To appraise members of the purpose of Marketing Cheltenham, its current areas of focus and how delivery and success will be measured.

2. Summary of the Issue

- 2.1 Following recommendations made in the 2015 'Strategic Tourism Outcomes' report and subsequent 2016 Cheltenham Visitor Economy Strategy for a new delivery body to lead the growth of Cheltenham's visitor economy and place ambitions, Marketing Cheltenham was created as the town's official Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO) by CBC in 2017.
- 2.2 Significant early progress was made, with 'Visit Cheltenham' establishing an increasingly prominent and influential presence in the market place. However, with initial delivery outsourced via commissioned consultants, this increasing reliance on consultancy contracts was seen to be unsustainable, prompting CBC to approve the creation of an in-house Marketing Cheltenham team (totalling five staff) with a funding commitment and delivery plan through to July 2021. Cheltenham BID together with other major stakeholders also committed their own financial support to Marketing Cheltenham – hence the July 2021 funding horizon, which brings it in line with the next BID ballot.
- 2.3 Members will be aware of recent publications and associated press coverage of Marketing Gloucester. It is important to note that the in-house and partnership approach adopted by Marketing Cheltenham is markedly different to the approach taken in Gloucester. Marketing Gloucester was created as a separate company with its own governance, albeit still wholly owned and funded by the City Council. Conversely, as a department of CBC with a director of CBC in the role of Senior Responsible Owner (SRO), Marketing Cheltenham is subject to direct CBC oversight and governance and CBC financial management and controls.
- 2.4 With CBC and partners having invested in its creation, albeit with a currently fixed term commitment to 31st July 2021, the challenge (and opportunity) is for Marketing Cheltenham to continue to demonstrate clear added-value to Cheltenham, CBC and its Place Vision and to secure the necessary confidence in its longer term future.

3. Summary of evidence/information

3.1 Purpose of Marketing Cheltenham

Marketing Cheltenham's principal purpose is to lead the delivery of Cheltenham's Visitor Economy Strategy, which ultimately seeks to grow the town's visitor economy by 5%pa from 2019 to 2021. By 2021, tourism will be worth £177m to Cheltenham's economy, will have created an additional 500 jobs and will have played – and continue to play - a significant part in realising the town's economic and cultural ambitions and wider Place Vision.

- 3.2 A further purpose of Marketing Cheltenham is to provide more direct support to the economic growth/inward investment agenda. There is clear alignment of some of the outcomes arising from the activities of a DMO on the wider economic prosperity of the borough. Reflections on the cities that consistently deliver against liveability indices

demonstrate the interrelationship between place making and economic growth.

	Survey	Top Cities	Criteria
EIU	Global Liveability Ranking (2017)	Melbourne, Australia Vienna, Austria Vancouver, Canada Toronto, Canada Calgary, Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stability • Healthcare • Culture • Environment • Education • Infrastructure
Mercer	Quality of Living Survey (2018)	Vienna, Austria Zurich, Switzerland Auckland, New Zealand Munich, Germany Vancouver, Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety • Education • Hygiene • Healthcare • Culture • Environment • Recreation • Political-economic stability • Public transport • Access to goods and services
Monocle	Most Liveable Cities Index (2015)	Tokyo, Japan Vienna, Austria Berlin, Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety/crime • International connectivity • Climate/sunshine • Quality of architecture • Public transport • Tolerance • Environmental issues and access to nature • Urban design • Business conditions & policy developments

3.3 Why invest in tourism and the visitor economy?

Recent figures have suggested that the tourism industry is now the fastest growing sector in the UK, putting it ahead of both financial services and banking – and the fifth largest sector in terms of GDP (11%). In 2019, tourism was one of the first industries to secure a national Sector Deal with UK government in line with its Industrial Strategy and, linked to this, VisitBritain (the national tourism body) has just launched its new five year tourism growth strategy which forecasts tourism spending to grow by more than £12 billion by 2025. At a regional level, GFirst LEP has also recognised the importance of tourism in its own draft Local Industrial Strategy.

3.4 At a broader level too, the important role that the visitor economy plays in place shaping and as a vital contributor to an area’s economic and social wellbeing has also become increasingly recognised in recent years. Local Authorities in particular are once again playing a key leadership role in capitalising on their local visitor economy’s growth potential, creating the conditions for it to thrive and ensuring a rich cultural offer to attract visitors and enhance the quality of life for local residents. Cheltenham’s Place Vision (and Visitor Economy Strategy) echo this.

3.5 Culture and the visitor economy have been at the heart of many of the UK’s economic growth success stories – from the renaissance of Liverpool post its year as European Capital of Culture in 2008, through to Manchester, Bristol, Newcastle, York and Chester – the list goes on. All have experienced significant economic growth in recent years, but at the same time have also successfully reshaped their place identities. By harnessing the potential of their cultural and visitor economies, these cities have created thriving communities and places where people (especially the young) want to live and work - not just visit.

3.6 Marketing Cheltenham priorities and work programme

With a full team recruited over the past 6-9 months now in place, Marketing Cheltenham has a clear work programme that is aligned to the Visitor Economy Strategy and CBC’s wider place marketing and inward investment ambitions. Its principal aim is **to:**

- **Lead the marketing of Cheltenham** as a place to visit, do business and invest, providing much needed coherence and cut-through in the marketplace by bringing partners together and amplifying the Cheltenham brand and proposition.

This is then supported by four underpinning priority areas:

- **Collaboration & Partnership** - Ensuring Marketing Cheltenham takes a collaborative approach in all that it does, galvanising partners from across the town and wider region

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behind a shared, destination and place marketing approach

- **Destination Management & the visitor experience** - For Marketing Cheltenham to play an increasingly influential role in helping to manage and further develop Cheltenham's tourism and cultural offer and the quality of the visitor experience
- **Supporting Inward Investment** – For Marketing Cheltenham to play a B2B facing role through development of a platform 'Cheltenham means Business' and a vehicle to raise the profile of Cheltenham as the UK's cyber tech capital
- **A sustainable organisation** - Establishing Marketing Cheltenham as a respected and valued DMO, providing solid foundations for a sustainable future for Marketing Cheltenham beyond 2021

Marketing

Activity under this priority area has and continues to see Marketing Cheltenham driving forward a number of marketing initiatives via its Visit Cheltenham channels. Examples of our delivery include:

- The launch and roll-out of The Festival Town branding last year, which has created a much stronger identity and shared story and continues to be adopted by partners across the town.
- Refreshed visitcheltenham.com website and supporting social media channels. In 2019, visitcheltenham.com received more than half a million visitors – a huge 60% increase on 2018, while our social media following and reach has doubled in the past year.
- Secured national and international PR and media coverage for Cheltenham, from The Times and FT to some of the most influential online influencers and bloggers.
- Delivery of all consumer marketing for Cheltenham BID – campaigns and event marketing to date have included major Christmas campaigns in 2018 and 2019; Light Up Cheltenham in 2019 and 2020; Cheltenham Boutique Sale and a new Cheltenham Restaurant Week in 2020. Campaign results have been impressive, including a 47% recall rate for the Christmas campaign, 1m+ reach via social media and increased town centre footfall (town centre cameras).
- Partnered with Cotswold Tourism on a major overseas tourism project, securing £250,000 from Visit Britain to grow international visitors into the region. We are hopeful of a further extension to this project in 2020/21.
- Launched a new Meet in Cheltenham conference and venue finding service to grow the volume and value of business tourism in the town (visiting Cheltenham for meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions).
- In the process of creating a Cheltenham Means Business brand, website and supporting marketing activity to encourage inward investment into the town and raise the profile of Cheltenham as the UK's cyber tech capital.

Partnership & Collaboration

- Major match funding commitments secured from Cheltenham BID and The Jockey Club with shared marketing and event delivery programmes.
- Marketing Cheltenham membership scheme established, with more than 100 businesses in membership, plus a further 500+ via an affiliate scheme with BID levy payers.
- Recognising the importance of securing the confidence of partners and industry,

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Marketing Cheltenham continues to build relationships with stakeholders across the town and wider region, actively attending and speaking at networking events, partner meetings whilst also maximising corporate PR and profile.

- Actively engaged in related strategic groups, including Cheltenham Culture Board (commissioning and development of a new Cheltenham Culture Strategy), Cotswold Tourism Partnership and the GFirst LEP Visitor Economy Sector Group.
- Recognised by Visit Britain and Visit England as the official Destination Management Organisation for Cheltenham and actively engaged in the national destinations forum.
- Development of Cheltenham Means Business web platform that enables B2B engagement and collaboration. This will feed from the GFirst ERDF Inward Investment programme website – Invest in Gloucestershire.

Destination Management & The Visitor Experience

- Marketing Cheltenham continues to directly manage and deliver a number of high profile events, including the Cheltenham Festival of Cycling, Christmas Lights Switch On and Parade and Light Up Cheltenham, whilst 2020 will see management and oversight of the new Cheltenham Ice Rink and Christmas Market on behalf of Cheltenham BID and CBC respectively.
- Informed by the O&S Events Task Group, Marketing Cheltenham has produced an interim Events Strategy, providing a framework to guide CBC's future support and delivery of events in the town.
- Currently leading a review of the Tourist Information service in Cheltenham including the scoping of future delivery models and forms.

A sustainable organisation

- In line with our partnerships and membership programme described above, Marketing Cheltenham continues to employ a commercially focused approach with clear income targets to offset CBC's pump-priming investment. Increased revenue streams from membership (including from a wider business base), advertising sales, sponsorship and commission are targeted to achieve a net ROI on CBC investment by 2021.
- With an in-house team of five now in place (mid 2019), possessing 40+ years of experience in destination management, marketing and event delivery, Marketing Cheltenham can be a valuable asset to CBC and the town over the coming years.

3.7 Measurement

The impact and outcomes of Marketing Cheltenham's delivery can be categorised into two areas: **Organisational performance measures**, consisting of marketing metrics and financial KPIs (causal measures) and **Destination/Town performance measures** (effect measures). These measures and their relative baselines and targets to 2021 are included as a background paper below.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1** To continue to recognise the value of Cheltenham's visitor economy and culture in place shaping, economic development and in creating a place where people want to live, work, study and invest.
- 4.2** To continue to champion and support Marketing Cheltenham to lead a coordinated and professional approach to the marketing of Cheltenham (to visitors, investors, students etc) and to recognise the need for longer term and sustained investment.

- 4.3** To support the implementation of new Events and Culture Strategies for the town and the role that Marketing Cheltenham can play in their delivery.
- 4.4** To be alive to and agile in capitalising on new opportunities that may emerge to work with partners or across a wider area, including helping to shape wider county/regional ambitions alongside neighbouring districts/DMOs and GFirst LEP.

Background papers	https://marketingcheltenham.co.uk/about/cheltenham-tourism-strategy/
Contact Officer	David Jackson, Manager, Marketing Cheltenham, 07780 023325 david.jackson@marketingcheltenham.co.uk
Accountability	Councillor Steve Jordan, Leader of the Council

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Information/Discussion Paper

Overview & Scrutiny – 24 February 2020

The Retail Environment in Cheltenham

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

- 1.1 Request of Overview & Scrutiny committee in response to the rapidly changing town centre environment

2. Summary of the Issue

- 2.1 The national retail environment has been challenging since the last recession. In fact many commentators assert that the closing of the Woolworth chain in 2009 was simply the start of a much bigger transition. One that has devastated the retail status quo and completely changed the face of town centre retail.
- 2.2 However, it would be naïve to simply focus upon retail in abstract from the wider role that town centre's perform. A point noted in the Portas Review of 2011 "*The new high streets won't just be about selling goods. The mix will include shops but could also include housing, offices, sport, schools or other social, commercial and cultural enterprises and meeting places. They should become places where we go to engage with other people in our communities, where shopping is just one small part of a rich mix of activities.*"
- 2.3 As a consequence this paper adopts a much broader perspective on the town centre.

3. Summary of evidence/information

- 3.1 A thriving town centre has a range of functions including
- Retail
 - Leisure
 - Food & beverage
 - Town centre living
 - Employment
 - Public realm
 - Connectivity/accessibility
 - Events and Festivals
- 3.2 For each of these areas we now present evidence on the current situation, although it is worth recognising that the town centre is in a state of transition and flux and consequently it is rapidly evolving.
- 3.3 **Retail.** Cheltenham has had its share of losses, but these have to be seen in the context of globalisation. Brands appear and decline with increasing frequency but interestingly for Cheltenham, even when a shop unit closes when administrators are appointed, those retail units are often filled promptly.. Examples include Blacks, Millets and HMV. Equally, whilst losses have occurred, there has been a positive

take-up of vacant units with newcomers to the town eg Oliver Bonas, India Jane and Urban Outfitters. More recently there has been a slow-down in the take-up of retail vacancies reflecting the national picture, encapsulated by data from Springboard which noted a difficult Christmas trading period nationally with footfall down -2.5%. Justification linked to “caution and spending restraint of consumers which typifies low consumer confidence.....Other influences that will have driven down footfall in stores and destinations during December include the strong shift in consumer demand towards experience/leisure based trips, away from wholly transaction focussed visits.”

- 3.4 Leisure.** Cheltenham is fortunate in that it has a defined leisure quarter at the Brewery; in many instances this would have been developed on the edge of town driving footfall away rather than into the centre. That foresight by NFU Mutual in redeveloping the site into a leisure driven offer has clearly benefited the town.
- 3.5 Food & Beverage.** Cheltenham has a strong food and beverage offer and whilst some high profile collapses have occurred (eg Jamies Italian), the offer is very strong and diverse with national names such as Wetherspoons, the Botanist and Brewhouse & Kitchen plus local independents too eg Lumiere, Mayflower, Gin & Juice. This offer aligned with the leisure core helps strengthen the wider night-time economy.
- 3.6 Town Centre Living.** A key step to maintaining vibrancy is to ensure opportunities for people to live right in the heart of the town. CBC has been supporting such initiatives through its planning function. Specific successes include Regency Place and the Brewery Quarter, with further properties coming on-stream on the Lower High Street. The town centre has also attracted significant retirement home operators who tend to attract individuals with high disposable income, but the extent to which this is spent in the town centre is unknown.
- 3.7 Employment.** The 1980's/1990's trend for decentralisation of employment to edge of town business parks at the expense of the town centre has often been linked with poor town centre performance. Fortunately Cheltenham has had considerable success in reversing a trend of employment to residential losses across the town eg The Dower house, 1 Bayshill and Pate Court. New town centre employment space has been created at Formal House, Honeybourne Place, and the Brewery; all of which have experienced positive take-up rates. Other schemes include the Quadrangle and 111-117 High Street. An interesting fact is that schemes with zero or very little car parking but accessible to town centre amenities and with positive cycling facilities etc are commanding some of the higher demand and rental levels; a factor that would be unheard of only a decade ago, and reflecting a new client group of youngsters who wish to live and work locally, and view sustainable transport as part of that change. The importance of these sites is their impact upon town centre footfall especially at lunchtime.
- 3.8 Public Realm.** It is vital that public realm is delivered and maintained to a high standard. CBC has been working with GCC, the BID and other stakeholders to improve the offer in Cheltenham. Whilst there have been some successes, such as the Promenade upgrade, wayfinding and phase 1 of the High Street, there remains a considerable amount of work to do, especially in The strand which must rate as one of the worst town centre surfaces in the County.
- 3.9 Connectivity/Accessibility.** It is crucial that the central core is readily accessible. As the Cheltenham Transport Plan demonstrated there is a growing propensity for individuals to wish to travel by foot, cycle or public transport – Stagecoach reported a 270,000 increase in bus passengers p.a. and greater reliability performance as a result of the phase 4 trial. Equally independent survey work undertaken by the BID (CARD group) identified that less than one in four town centre users came to

Cheltenham by car, the majority arriving by bus or on foot, exploding the myth that everyone drives into town and that car parking and its price is the key determinant of the town centre performance. The key question with the climate change emergency declared by both CBC and GCC is how to maintain and build upon the positive modal shift achieved in the last 18 months.

- 3.10 Events and festivals.** Cheltenham has benefited from the creation of both the Cheltenham BID and Marketing Cheltenham who have taken on wide ranging roles to promote the town. The effectiveness of their actions best summed up in the following data sets, released in November 2019. Day visitors to Cheltenham grew to 1.9 million – a 7% increase, whilst staying visitors rose to just under 1.1 million – a 6% increase. Rebadging the town to the Festival Town and bringing forward events such as the Big Wheel and Lighting-Up Cheltenham are all part of a wider package designed to support town centre vitality. Equally we must be open-minded to new initiatives such as the Wheel and ice-rink on Imperial Gardens.
- 3.11** In conclusion, Cheltenham remains buoyant as shown by headline data eg Knight Frank rate Cheltenham town centre as 9th out of 200 retail centres for investment; the JCS retail study (Sept 2019) cites Cheltenham vacancy rate at 8% compared to national average of 12%. However, there is no time for complacency as the retail storm continues unabated with £1 in every £5 now spent on-line. In order to maintain current footfall and performance will require the town to run faster to stand still.
- 3.12** To date this has been delivered through a variety of arms-length bodies. Cheltenham Development Task Force has played a significant role in delivering ambitious schemes, notably the bookends of the Brewery Quarter and John Lewis & Partners store, plus on-going engagement with potential new entrants such as Metro Bank, whilst the BID has supported a wide range of initiatives through direct marketing and engagement and ambassadors on the street. Meanwhile Marketing Cheltenham picks up the mantle for long term promotion.
- 3.13** More recently the planning team under David Oakhill has been taking a more proactive stance to forthcoming challenges working with the agencies above and others such as Cheltenham Civic Society. This has resulted in recent successes in securing planning for underutilised upper floors above retail (eg Radley store on the Promenade) for residential or office which it is hoped will help landlords facing challenges from retail lease renewals. Additionally we have collectively been engaging with other landlords and leaseholders to encourage conversations to 'unlock' existing and potential future challenges.

4. Next Steps - possible next steps for the committee to consider eg potential witnesses, further report, site visit etc.

- 4.1** The key issues are policy and political support for a creative and open-minded approach to the challenges that we face.
- 4.2** Assuming that the town can remain in aspic in the face of such momentous change is unrealistic. An opportunity exists to create a Town Centre Vision/Masterplan that connects a range of existing strategies such as the Place Strategy and Connecting Cheltenham under one document and as the Task Force did at inception identify where the opportunities for interventions exist. Inevitably this requires a document with a degree of flexibility as too great a specificity necessitates a rewrite every time circumstances shift. Equally becoming a slave to a masterplan is not advised as the vagaries of funding mean that we need to have well developed concepts capable of pursuing funding opportunities as they arise.

- 4.3 The Cheltenham/Gloucester/Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy (JCS) is currently under review. One area of focus is Retail, with a review of retail currently underway for Cheltenham and Gloucester to inform future policy direction. The other area of focus is obviously residential development, much of which is likely to be located on the periphery of Cheltenham. It is important to have a sufficiently sized market to support the town centre, along with connects (i.e. transport connections) between residents and the town centre to ensure ease of movement.
- 4.4 Consideration of the implications (both positive and negative) of Conservation Area designations and the application of Listed Building regulations is worth exploring. Cheltenham has one of the largest Conservation Area's in the Country, which is both an asset and constraint. A Conservation Area helps to retain the important character of the town centre, but through its application does inevitably make it more difficult to implement significant change (for example height of buildings).
- 4.5 Listed Building regulations place an emphasis on protection and retention of listed assets, as opposed to the wider benefits derived from making changes to those buildings (as would be the case for planning regulations). A listing places significant restrictions on works to such building, both internal and external, and within proximity to. Consideration should be given to informing national debate on this issue.
- 4.6 Continue effective dialogue with developers and investors as achieved through the Development Task Force to maintain the quality of the built environment offer, and create added value where possible.
- 4.7 Continue to promote Cheltenham as a thriving town centre through outreach work by Marketing Cheltenham and the delivery of short-term attractions such as Light-Up Cheltenham delivered by the BID.
- 4.8 Maintain pressure on central government to accelerate the review of business rates.
- 4.9 Progress public realm upgrades as funding allows
- 4.10 Delivering the ambitions of Connecting Cheltenham which aligns with the GCC emerging Local Transport Plan refresh and supports both Councils climate change emergency declarations. This will involve promoting modal shift and reducing car borne traffic.

Background Papers

n/a

Contact Officer

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kevan@cheltenhambid.co.uk

Accountability

Councillor McKinlay, Cabinet Member
Development and Safety

Cheltenham Borough Council
Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 24 February 2020
Scrutiny Task Group Review – Events

Accountable Member	Councillor Dennis Parsons, Chair of Scrutiny Task Group
Accountable Officer	Tracey Crews, Director of Planning
Executive Summary	<p>A review of events management was initiated by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2019. A Task Group was set up to look at the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Council’s approach to managing events in our parks and gardens within the context of the commercialisation agenda; • the approval process for events across the borough, and • how events are managed once approval is given. <p>The Task Group engaged with a number of key stakeholders, including event organisers and local residents’ groups. This was an important part of the process and informed a number of recommendations set out within this report.</p> <p>The desired outcome outlined by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s One Page Strategy (Appendix 2) was for the group to identify strengths and weaknesses of the increased commercialisation strategy, and to identify possible improvements to the process of events application, approval and management.</p>
Recommendations	<p>1. That Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorse the findings and recommendations of the Scrutiny Task Group Report provided at Appendix 2, and for these recommendations to be presented to Cabinet.</p> <p>2. That Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the Minority Report provided at Appendix 3 and decide whether to endorse the recommendations for consideration by Cabinet.</p>
Financial implications	<p>In terms of the recommendations in Appendix 2 there could be some future financial impacts which are indicated below but it is not possible to quantify these given the current stage that the project has reached. As the project progresses, it will be possible to provide more concrete assessments of the potential financial impacts. The project should generate more income for the Council.</p> <p>3. There may be some expenditure required to finance the event website although if this is done in house that will minimise any costs.</p> <p>8. There may be costs for providing Member training.</p> <p>11. There may be additional income generated because of the development of new commercial opportunities.</p> <p>12. Additional capital investment may be required to promote new commercial opportunities.</p>

	<p>13. There may be changes to the rates charged on the parks and gardens in the light of the commercialisation strategy.</p> <p>14. Additional income can be generated through widening the calendar in which commercial activities take place.</p> <p>15. Additional income may be generated through providing hands-on guidance for event providers.</p> <p>16. Additional income may be obtained through increased licence income.</p> <p>Contact officer: Martin Yates, Business Partner Accountant</p> <p>Email: martin.yates@publicagroup.uk</p> <p>Tel: 01242 264 200</p>
<p>Legal implications</p>	<p>If an event does not involve licensable activities or it falls under the TEN regime, from a Licensing Act 2003 perspective, there is no/limited regulation. You only need to obtain a licence for the following activities: to sell alcohol by retail; if you are a qualifying club, to supply alcohol to a club member, or to sell alcohol to a guest of a club member; to provide regulated entertainment; or to provide late night refreshment - selling hot food or hot drink between 11pm and 5am for consumption on or off the premises, unless you are a hotel, staff canteen or campsite.</p> <p>Land use licences (under £250,000) are delegated to the Director for Finance and Assets. If members decide that they wish to make decisions in respect of land use licences then such decisions would be either the relevant Cabinet member or Cabinet itself. Alternatively, if members are looking at involvement but not decision making it would be possible to consider setting up a Panel (with clear terms of reference).</p> <p>When referring to the term “licence” in documentation of any sort we need to ensure that it is clear about whether or not we are referring to a premises licence or a land use licence.</p> <p>Contact officer: Vikki Fennell</p> <p>Email: vikki.fennell@teWKesbury.gov.uk</p> <p>Tel: 01684 272015</p>
<p>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</p>	<p>No direct HR implications identified.</p> <p>Contact officer: Corry Ravenscroft, HRBP</p> <p>Email: corry.ravenscroft@publicagroup.uk</p> <p>Tel: 07827 895 624</p>

1. Background

1.1 A short paper setting out the considerations of the Scrutiny Task Group is provided at Appendix 2. This is a short report; therefore the details are not repeated here. The Task Group has made a total of 19 recommendations having heard evidence from relevant officers, community groups and event organisers. These are categorised under 5 key themes:

1. Community/engagement
2. Process
3. Events strategy
4. Commercial
5. Enforcement

2. Reasons for recommendations

2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to endorse the findings and recommendations of the report provided at Appendix 2, and for these recommendations to be presented to Cabinet.

2.2 It is considered that the recommendations as drafted will assist in the following ways;

1. Improve transparency and efficiency with the events process;
2. Improve engagement with community impacted by events in their locality;
3. Guide the drafting of the events strategy;
4. Strengthen Land Use Agreements and the consequently the council's approach to enforcement.

3. Consultation and feedback

3.1 The Task Group has valued the contribution made by community groups and event organisers.

Report author	Harry Mayo, Democracy Officer: harry.mayo@cheltenham.gov.uk , 01242 26 4211
Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Overview & Scrutiny Committee One Page Strategy2. Scrutiny Task Group Report – Events3. Minority report from Councillor Dennis Parsons

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SCRUTINY REVIEW – ONE PAGE STRATEGY

FOR COMPLETION BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	
Broad topic area	Events
Specific topic area	In view of the strategy to increase commercialisation of the parks and gardens; look at the approval process for events in the town and how those events are managed once approval is given
Ambitions for the review	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the strategy for increased commercialisation of the parks and gardens 2. Develop knowledge of the events application/approval process 3. Gain understanding of the council's procedures for managing an event (including enforcement if necessary) 4. Understand the impact of not increasing commercialisation
Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify strengths and weaknesses of the strategy for increased commercialisation of the parks and gardens 2. Identify any improvements/changes to the events application/approval process 3. Identify possible improvements to the council's procedures for managing events (including enforcement)
How long should the review take?	3-4 months
Recommendations to be reported to:	Overview and Scrutiny for endorsement Cabinet/Council depending on the recommendations to be made
FOR COMPLETION BY OFFICERS	
Members	Councillors Baker, Mason, Parsons, Seacome and Sudbury
Officers experts and witnesses	Jessica Goodwin, Events Manager (Commercialisation strategy) Jane Stovell, Project Manager (Event application/approval process) Adam Reynolds, Green Space Development Manager (Events management) Mark Nelson, Enforcement Manager (Enforcement) Louis Krog, Business Support and Licensing Team Leader (Licensing)
Sponsoring officer	Tracey Crews
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Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet Member Clean and Green (Parks and Gardens) / Cabinet Member Development and Safety (Enforcement) / Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles (Events Management) / Cabinet Member Finance – (income stream)

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Scrutiny
TASK GROUP
EVENTS
AUGUST 2019



Scrutiny Task Group – Events – Final Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A review of event management was initiated by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in August 2019. A Scrutiny Task Group was set up to look at the following areas:

- the Council's approach to managing events in our parks and gardens within the context of the commercialisation agenda;
- the approval process for events across the borough
- how events are managed once approval is given.

The Task Group engaged with a number of key stakeholders, including event organisers and local residents' groups.

The desired outcome outlined by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's One Page Strategy (Appendix 2) was for the Task Group to identify strengths and weaknesses of the increased commercialisation strategy, and to identify possible improvements to the process of events application, approval and management.

The Task Group recommends a total of 19 recommendations presented under the following key themes;

1. Engagement/Community
2. Process
3. Event Strategy
4. Commercial
5. Enforcement

The details of the recommendations are set out in section 4 of this report.

Photos on covering page courtesy of Marketing Cheltenham

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. A review of events management was initiated by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2019, in view of the strategy to increase commercialisation of the parks and gardens.
- 1.2. This report sets out the findings and recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Task Group.

2. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

2.1. Membership of the Task Group:

- Councillor Dennis Parsons (Chair)
- Councillor Chris Mason
- Councillor Diggory Seacome
- Councillor Garth Barnes

Councillors Paul Baker and Klara Sudbury were initially on the group but stood down due to work commitments. Councillor Sudbury was replaced by Councillor Barnes.

2.2. Key officers:

- Tracey Crews, Director of Planning and Sponsoring Officer (TC)
- Jess Goodwin, Events Manager at Marketing Cheltenham/Cheltenham BID (JG)
- Louis Krog, Licensing (LK)
- Adam Reynolds, Green Space Development (AR)
- David Oakhill, Head of Planning (DO)
- David Jackson, Manager of Marketing Cheltenham (DJ)
- Andrew Knott, Accountant and Deputy Section 151 Officer (AK)
- Gareth Jones, Senior Environmental Health Officer (GJ)
- Sarah Clark, Public and Environmental Health Officer (SC)
- Jane Stovell, Project Manager (JS)

2.3. Ambitions agreed by the O&S committee:

1. Understand the strategy for increased commercialisation of the parks and gardens
2. Develop knowledge of the events application/approval process
3. Gain understanding of the council's procedures for managing an event (including enforcement if necessary)
4. Understand the impact of not increasing commercialisation

Outcomes desired by the O&S Committee:

1. Identify strengths and weaknesses of the strategy for increased commercialisation of the parks and gardens
2. Identify any improvements/changes to the events application/approval process

3. Identify possible improvements to the council's procedures for managing events (including enforcement)

3. METHOD OF APPROACH

- 3.1. The Task Group met on six occasions. The meetings took place on the following dates: 10th October 2019, 4th November 2019, 27th November 2019, 6th December 2019, 13th January 2020 and 30th January 2020.
- 3.2. The first meeting on 10th October 2019 sought to establish a strategy for the Task Group process. It was agreed that due to the complexity of the subject it would be prudent to split the future meetings into the following topics: strategy, process, previous events, enforcement and a 'mop up' session to determine the final recommendations.
- 3.3. This section of the report will outline the process chronologically, demonstrating how each recommendation was reached. Each meeting is discussed at the following points:
 - strategy (3.5 – 3.13)
 - process (3.14 – 3.29)
 - lessons learned from previous events through engagement with key stakeholders (3.30 – 3.47)
 - enforcement (3.48 – 3.60)
 - 'mopping up' outstanding issues and deciding on final recommendations (3.61 – 3.74)
- 3.4. At the first meeting, the Chair sought to focus on the question of engagement with elected Members and members of the community in making decisions around the hosting of events. It was agreed that a wide variety of interests needed to be taken into account, and Members suggested various groups and individuals to contact, from council officers with relevant areas of expertise to residents' groups and event organisers.
- 3.5. At the strategy meeting on 4th November 2019, AK informed Members about the council's overall commercial strategy, which seeks to make better use of council assets and improve their commercial potential.
- 3.6. He reported that officers look at assets through the lens of commercial activity to generate income, reviewing commercial rates in order to produce the most reasonable figures. Different rents are offered depending on the nature of the event that is proposed to be held there: commercial, charity or community. Members emphasised that if the goal is to make as much money as possible from the parks, then the public should be aware of it. Members also emphasised that a balance must be struck between generating profit and enabling free access for residents and visitors. It was resolved that the rates charged by CBC assets should be reviewed in the context of the events strategy.
- 3.7. DJ outlined the council's five year marketing strategy, which is aimed at increasing the value of tourism in Cheltenham from £150m to £170-180m, and to a total of 20% of all Gloucestershire tourism, across a five year period.
- 3.8. Members discussed the merits of different event strategies considering the seasonality of the events calendar, and agreed that the priority should be to improve the troughs in the event

season rather than stretch the peak season. It was noted that some parks are used more heavily due to their proximity to the town centre, and Members agreed the strategy should focus on improving venues across the board and increasing demand for smaller venues across the town. Members agreed that the wider effect of events on the local economy (e.g. the effect on business for local restaurants) must be taken into account.

- 3.9. JG informed Members about the general principles of the emerging events strategy. These are based around increasing tourism, economic impact, cultural opportunities and promoting Cheltenham. Social value is a key thread of the emerging strategy. Prospective events are assessed not only according to commercial value but also in terms of the broader benefit they can bring to the town. She emphasised that any events strategy must take into account the interests of the whole town rather than just the council, and must complement the cultural strategy currently being developed.
- 3.10. To ensure the events strategy is fully reflective of the cultural strategy, it was agreed that the events strategy should be interim and reviewed again when the cultural strategy is approved.
- 3.11. A tier system for events was proposed, with the top tier being for high-profile events bringing national and international visitors, second tier events bringing national and regional attention, and the bottom tier being for bespoke, Cheltenham-centric, community-led events.
- 3.12. Members suggested that there is a real difference between events that allow non-attendees to walk around experience the event (e.g. the Literature Festival) and those that put up fences and exclude them entirely unless they have paid the entrance fee. The current approach applied by officers in considering the use of parks and gardens for events includes openness and accessibility as key criteria. The Task Group agreed that this needs to be preserved.
- 3.13. Members discussed the wider purpose of the emerging events strategy. TC clarified that the existing approaches are not borough-wide, and now that Cheltenham is being promoted as a The Festival Town, a more rounded approach was needed. An events strategy will provide a clear structure within which to consider and promote events.
- 3.14. The 27th November meeting focused on process, and broke down the current process into its key elements: Events Consultative Groups (ECGs), Safety Advisory Groups (SAGs) licensing, planning and land use agreements.
- 3.15. LK explained that ECGs offer an opportunity for Members to sit down with prospective organisers and discuss their aims and various other issues. It is particularly helpful for less experienced organisers, who can consult the relevant officers and Members with significant experience of Cheltenham events. Members reported that they had had positive experiences with ECGs in the past, and found them a useful and informative part of the process.
- 3.16. LK further explained that events tend to be referred to a SAG, which has blue light services as its core membership in addition to officers from licensing, environmental health, building control and planning. Though the SAG has no statutory powers and cannot veto events, it can compile technical advice on safety issues like noise mitigation and environmental concerns, and feed it back to the relevant individuals.

- 3.17. The SAG can also recommend the imposition of conditions of required formal consents such as licensing or planning consents. The council would not enter into a land use agreement with an organiser that was ignoring clear SAG advice.
- 3.18. There was detailed debate around communication, especially the question of whether Members should be part of SAG. It was agreed that SAG was a technical forum with the focus on the safety of events. It was agreed that it was not appropriate for Members to be part of this group. It was agreed that ECG was the appropriate vehicle for member engagement and that Members should continue to act as the conduit with the local community. There was discussion around a committee should be established for events akin to that of licensing committee. It was agreed by the Task Group that this would add unnecessary administrative burden into the events process and slow down decision making.
- 3.19. Members were also informed of the situation regarding licences, the most important of which relate to entertainment and alcohol, but which are also required to play commercial music, collect for charities and many other things. In the past, the council allowed some events to use its licences, but this is no longer the case. Some smaller events are still allowed to use the council's licences, but Cheltenham Festivals (as an example of a large provider) now has its own premises licences. Most licences last for 12 months, though alcohol licences are granted in perpetuity for an annual fee.
- 3.20. DO outlined the implications of planning consent for events, explaining that the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) generally allows venues in Cheltenham to be used for events for 28 days each calendar year without planning permission. Montpellier and Imperial Gardens are the exceptions, benefitting from planning permission to use up to 70 days per year.
- 3.21. The level of restriction depends on the kind of activity taking place on the land: motor racing, for example, is much more tightly restricted than other events. It was emphasised that each event is assessed according to the specific licences and legal permissions required, and that it is important for planning to be seen as an enabler rather than a blocker.
- 3.22. AR informed Members about land use agreements, which are brought in after the consultative scrutiny stage (ECG/SAG), when the event has been greenlit and the relevant licences procured. The land use agreement covers the specific land to be used, fees and charges, health and safety requirements, ground protection measures, procedures for dealing with noise and nuisances, and more.
- 3.23. Land use agreements for smaller events tend to mostly follow an established template, while larger events require a bespoke agreement tailored by One Legal for a fee of £150. This legal cost lies with the Finance and Assets division.
- 3.24. Members questioned the lack of public involvement in the land use agreement stage. It was clarified that public and member consultation has already happened at the ECG stage, before the land use agreement is formulated.
- 3.25. JS outlined the current process of how events are booked, emphasising that it is highly complex and requires a large amount of officer time, but is in the process of being modernised. Streamlining the process will save money and improve the experience of event organisers, who often find themselves waiting for responses. Members agreed that it would

be beneficial to centralise the process, so that officers and organisers can access the information they need in one place.

- 3.26. LK added that the lack of a specific events officer at the council means that responsibility is naturally more stratified and decisions take longer to make. JS suggested that the council's case management system, which uses software called IDOX Uniform, ensures that event organisers know who to contact. Members asked whether the council had investigated what other authorities and whether Cheltenham could do better. JG responded that she was in the process of examining alternative options, such as the Apply4 system used by Bristol City Council, and whether greater value for money could be achieved elsewhere.
- 3.27. Members asked whether the complexity of the planning process dissuades smaller event organisers from applying. LK that as long as events are organised and run properly, with the correct licences, then the council's role is relatively minor. Particularly small events do not need to go through the full process: for example, ECGs are only required when the event is expected to attract more than 500 visitors. It was acknowledged that this was an imperfect threshold, since even the smallest event can cause problems if inadequately overseen.
- 3.28. Members asked whether a greater amount of information could be included in member briefings on events. TC suggested that briefings, which are publicly available should residents wish to read them, should be published in one easily accessible place. LK clarified that every event has its details logged on the IDOX Uniform system, and the majority of regulatory information is in the public domain already.
- 3.29. It was suggested that it might be wise for Members to receive updates on all events and choose who to inform of this on their own initiative. It was agreed that this is the point of councillors, to represent the public and report directly back to their constituents. It was agreed that the possibility of new member training be explored, to clarify what Members can and should relate directly to constituents.
- 3.30. The 6th December meeting, relating to previous events, sought to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the events process from a wider set of perspectives. In order to achieve this, invitations were circulated to various stakeholders, including residents' groups and event organisers, outlining the purpose of the meeting as follows:

The purpose of the meeting you have been invited to is to hear your thoughts and reflections on the processes adopted by the borough council in supporting events across the town, lessons we can take forward when developing our event strategy, how we strike a balance between commercial interests and residents' interests, and how to ensure that every event has a positive impact on the wider community.

- 3.31. The meeting was based around the following questions:
- *In your experience, how effective do you feel the process is for the consideration and booking and managing of events?*
 - *In your experience, how effective do you think the consultation process is between the event organiser, elected Members, CBC officers and the wider community?*
 - *How do you think CBC can improve its approach to booking and managing events on its land through the events booking process or events strategy to better support events in Cheltenham?*

- 3.32. A total 13 representatives attended the meeting, representing groups including Friends of Sandford Park, Friends of Imperial Square Gardens, Friends of Montpellier Bandstand and Gardens, the Paint Festival, the Lido, Cheltenham Festivals, the Fiesta, Triathlons and Cyclo-cross, and written feedback was received from those unable to attend.
- 3.33. Attendees relayed their positive and negative experiences of the events process and discussed what could be done better. Members were able to discuss the reality of the events system directly with those affected by it, and demonstrated a willingness to engage directly with organisers and residents to improve the process.
- 3.34. A number of attendees described their frustration with what they saw as an unnecessarily complicated application process. The representative for the Paint Festival reported that they were asked numerous questions throughout the process that could have been answered in one go at the very start, had the process been more coherent. They criticised a lack of joined-up thinking, and suggested that the number of different permissions required made it difficult to plan ahead.
- 3.35. Those representing events that took place in different locations indicated that they felt this was not adequately taken into account during the application process. The Paint Festival, for example, had over 15,000 visitors in total in 2019, but only a maximum of 20 in each location at any one time. The council's questions were ambiguous as to which figure was needed in particular cases.
- 3.36. Organisers agreed that there needed to be a clearer idea of the council's requirements of them, and a more focused and less stratified system of information and decision making. TC noted that recent business work carried out on the events process had indicated that the process was more complicated than it needed to be. Attendees and Members agreed that when an organiser fills out an online form, they should be given direct contact details for the officer who can grant them the particular permission they need.
- 3.37. The representative of Cheltenham Festivals indicated that the process had improved considerably in the twenty years they had worked with the council. Cheltenham Festivals tends to organise events several years in advance, so has a different experience of the events process to someone seeking to organise something at short notice. The representative of Cyclo-cross, a relatively small event, reported that they have good communication from officers and a clear idea of what is expected from them. The representative of Tri in the Park agreed that the consultation process had been good for them, responding to their time-critical needs in a proactive way.
- 3.38. Representatives of residents' groups also outlined their experience of the planning process. The representative of Friends of Pittville suggested that residents' feedback is not adequately taken into account, while the representative of Friends of Sandford Park cited the Cheese and Chilli Festival as a particular example of the lack of contact with the local community. They claimed that there had been no communication whatsoever from the council or the event organiser before the festival took place, only marketing leaflets. Residents did not feel as though the concerns they had voiced a year earlier about the effect of increased noise had been taken seriously. Members agreed that the organisers should have informed the local community, and that residents should always be notified of events in their area and have a chance to respond.

- 3.39. Written feedback submitted by the Cheese and Chilli Festival organisers indicated that they would no longer be looking to hold the event in Cheltenham due to the high volume of complaints received from residents in 2019.
- 3.40. The Chair agreed that the consultation process needs to be looked at more closely. Members acknowledged that the theme of residents not being properly consulted has persisted for a long time. Representatives of residents' groups agreed that from their point of view, it is about feeling like their concerns are being taken seriously.
- 3.41. The representative of the Fiesta agreed that public notification was essential, adding that when her organisation holds events in Winston Churchill Gardens, they put leaflets through every resident's door. This is not a legal requirement, but she suggested that something similar should be. The representative of the Paint Festival suggested that some leeway should be offered to events that take place across the whole town, as it would not be feasible to inform every resident who might be affected by their event.
- 3.42. The Chair suggested that a key complaint had been the lack of a single point of contact. He suggested that all event details should be accessible in one place, with a single officer responsible for oversight. Members agreed that the best way to achieve this would be to move to an entirely electronic system, which all officers could access rather than having to wait on each other for responses. JG reported that she was in the early stages of talks with a company offering web-based planning applications, which allows all departments and SAG members to view and comment on applications as they progress. An electronic system could allow organisers of annual events to carry over the same preferences year-on-year rather than having to fill out the same information each time they apply.
- 3.43. Representatives of smaller events indicated that they were concerned about the implications of the council's commercial strategy. If they are asked to pay to use assets that they currently use for free, then their events may become difficult to continue. JG reassured them that there are different tiers of rent, with charities (for example) charged significantly less than general commercial providers. Various criteria are considered when deciding which events to approve, including community benefit and physical and financial accessibility.
- 3.44. TC reminded the group that not everyone will be supportive of all events, but the events strategy must intend to facilitate a wide variety of events in the context of supporting the visitor economy, contributing to the local economy and offering a range of cultural and event experiences.
- 3.45. Members discussed the Gardens Forum and expressed scepticism about its value. AR reported that some organisers no longer come to it due to heated exchanges with residents in the past. TC suggested that it does not inform decision making, and Members agreed that its remit needs to be reconsidered.
- 3.46. TC summarised the key points raised in the public meeting as follows: the need for a single point of contact, up-front guidelines about what is required of organisers, flexibility in consultation, and the importance of working relationships and public engagement.
- 3.47. Members of the Task Group would like to thank everyone who attended the previous events meeting and contributed to the review of the event process.

- 3.48. The 13th January meeting sought to explore the issue of enforcement, especially with regard to the question of public and environmental health.
- 3.49. LK explained that while the council endeavours to take a proactive approach to licensing, informing organisers about what is required of them at the earliest possible time, enforcement is more reactive (i.e. responding to a breach of licence).
- 3.50. The issues encountered can differ greatly depending on the size of the event. Smaller events are more likely to undergo sudden changes late in the process that require a new or amended licence, or to not realise that they need a particular licence, while larger providers tend to be more experienced.
- 3.51. SC outlined issues relating to environmental health, explaining that the aim is to facilitate safe and sustainable events through proactive regulation. A good example of this is food safety: the event organiser is advised to check vendors' registration, food hygiene ratings are fully checked, regulatory advice is given in advance and spot checks are carried out.
- 3.52. A proportionate approach is taken to site inspections, based on risk. Major events are checked for noise, and some events are checked for health and safety and food safety, though the key risks are identified and mitigated before the event begins. Key concerns can also include crowd safety, the safe separation of pedestrians and vehicles, and animal safety (e.g. animal welfare and infection control). Advice is given on priority topics from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), such as recent warnings about inflatables after serious accidents elsewhere in the country.
- 3.53. SC explained that this proactive approach, based on providing solid advice up front, reduces the likelihood that enforcement action is needed afterwards. It is up to the event organiser to demonstrate that they have planned a safe event and take remedial action if not.
- 3.54. Members asked about how enforcement works regarding antisocial behaviour and crime at events, such as violence or drug use. SC clarified that these are police matters and not for the council to enforce, but the council does what it can to help – for example, it works with the police and racecourse in relation to ticket touting at racing events.
- 3.55. She suggested that the environmental health service must balance the needs of event organisers, eventgoers and residents, and advised that the council looks at making events more cost neutral in terms of regulation in the future.
- 3.56. Members discussed questions of liability in the case of injuries at events. Officers clarified that liability generally lies with organisers unless there is a specific defect with council-owned land. Any serious incidents are fully investigated, taking into account all decisions made by the council in allowing the event and formulating the land use agreement. LK stated that although the land use agreement seeks to limit the risk that the council takes on, any agreement carries an element of liability.
- 3.57. Members outlined concerns that event providers will deliberately push the boundaries of what it allowed if breaches are not punished. GJ responded that there are a number of possible sanctions, but treating providers too harshly would discourage others from using Cheltenham venues. LK added that persistent failure to fulfil the requirements of licences can be addressed through the Licensing Committee or by way of prosecution.

- 3.58. Members discussed specific aspects of land use agreements such as cut-off times, which might be restricted in order to reassure residents and reduce inconvenience. GJ noted that most events end well before the cut-off time established in the land use agreement.
- 3.59. LK suggested that any consultation creates an expectation that the process or outcome will be influenced. If an application has gone through the proper channels, acquired the correct licences and is following all the relevant safety requirements, there is no legal scope for withdrawing that licence to due residents' complaints. The council must be clear about the point of the consultation, that residents cannot necessarily influence the holding of an event. Members agreed that consultation should be referred to as 'engagement' instead, as this does not create a false expectation that it is guaranteed to influence the process.
- 3.60. AR suggested that over time in the events process, the same issues continually crop up and have a significant cumulative effect – for example, the poor enforcement of parking rules. He also suggested that a stronger relationship ought to be built between residents and event organisers, improving scrutiny and accountability while also helping residents understand the work that goes into putting on events. JG suggested that access to a 'how to' pack could help organisers understand the requirements of their role before they start their application. Members agreed that this would be beneficial.
- 3.61. The final meeting of the Task Group took place on 30th January 2020 and sought to mop up outstanding issues and decide on the final recommendations.
- 3.62. Members were presented with a total of 20 draft recommendations, split into five categories: engagement and community, process, strategy, commercial and enforcement. The recommendations were discussed in detail, and most were amended in some way.
- 3.63. The first four recommendations relate to the question of engagement and community. Members insisted that the phrase 'minimum standard of engagement' be amended to read 'agreed standard of engagement', deeming the latter to be too little. The group also clarified that officers would be tasked with engaging with the Gardens Forum and Friends Of groups in order to develop this agreed standard.
- 3.64. The Chair indicated that he felt Members are marginalised in the events process, as they are unable to prevent events taking place when there is no licensing issue, but are seen as responsible for unsuccessful events by residents. Members discussed the ways in which they are able to influence the planning process, including the ability to raise serious issues to Cabinet and engage with officers about areas of concern.
- 3.65. TC advised that the Task Group had already discussed this, and that there was consensus that adding committee-based decision-making would delay the delivery of events and add questionable value. She stressed that the process does not seek to disengage members.
- 3.66. The Chair stated his intention to produce a minority report, dissenting on the level of member involvement in the process. The minority report is attached to the covering report as Appendix 3.
- 3.67. Members agreed that the second recommendation should say 'engaged' rather than 'informed', offering members a more clearly defined role in the process. They also agreed that due to the overlap between two recommendations regarding public information, they should be merged into one (recommendation 3).

- 3.68. The prospect of an events website, as proposed in recommendation 3, was discussed in detail. Members noted the potential for misinterpretation, so it was amended to clarify that it would be a broad events platform with information about every event, rather than a specific website for each individual event. Members also agreed that it should be made clearer that they are the primary point of contact by email.
- 3.69. Members asked about the breadth of the review planned in recommendation 4. TC clarified that the parameters have not been defined yet. Members agreed to expand the recommendation to include a geographical review of the Gardens Forum's remit.
- 3.70. Members then discussed the recommendations pertaining to process, questioning the need for additional member training when relatively few members represent wards containing a large amount of public space where events occur. TC reminded members that it might not be relevant to all members now, but could easily be in the future. The recommendation was not amended.
- 3.71. Members moved on to discussing the recommendations listed under Event Strategy. JG reported that the emerging events strategy takes into account four tiers rather than three: headline events, feature events, town events and community events. Members agreed that this offered greater clarity and that recommendation 10 should be amended accordingly.
- 3.72. Members agreed that recommendation 11 should make reference to the commercial strategy. It was also agreed that the word 'capital' be added to recommendation 12 to aid understanding. These were both amended accordingly.
- 3.73. The final group of recommendations, listed under Commercial, were also discussed. TC clarified that none of the charges to be reviewed in recommendation 13 had yet been determined. Members discussed anomalies in the system that could be ironed out. DS indicated his willingness to assist in any review of rates.
- 3.74. It was agreed that recommendation 16 be amended to refer to 'all non-community events' rather than 'all large events', as the latter was too ambiguous. CM suggested that recommendation 18 commit to considering a more robust approach to enforcing noise limits. This was also agreed.
- 3.75. Members of the Task Group would like to thank everyone who attended their meetings and contributed to the review, and also to thank those officers who supported to the work of the group.

4. Recommendations

4.1 A total of 20 recommendations have been agreed by the Scrutiny Events Task Group.

No	Recommendation
Engagement/Community	
1	An agreed standard of public engagement be established as part of the event consultative process, which all event organisers will be expected to achieve. Officers to be tasked with engaging on developing the agreed standard with the Gardens Forum and Friends Of groups.
2	The engagement protocol between Events Consultative Groups (ECG) and Members be reviewed, to ensure that Members are as engaged as possible about events in their ward.
3	Investment be made in an event website to create a forum that connects event organisers, resident and wider stakeholders with a clear point of contact, with the key outcome being to provide clear information regarding events for communities in their ward, providing live updates on events and stages within the sign off process. Members to act as the primary point of email contact.
4	The remit of the Gardens Forum be re-evaluated to include a review of sites covered.
Process	
5	The objectives of the events process align not only with the goals of the commercial strategy, but also those of the cultural strategy and the social value policy.
6	The event process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be digital wherever possible to aid event organisers and enable back office systems between parks, licensing, planning, event management to be joined up • be clearly set out on Council website • clearly provide a single point of contact • demonstrate the benefits to the wider community as part of the events process
7	A 'how to' pack be compiled and published on the events website in order to help event organisers understand the licensing, enforcement and environmental health requirements of the events process and enforcement.
8	Member training be put in place to support Members in their roles and responsibilities within the events process.
Event strategy	
9	The event strategy be interim, to ensure it can be reviewed to be fully reflective of the cultural strategy once it is approved.
10	The events strategy incorporate a tier system, classifying events as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • headline events: a small number of big impact, annual, cultural and sporting highlights which showcase the town • feature events: established, growing or one-off events that contribute to the vibrancy, profile and tourism appeal of the town • town events: events delivered at a town level that, although of a recognised quality, are predominantly aimed at residents • community events: small scale community or community of interest organised festivals and events taking place across the town, with a capacity of 499 or less

11	The events strategy considers options of spreading the impact of events across wider venues, to recognise the potential of commercial opportunities together with reducing the impact on current honeypot sites such as Montpellier and Imperial Gardens.
12	The events strategy considers the infrastructure required to support recommendation 12 and present a business case to Cabinet as appropriate outlining capital investment required. In addition, the strategy should ensure that any new event sites consider infrastructure in the context of the climate emergency.
Commercial	
13	The rates charged by CBC on the assets of parks and gardens be reviewed in the context of the council's commercialisation strategy.
14	The events strategy look at opportunities of improving troughs in the events calendar, to further develop commercial opportunities, whilst recognising the impact of stretching the peak season on heavily used parks and gardens.
15	Officers investigate the commercial opportunities of providing hands-on guidance for event providers.
Enforcement	
16	All non-community events be required to attain their own licence to aid any enforcement measures undertaken by the council.
17	The Land Use Agreement template be reviewed to ensure conditions are sufficiently robust to support enforcement actions where required.
18	A review of noise levels be applied to events once national guidance has been published (anticipated in 2020), and a review of enforcement to follow to ensure the robustness of procedures.
19	An enforcement guidance paper be prepared and published online, clearly articulating the actions the Council may take with non-compliance with Land Use Agreements.

5. PROGRESSING THE SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 In respect of the terms of reference set for us by the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) committee, we feel confident that these have been met.

Minority report from Councillor Dennis Parsons

I fully endorse the Events STG report and commend it to O&S and to Cabinet, but with one exception. That relates to what I regard as a democracy deficit in the process for determining event applications where no licence is necessary.

Where an event falls within planning or licensing provisions, there is a legal requirement for the Council to consult residents. But the practice is for the vast majority of cases to be dealt with by officers under delegated authority. However, members retain a right to call in cases to be decided in committee – by members.

The gap in the system relates to land use agreement events where neither planning nor licensing are involved and so there is no obligation to consult. The STG report argues that the Events Consultative Group process is sufficient to deal with such cases. I strongly dissent from that view because it does not address my concern that that still leaves the ultimate decision in the hands of officers. There is no provision for call in to a member decision. Members can seek to influence the officer decision which, to me, stands democracy on its head with elected members, with a mandate to represent their residents' interests, subordinated to unelected officers.

There is a related issue in that it has been the practice in the past for officers to allow events where alcohol is available to take place under the licence that the Council has granted for itself. We were told that this was now discontinued for all but community events. My democracy deficit argument applies here too. Even community events can cause distress to neighbouring residents but only in an extremely small number of cases. But the decision rests with officers and not with elected members.

My recommendations are:

- 1. that officers be required to come up with a mechanism for events which do not fall within Planning or Licensing, to have the option in exceptional cases to be decided by members; and**
- 2. that only community events should be allowed to operate under the Council's alcohol licence but that members should be made aware of such cases and should have the right to call in for member decision as in recommendation 1.**

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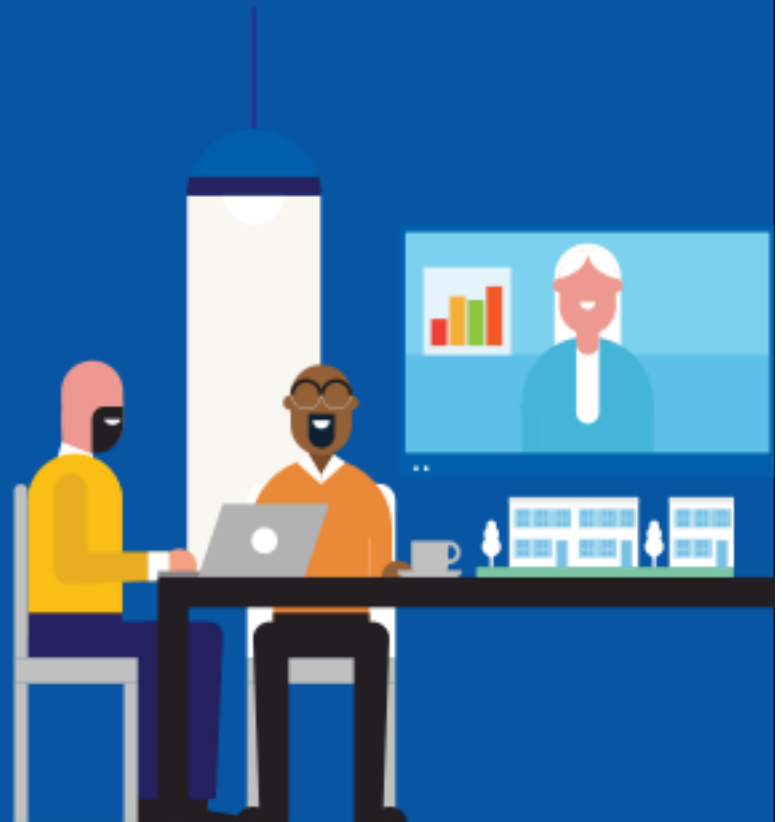
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Review of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report

February 2020



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1. Introduction and Overview

- 1.1 Campbell Tickell was commissioned to undertake a review of Cheltenham Borough Council's (CBC) Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2019.
- 1.2 The council's approach to Overview and Scrutiny was restructured in 2011, when the number of committees was reduced from three to one. The current structure was last reviewed in 2013.
- 1.3 The key aim for the current review has been to make recommendations as to how the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can become more effective. In particular, we have considered/what changes could be made to help improve the effectiveness of scrutiny to ensure it makes a tangible difference to the work of the council. We have also considered whether allocated resources are sufficient to support effective scrutiny.
- 1.4 The review was conducted through a combination of a desk-top review of governance and constitutional documentation; interviews with council officers, committee members and the leader of the council; and observation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21st October 2019. We would like to thank everyone for their open, honest and positive response to our field work.
- 1.5 The current overview and scrutiny legislation recognises that local authorities are democratically-elected bodies which are best placed to determine which overview and scrutiny arrangements best suit their own needs, and there is flexibility to decide which arrangements work best.
- 1.6 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has, however, recently published *Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities* (May 2019, referred to hereafter as 'the guidance'). The guidance states that effective overview and scrutiny should:
 - Provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge;
 - Amplify the voices and concerns of the public;
 - Be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role; and
 - Drive improvement in public services.
- 1.7 The guidance is statutory, but its precise status is described as follows: 'local authorities... must have regard to it when exercising their functions. [This]... does not mean that the sections of the statutory guidance have to be followed in every detail, but that they should be followed unless there is a good reason not to in a particular case'.
- 1.8 Our review has concluded that while the council has appropriate and functioning overview and scrutiny arrangements in place, the potential value of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is not being realised and, in some instances, practice does not follow the statutory guidance. As there is no single description of the committee's role or the benefits scrutiny should deliver, it has been difficult to demonstrate or evidence tangible outcomes: or as one interviewee described it, 'a lot of effort for what?'

- 1.9 Ultimately, when testing against the four strands listed above from the guidance, it is not possible to demonstrate conclusively that the council's overview and scrutiny function is fully effective. We found in the course of our review, however, that there is a genuine desire to improve and to ensure that scrutiny is as effective as possible and has real impact.
- 1.10 We presented our findings and recommendations to the committee on 13th January 2020 and these are set out in detail below.

2. Findings and Observations

- 2.1 We have set out our findings and observations against the themes which structure the guidance. Each theme is headed by a relevant extract or extracts from the guidance. A short summary of our general observations, including those from our review of governance documentation, follows our thematic observations.

Culture and Ways of Working

'The prevailing organisational culture, behaviours and attitudes of an authority will largely determine whether its scrutiny function succeeds or fails'.

'Scrutiny works best when it has a clear role and function. This provides focus and direction'.

- 2.2 Culture can most simply be described as 'the way we do things round here'. The findings from our review indicate a culture at Cheltenham Borough Council which tends towards promoting an uncertain and unconfident attitude to Scrutiny.
- 2.3 The written description of the role and purpose of the committee is fragmented across a number of parts of the council's Constitution (and elsewhere on the council's website). There are a number of different descriptions of its role and purpose, running the risk (as evidenced in our interviews) that the bigger picture of the committee's value is lost. While those interviewed could describe fairly consistently what they saw as the role of Overview and Scrutiny (e.g. formal scrutiny of Cabinet decision making; a development arena and/or sounding board for development of council policy; providing a spotlight on issues of concern to their constituents through the establishment of committee working groups), all admitted that others within the wider council would be unlikely to be able to do this and that the 'wider membership are not clear on what [the committee] does'. The sentiment behind this comment would appear to apply across members and staff: recognition of the committee's role and worth within the overall structure seems generally to be weak.
- 2.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is rarely referred to in Council, it has a very low profile compared to other committees, and when challenged as to whether the committee delivers anything, one interviewee commented 'I don't think they do'.
- 2.5 While the committee is recognised as a legitimate part of the democratic process, interviewees struggled to articulate the value it adds to this process. They could provide few tangible examples of work the committee had done to benefit the wider authority; the

report on Urban Gulls was the most commonly cited example, although it is fair to say that there were a mixture of views expressed as to the level of value even this detailed report had really added for the council and public.

- 2.6 A common theme emerging from the review was that the political make-up of the council (with one political party with a large majority) is a significant factor in the committee not being as effective as it could be. While we recognise that this does indeed present some challenges, it should not mean that there is no role or mechanism for effective scrutiny.
- 2.7 Effective scrutiny will be supported by strong communication channels between the relevant constituent parts of the council's governance structure. In practice, however, we did not see particularly effective communication between the committee and the Cabinet, as evidenced both in our document review and from the interviews and committee observation. We could see little evidence of a two-way flow of communication and feedback: for example, a clear mechanism to determine how committee observations and recommendations on cabinet papers, and feedback from Cabinet, are communicated and tracked.
- 2.8 We understand that the Leader of the Council does regularly attend committee meetings and that there is a specific standing item on the agenda listed as 'Cabinet Briefing'. It is not clear, however, what his contribution to the meeting is supposed to be and therefore if it is being maximised. At the meeting we attended, for example, committee members were given the opportunity to ask the leader questions, but none were raised. Without a specific focus for conversation and feedback, it can be difficult to generate an effective dialogue.

Resourcing

'The resource an authority allocates to the scrutiny function plays a pivotal role in determining how successful that function is and therefore the value it can add to the work of the authority'.

- 2.9 We identified that the primary resource to the committee is delivered through the council's Democratic Services team. There is a Democracy Officer within the team (working three days a week) who has responsibility for the overall servicing of the committee. The Executive Director of People and Change, a role we understand was introduced in the summer of 2019, has executive responsibility for the committee. Individual officers within the wider council provide additional support to the committee through production of reports and information used by the committee and any working groups which the committee establishes from time to time. The dedicated Democracy Officer and Executive Director of People and Change attend all meetings and a range of council officers attend meetings as required to present their reports and/or answer members' questions.
- 2.10 At the time the review was commissioned, we understand there had been some pressure on resources due to a key staff member being on maternity leave and difficulty in sustaining interim support during this period. It was clear from our interviews, however, that without exception everyone agreed the situation was now much improved; the introduction of an executive lead was also welcomed. Taking into account resource and budget challenges that

all local authorities have to manage, the level of dedicated resource the committee has at its disposal is now felt, we were told, to be satisfactory.

- 2.11 If this existing support is used to best advantage its level should not be a barrier to the committee being successful or adding value to the work of the council. This does not, however, negate the potential need for additional and specialist support – for example, to deliver an ongoing programme of committee member training and development, which is one of the recommendations we make at the end of this report.
- 2.12 As a further, nuanced, observation, we would add that there is perhaps an over-reliance on the dedicated Democracy Officer both from the committee itself and also other officers within the council. We heard from some interviewees that officers often prioritise other commitments over the work of the committee, meaning that the Democracy Officer has to chase reports to meet agenda dispatch deadlines. In some instances we heard comments that although the committee is an ‘accepted part of the democratic process’, some officers question the value it adds to the work of the council (as above) and it appears that this impacts on the time and effort they are willing to put into supporting the committee.
- 2.13 We heard, too, that sometimes it is not clear why particular reports are on the committee agenda, nor what is expected from officers’ or indeed members’ input – something our meeting observation confirmed. This can make it very difficult for officers (as well as members) to feel that there is value arising from their support for a committee, or indeed that their input is valued. In this context we observed that, at the meeting we attended, the Democracy Officer had produced briefing notes to support key members which seemed to be largely disregarded.

Selecting Committee members

‘Selecting the right members to serve scrutiny committees is essential if those committees are to function effectively. Where a committee is made up of members who have the necessary skills and commitment, it is far more likely to be taken seriously by the wider authority’.

‘When selecting individual members to serve on scrutiny committees, an authority should consider a member’s experience, expertise, interests, ability to act impartially, ability to work as part of a group, and capacity to serve’.

- 2.14 We found that committee members are committed to their role and have largely been appointed on a self-selection basis. We understand that all council members are required to serve on either the planning, licensing or overview and scrutiny committee and at ward level we understand that there are ‘informal discussions’ about how committee membership is distributed.
- 2.15 Members agreed that they are not required to evidence any specific skills before being appointed to the committee. One member we interviewed argued strongly that in his opinion the most important skill was being able to represent the views of constituents and

support them if they have concerns about the success (or otherwise) of council policy, but we would suggest that there are some other core skills which are likely to be at least helpful, and probably essential, in order to conduct effective scrutiny.

- 2.16 Despite skills not playing a part in selection and appointment of committee members, we found that there is little specific and effective ongoing training and development offered to members to help them maximise their contribution and thus improve the functionality of the committee and its decision making. This in turn could help increase perceptions of the credibility of the committee and the value it is felt to add to the council.
- 2.17 Our document review has highlighted that there is no role description for committee members and only a limited role description for the committee chair: the description makes no reference to the skills and attributes required for an effective chair. While we are not suggesting that the current chair is not effective (and indeed we heard many positive comments about the him), a clear role description for both the chair and individual members would help the committee and its members more easily understand and demonstrate effectiveness.

Power to access information

'A scrutiny committee needs access to regularly available sources of key information about the management of the authority, particularly on performance, management and risk'

- 2.18 Our review of documents and field work suggested there is no resistance to members having access to the information they need. Whether the committee is clear about the information it requires and why was, however, less obvious. Much of the meeting we observed on 21st October (which we were told was a 'typical' meeting in terms of agenda items presented) involved the presentation of papers for information/discussion with no clear objective set for the committee to achieve. This risks the committee spending time and energy on issues without clear benefit to the authority. It also makes it difficult for individual members to be as effective as they might be in framing questions or asking for information. We saw evidence of these issues in much of the meeting we observed.
- 2.19 For example, there was an agenda item titled 'Indices of Deprivation'. This was a 10 page, very detailed report, which was further augmented at the meeting itself by a very long and detailed PowerPoint presentation conveying different information, much of the detail of which was too small to be easily read by members. Although the report indicated that it was for information and discussion, and it clearly included some very interesting and important information about the levels of inequality and deprivation in Cheltenham, linking to one of the council's key objectives, both the paper and presentation were poorly presented and lacked focus and clarity. The item ran over the time allocated to it within the agenda and there was no clear summary of what the committee had understood from the information; the suggestions made in the report weren't reviewed systematically and it was unclear what had been agreed or recommended.

- 2.20 The agenda for the meeting we observed on 21st October included few specific reports focusing on the key performance, management and risk information highlighted in the statutory guidance, although we recognise that the committee work plan does provide for this to occur at specific meetings. Even in those reports where financial information was included, this was not obviously scrutinised by committee members. An example of this would be the item on the crematorium programme. This involved a paper and presentation on the outcome of the new crematorium project which included its ongoing financial performance. That part of the paper was not discussed by members and there was no evident scrutiny or challenge of the figures presented. This could have been due in part to member fatigue, as this item was reported under 'exempt information' at the end of the meeting, which had already run for over two hours.
- 2.21 The report on the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Strategy presented at the same meeting was simply a copy of a power point presentation (it was not clear who the original audience was) with no covering report; it was impossible to understand what the committee was being asked to do. Our interviews correspondingly revealed that there was confusion as to why this item was on the agenda at all: officers thought members had asked for it, members said they hadn't – but no one challenged this at the meeting.
- 2.22 In contrast, the report on Public Conveniences considered at the start of the meeting was a good report and well presented by the officer present. This was a draft copy of a report due to go Cabinet on 5th November and the committee were being asked to comment and scrutinise the report to enable their views to be included before the report was presented to Cabinet members. It was very clear what was being asked of members of the committee and this in turn engendered a good level of debate and questions from members. It is also worth noting the standard of this report, with a clear executive summary, recommendation and wider implications for the council drawn out - for example around finance, risk, etc. This supports our impression that officers give more attention to Cabinet reports. In turn this may be indicative of the relative value placed upon the committee within the council.

Planning work

To make a tangible difference to the work of the authority... scrutiny committees need to plan their work programme, i.e. draw up a long-term agenda and consider making it flexible enough to accommodate any urgent, short-term issues that might arise during the year'.

'While scrutiny has the power to look at anything which affects 'the area, or the area's inhabitants', authorities will often find it difficult to support a scrutiny function that carries out generalised oversight across the wide range of issues experienced by local people, particularly in the context of partnership working. Prioritisation is necessary'.

- 2.23 Our review of the committee work plan, agenda and papers, together with our meeting observation, suggests that the lack of focus in defining the committee's role and purpose has fed through into how it operates: we could not see that it has applied an obvious or clear strategic lens or prioritisation to its work programme.

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- 2.24 The current terms of reference for the committee provides for it to agree its work plan taking into account 'corporate priorities, the forward plan, issues of local concern and available resources'. This did not seem to us to be happening consistently or in a way that could easily evidence the work and role of the committee. While some items were clearly listed in the work plan, there seemed to be little understanding (certainly among some of the members we interviewed) as to why other items arrived on an agenda.
- 2.25 The meeting we observed covered a very wide range of topics but it was not clear what priority the committee should be giving each topic or how they fitted with the council's corporate objectives.
- 2.26 Agenda planning for each meeting is carried out by the Chair, Vice Chair and an additional member of the committee, supported by the Democracy Officer. There is a Scrutiny Work Plan which covers a rolling 12-month period. This includes a number of annual items, for example budget and end of year performance review. Other regular items are also included in the plan, such as quarterly performance review. Some items are included as a response to the Cabinet Programme along with other more specific items which officers or members suggest the committee may wish to consider. If the committee have set up a scrutiny task group to look at a particular issue in detail, feedback and progress from any evidence sessions held are also reported. The Democracy Officer is then charged with producing and distributing the draft agenda and ensuring all reports are received with the timescales set out for dispatch.
- 2.27 In our interviews we asked members to tell us about a particular piece of committee work which they felt had made a difference. The majority of members talked about the scrutiny task groups; in November 2018 a task group produced a report on the issue of urban gulls, and a task group has recently been established to consider in detail how the council manages large scale events. We understand topics for these more in-depth scrutiny exercises are agreed by the committee based on concerns raised by constituents. As previously described, however, when questioned interviewees could provide few examples (the report on Urban Gulls above was the most commonly cited) of work the committee had done to benefit the wider authority.
- 2.28 While the statutory guidance recognises that the scrutiny function has the power to look at anything which affects the local area, it also recognises that in practice authorities cannot resource exhaustive scrutiny and therefore that prioritising is key. It was clear from our conversations that there may be some degree of tension or frustration in relation to how scrutiny topics are agreed and the resources the council have to provide by way of producing evidence, etc., to support these task groups. In our feedback session to the committee on 13th January, for example, one member expressed support for more focus on council priorities rather than perhaps on members' personal interests or passions. We would agree that, with finite resources, and mindful of the guidance, it is sensible that the committee should focus its time and effort on providing overview and scrutiny of the council's agreed priorities and objectives – while not precluding other matters if resources allow and value arising from scrutiny can be demonstrated.

General feedback from meetings and evidence sessions

- 2.29 Our field work included observing the Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 21st October. There were good behaviours evidenced throughout the meeting, and members were respectful of each other's contributions. There was no evidence of 'party political' comments in any discussion or decisions made.
- 2.30 Contribution from committee members was, however, inconsistent and patchy. The majority of contributions were made by two members; one member did not contribute at all and another only asked one question.
- 2.31 The meeting was generally chaired well. It was evident, however, that everyone's energy levels, including the Chair's, started to flag after the meeting had been running for over two hours. This was of particular concern as the two exempt agenda items were at the end of the agenda and members' contribution, challenge and discussion on these two items was noticeably weaker. In our interviews, members commented on the length of meetings, and we were told there had been an earlier agreement to manage the meeting agenda within two hours; the agenda for the meeting on 21st October was timed to finish within two hours. We were told that although there had been some initial noticeable improvement on meeting management this had not been maintained.

Governance documentation

- 2.32 We reviewed a range of governance documents, including the council's Constitution, focusing only on content of relevance to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Our overall view of the Constitution is that while it is for the most part clearly written, there are a number of different descriptions of the role and purpose of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This is potentially confusing and also presents the risk of errors and inconsistencies developing as updating occurs. The documents we reviewed were not consistently dated, which makes it difficult to know if they are current and up to date.
- 2.33 Our overall sense from the document review is that the role and hence potential value of the committee is not clearly documented. We have produced a detailed RAG-rated critique of the documents, supplied separately for officer consideration. This includes some recommended actions with a view to getting the committee's governance documentation (and therefore practices) into the best possible shape. The more substantial findings and recommendations from our document review are incorporated into this report. The issue for the committee to consider is that improving governance documentation is only one tool for improving effectiveness; our other recommendations around culture and ways of working are equally, if not more, important.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 3.1 Our review has concluded that it is currently difficult to evidence how the Overview and Scrutiny Committee contributes substantially and tangibly to overall democracy and accountability within the wider council. We therefore suggest that current ways of working

should be strengthened in order to evidence that the committee (and indeed the wider council) have paid regard to and are working within the spirit of the guidance.

- 3.2 In particular, we feel that the role and potential value of the committee is not clearly documented or understood within the council; that while the committee is an accepted (and required) part of the democratic process within the council, it is not held in high regard, nor does there seem to be a properly functioning or effective relationship between the committee and the council; and that substantial debate and discussion is lacking at meetings – at least in part because many of the papers provided to the committee lack focus and any clear ‘ask’ of the committee. The majority of those we interviewed agreed that it was hard to articulate to any great extent what value the work of the committee adds to the council’s delivery of its corporate objectives.
- 3.3 We feel the level of resources made available to the committee is adequate (although additional specialist resources may be required if the committee undertakes the training we recommend), but in some cases it needs to be better focused and organised, particularly within the wider council.
- 3.4 While these are challenging findings, there is plenty of scope for improvement, building on the commitment of both officers and members to maintaining an effective scrutiny function. We were particularly encouraged by the open and receptive approach with which our review and our findings were welcomed both by officers and by the committee and its Chair.
- 3.5 In summary, we believe that the change required to make the council’s scrutiny function fully effective includes a re-focusing of the committee’s purpose and the resourcing and delivery of a number of practical actions, as well as the introduction of a bespoke training/coaching programme to help members become more effective in carrying out their responsibilities. We would emphasise that members need to take responsibility for and ownership of ensuring these recommendations are implemented and embedded.
- 3.6 It is important to note that our recommendations are not just about showing adherence to the statutory guidance. They are more than that: if accepted and delivered they will help make the committee more effective and members feel valued, and will improve the standing of the committee within the wider council. And, of course, a better performing Overview and Scrutiny Committee should deliver benefits for the performance of the council as a whole.

Our recommendations

- 3.7 Our recommendations fall under three broad themes as set out below.

Culture and Ways of Working

- Develop and agree a single, clear and measurable definition of the role and purpose of the committee, used consistently in all documentation;
- Develop a specific role description for the committee chair to include skills, attributes and key responsibilities;

-
- Consider how members of the committee can be suitably supported and trained to be skilled and effective in their role and clearly understand the purpose of the committee and their contribution to it;
 - Arrange focused training for all members, perhaps within a scheduled meeting, specifically on how to be an effective Overview and Scrutiny Committee member. Possible areas for training include how to promote and build visibility of scrutiny, and how to effectively challenge and scrutinise information and decisions;
 - Introduce a formal feedback loop/link from Cabinet to Overview and Scrutiny Committee to make best use of the council leader's attendance at committee;
 - Review and determine how enquiry topics are to be identified; should they be focused on the delivery of the council's corporate plan? This would make better use of finite resources and help negate possible tension between Cabinet and the committee;
 - Consider how the Chair and committee members can extend the committee's visibility within the council.

Resources

- Although dedicated resource to the committee has improved and is valued, general officer support needs to be better focused and respect demonstrated for the role and value of the committee;
- All members should take ownership of their contribution at meetings, including reading briefing notes in full;
- Report writers and presenters need to be given clearer briefs, expectations and time frames – and this needs to be robustly adhered to and managed by the Chair;
- Consider introducing a maximum page limit for reports with use of appendices by exception;
- Consider training for officers on PowerPoint presentation in order to maximise the benefit obtained by the committee;
- The Chair should sense-check all papers before dispatch.

Effective meetings

- Ensure that all committee members are encouraged to contribute and feel comfortable doing so;
- Introduce a front cover sheet for each committee report/agenda item to provide clarity on the purpose of the report, why it is coming to committee and what action the committee is being asked to take. This should be made available to report authors after agenda planning meeting. The Chair should use this to 'top and tail' each agenda item at meeting and can also be useful for minutes;
- Introduce an action tracker so that all decisions/actions made by the committee can be tracked at each meeting. This should also include tracking of recommendations to Cabinet or other committees/groups;

-
- Re-order agenda (recognising issues with public attendance) between items for scrutiny and items for overview in order to make better use of meeting time and member energy;
 - Re-introduce maximum meeting time of two hours, attending carefully to agenda planning, quality of reports, length of presentations, management of external speakers, etc.;
 - Introduce a wrap up session at the end of each meeting to consider 'positives and negatives' from meeting.

APPENDIX 1 - INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

Members and Officers interviewed

1. MEMBERS

Chris Mason: Chair

Klara Sudbury: Vice Chair

Dennis Parsons

Jo Stafford

John Payne

Steve Jordan: Council Leader

2. OFFICERS

Richard Gibson: Strategy and Engagement Manager

Saira Malin: Democracy Officer

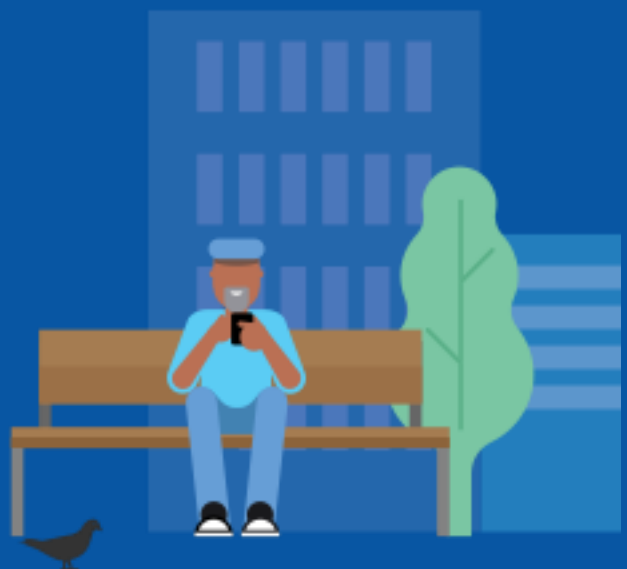
APPENDIX 2 - DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

- Constitution
- A guide to Overview and Scrutiny in Cheltenham
- Committee Chair's role description
- Agendas and papers for Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings 19 August 2019, 9 September 2019
- Minutes for Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting 19 August 2019
- Urban Gulls Report, 2018
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan 2019/20 (dated August 2019)

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Briefing for Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 24th February 2020

The Forward Plan lists the reports expected to come to Cabinet in the next 3 or 4 months. This note supplements that with other issues that may be of interest to O&S.

Countywide Governance

3 new boards (Central Gloucestershire; Severn Vale & Rural) were proposed and created as part of the 2050 vision work. There is ongoing discussion about the best way forward, what role these play in the existing structure and whether a single board would be a better option.

The Strategic Economic Development Fund (sourced from Gloucestershire Business Rates Pool) was discussed at recent Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee Meetings. A bid for £500k to fund the Central Gloucestershire City Region Board was withdrawn for further discussion. However it was agreed to continue providing £250k to match fund central government core funding for GFirst LEP. Funding bids for Cyber Central (£200k), Local Nature Partnership Capital Mapping Work (£40k) and Rail Investment Strategy (£70k) were also agreed.

Rail Industry

Members will be aware of the seminar on this on 27th February. As background information, the GEGJC has received initial feedback on the Rail Investment Strategy (mentioned above) although work is ongoing and this is intended to inform the Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan.

Improvement work at Cheltenham Spa station is continuing but is well behind schedule. While the cycle link to Lansdown Road is not part of the current work, project managers GWR are committed to providing it. However, the overrun on the current work and uncertainty about the future franchise which currently ends 31st March 2020 means we still are not sure if/when this will happen.

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SCRUTINY REVIEW – ONE PAGE STRATEGY

FOR COMPLETION BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	
Broad topic area	Payments for members appointed to outside bodies as non-executive directors or trustees.
Specific topic area	<p>Having considered the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) in December, some members had raised the issue of whether under the scheme for Special Responsibility Allowances payments could be made to those members who are appointed to outside bodies as non-executive directors or trustees.</p> <p>Members acknowledged the complexities of the issue and decided therefore that a task group would be the most appropriate way in which to give consideration to this matter.</p>
Ambitions for the review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the options and restrictions relating to such payments. • Look at what other authorities do. • Consider the budget implications of any payments.
Outcomes	Make recommendations to the Independent Remuneration Panel regarding payments of Special Responsibility Allowances to members who are appointed to outside bodies as non-executive directors or trustees, taking into consideration the limitations, restrictions and budget implications.
How long should the review take?	TBC
Recommendations to be reported to:	O&S / Council / IRP
FOR COMPLETION BY OFFICERS	
Members	
Officers experts and witnesses	
Sponsoring officer	
Facilitator	
Cabinet Member	
FOR COMPLETION BY THE SCRUTINY TASK GROUP	
Are there any current issues with performance?	
Co-optees	
Other consultees	
Background information	
Suggested method of approach	
How will we involve	

the public/media? Or at what stages	
--	--



SCRUTINY TOPIC REGISTRATION

Date:	6 February 2020
Name of person proposing topic:	Dennis Parsons
Contact:	Dennisp99@hotmail.com
Suggested title of topic:	Review of homelessness policy
What is the issue that scrutiny needs to address?	
<p>Whether the partnership with Solace has led to the anticipated outcomes. Whether the length of time that it takes to get people off the streets or out of green spaces and into secure accommodation is as expected. What, if anything, could lead to a swifter outcome.</p>	
What do you feel could be achieved by a scrutiny review (outcomes)	
<p>Residents are unhappy at homeless people pitching tents in their green spaces. And being there for a long time. A tent dweller in Wellington Square arrived over two weeks ago and is cooperating with outreach – but is still working through the system. In the meantime, parents with young children feel intimidated to use the green space. Positive practical outcomes could include homeless people being accommodated more quickly with benefits to the homeless person and to local residents. And a scrutiny review would show the public that the Council takes the matter seriously and that we understand residents’ concerns.</p>	
If there a strict time constraint?	No
Is the topic important to the people of Cheltenham?	Yes
Does the topic involve a poorly performing service or high public dissatisfaction with a service?	Yes
Is it related to the Council’s corporate objectives?	Yes
Any other comments:	
<p>The Place Strategy includes the aspiration that everyone should thrive. It is important that homeless people are included and helped into secure accommodation as quickly as possible. The present arrangements do not satisfy that objective. Local residents uncomfortable in using their local green space will not feel that they are thriving.</p>	

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OFFICER IMPLICATIONS (for office use only)

Date:	
Officer name:	
Officer title:	
Contact:	
Please give your comments on this proposed topics, for example is there any other similar review planned or in progress, are there any potential resources constraints etc	

Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan – 2019/20

Item	Outcome	What is required?	Author/presenter
Meeting date: 24 February 2020 (Report deadline: 12 February 2020)			
Marketing Cheltenham	Explain the purpose, current areas of focus and how they will measure success	Discussion paper	David Jackson, Manager - Marketing Cheltenham
The Retail environment in Cheltenham	Discuss the retail environment and understand that retail is one element that CBC must support, as well as a host of other demands on the town centre – living, office, leisure, food & beverage etc) / what is CBC doing well and how can it improve?	Discussion paper/presentation	Jeremy Williamson, Kevan Blackadder and David Oakhill
Scrutiny Task Group – Events	Consider the final report and recommendations of the Events STG (have they fulfilled the objectives we set)	STG Report	Harry Mayo, Democracy Officer
Scrutiny review	Consider the final report and recommendations of Campbell Tickell (CT)	Report (of CT)	Darren Knight, Executive Director for People & Change
LGA peer review	Consider progress against the action plan from the LGA peer review 2018	Briefing Note (not for discussion)	Richard Gibson, Strategy and Engagement Manager
Meeting date: 30 March 2020 (Report deadline: 18 March 2020)			
The Cheltenham Trust (TCT)	Presentation from Laurie Bell on performance over her first year (summary of financial position / progress against income generation)	Discussion paper NOT presentation (EXEMPT?)	Laurie Bell, Chief Executive – (TCT)CONFIRMED
Clearview	Look at performance on the new management system (Clearview)	Live demonstration	Ann Wolstencroft
Publica	Consider where Publica are in terms of performance, what are they doing well, where are the priorities for improvement and how do they measure the quality of service to their clients?	Discussion paper	Jan Britten and Dave Brooks CONFIRMED
Meeting date: (Tuesday) 26 May 2020 (Report deadline: 14 May 2020)			
The Cheltenham Trust	What are the community benefits and provide a Town hall update	Discussion paper	Laurie Bell, Chief Executive (TCT) CONFIRMED

Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan – 2019/20

One Legal	How are One Legal performing against their Service Level Agreement / what's changed since we entered agreement (new clients, etc)	Discussion paper	Sara Freckleton or Sarah Farooqi (emailed invite 15/01)
Meeting date: 22 June 2020 (Report deadline: 10 June 2020)			
End of year performance review	Consider performance and comment as necessary	Discussion paper	Richard Gibson, Strategy and Engagement Manager
Meeting date: 27 July 2020 (Report deadline: 15 July 2020)			
Air Quality / Schools	Consider the impact of the school run on schools	Discussion paper	Gareth Jones and GCC officer(s)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan – 2019/20

Items for future meetings (a date to be established)			
Gloucestershire 2050	Update on Gloucestershire 2050	Update	The Leader will provide ongoing updates as part of the Cabinet briefing
Safer Gloucestershire	Officers queried whether the committee would like a presentation from Safer Gloucestershire, the county community safety partnership dealing with crime and disorder	Member seminar	Asked Richard if he'd like me to look at dates for this
Public Art Panel	Consider what is it, is it effective, what has it done, what difficulties does it face	To be scheduled once SWOT has been concluded	Tracey Crews and Chair of Panel

Annual Items		
Budget proposals (for coming year)	January	Chair, Budget Scrutiny Working Group
Draft Corporate Plan	February	Richard Gibson, Strategy and Engagement Manager
Publica annual report	March	Dave Brooks (Chair) and MD
End of year performance review	June	Richard Gibson, Strategy and Engagement Manager
UBICO annual report	July	Ubico and Cabinet Member
Scrutiny annual report	September	Democracy Officer
Update on motions	September	Relevant Officer
Police and Crime Commissioner (circulate his annual report in advance)	September	P&CC

Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan – 2019/20

Quarter 2 performance review	November	Richard Gibson, Strategy and Engagement Manager
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Briefing sessions/seminars			
Network Rail & GWR	Member seminar	27 February 2020	Confirmed
Stagecoach	Member seminar	31 March 2020	Confirmed
CBH Masterplan	A member seminar arranged at the request of the O&S Committee (15 April 2020)	Member seminar	Confirmed

Briefing Note

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

24 February 2020

Local Government Association Peer Challenge

This note contains information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Cabinet or a committee but where no decisions from Members are needed.

If Members have questions relating to matters shown, they are asked to contact the Officer indicated.

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

- 1.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) undertook a peer challenge review of the council in November 2018. The review took place between 13 and 16 November 2018.
- 1.2 The resulting action plan (see appendix 1), and the progress being made to deliver these actions is brought to the committee to review.

2. Background to the review.

- 2.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) undertook a peer challenge review of the council in November 2018. The review took place between 13 and 16 November 2018. There is more information on the council's website https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/19/corporate_priorities_and_performance/1431/lga_peer_review_2018
- 2.2 The peer review explored five core components that all LGA corporate peer challenges cover:
 - Understanding of the local place and priority setting: does the council understand its local context and place and use that to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
 - Leadership of Place: does the council provide effective leadership of place through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?
 - Financial planning and viability: does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
 - Organisational leadership and governance: is there effective political and managerial leadership supported by good governance and decision-making arrangements that respond to key challenges and enable change and transformation to be implemented?
 - Capacity to deliver: is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?
- 2.3 In addition, there was an extended focus on three specific areas:

- Review how the authority is positioned to deliver the aspirations and ambitions contained within the Cheltenham vision in the context of the emerging thinking on Gloucestershire 2050, and whether the authority and its partners have sufficient capacity to achieve delivery of the ambitions.
- Review the council's broad range of external delivery mechanisms, including the council's commissioning, contracting and other partnering approaches and various company arrangements, to see how effectively they are delivering the outcomes the council requires from them.
- Consider the council's modernisation programme and to reflect on how well it is being articulated, organised and driven across the organisation.

2.4 The team spent 4 days on-site and spoke to more than 100 people including a range of council staff together with councillors and external stakeholders. The team gathered information and views from more than 50 meetings, focus groups and phone calls, plus additional research and reading.

2.5 The team's final report is here
https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/file/7171/peer_challenge_report

3. The action plan

The action plan (appendix 1) sets out our actions and progress against the 11 recommendations set out by the peer challenge team:

Recommendation – area for action	Red – Amber-Green
Be clear what you want and prioritise;	Green
Strengthen contract management arrangements;	Amber
Devise a coherent programme around regeneration and deprivation with nominated leads;	Amber
Strengthen governance and project management arrangements for the Cyber Park;	Green
Continue to invest in and further improve the relationship with Gloucestershire County Council (GCC);	Green
Sustain the momentum that has been generated by the modernisation programme;	Green
Housing delivery will need focus and capacity;	Green
Review inherent financial risks and build levels of reserves to withstand future uncertainty;	Green
It will be important for CBC to develop an economic growth / skills strategy;	Amber
Strengthen the role of members;	Green
Strengthen Place Governance.	Amber

4. Next steps

4.1 The final action plan will be posted on the council's website and progress will continue to be reviewed on an annual basis.

Background Papers

Contact Officer

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richard.gibson@cheltenham.gov.uk

Accountability

Cllr. Steve Jordan, Leader of the Council

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Peer Review – areas for action. PROGRESS UPDATE FOR O+S 24.2.20

Recommendation – area for action	Initial thoughts on how CBC can respond	Cabinet / Officer leads	Progress – Jan 2020	R-A-G
<p>1. Be clear what you want and prioritise. The council is recognised as a willing and ambitious partner but capacity is not aligned to resources and clearer prioritisation of key objectives is required. Strategic capacity is particularly stretched and with major projects planned this needs to be addressed.</p>	<p>The new corporate plan will be based on a defined set of priorities. We then need to consider how we monitor and have oversight over the deployment of resources.</p>	<p>Cllr Alex Hegenbarth Darren Knight Richard Gibson</p>	<p>CBC's new corporate plan was agreed by Council in March 2019 that focuses on 5 key priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Cheltenham the Cyber-Capital of the UK. • Continuing the revitalisation and improvement of our vibrant town centre and public spaces. • Achieving a cleaner and greener sustainable environment for residents and visitors. • Increasing the supply of housing and investing to build resilient communities. • Delivering services to meet the needs of our residents and communities. <p>The council has also invested in clearview, our new performance management software. This will enable timely presentation and analysis of the council's performance and risk metrics. The system is already live and being populated ready for data to be reviewed in March 2020.</p>	<p>green</p>
<p>2. Strengthen contract management arrangements. The current arrangements are insufficiently robust in specifying service standards, performance metrics and performance reporting, and sanctions in relation to under-delivery.</p>	<p>As part of the new corporate plan we will be looking to introduce a new performance management approach</p>	<p>Cllr Alex Hegenbarth Darren Knight</p>	<p>As part of clearview, the intention is to create a commissioned services scorecard where relevant data to the contracts with Publica, CBH, Ubico and the Cheltenham Trust will be managed. This is not live yet – expected April 2020.</p> <p>In addition, the council will be investing in training to support more effective contract management.</p>	<p>amber</p>

Recommendation – area for action	Initial thoughts on how CBC can respond	Cabinet / Officer leads	Progress – Jan 2020	R-A-G
<p>3. Devise a coherent programme around regeneration and deprivation with nominated leads. The council is committed to addressing deprivation mostly located to the West and North West of the town. However, this activity is currently dispersed across initiatives undertaken by different services, managers and partners without overarching co-ordination. Similarly the political responsibility for this resides across several portfolios.</p>	<p>We will consider developing a supporting suite of strategies (Inclusive growth, Culture and creativity, tackling inequalities) that will set out a coherent plan for promoting regeneration and tackling deprivation.</p>	<p>Cllr. Steve Jordan Cllr Flo Clucas Tracey Crews Darren Knight Richard Gibson</p>	<p>Cabinet in May agreed that the council will work with the Cheltenham Culture Board to develop a cultural strategy that will tackle inequality and promote diversity. This has now been procured and work is underway.</p> <p>An updated needs assessment has been commissioned that alongside the latest indices of deprivation provides an up to date picture of inequalities – this was presented to O+S on 21 October.</p> <p>Work is now needed to create a coherent plan for promoting regeneration and tackling deprivation</p>	<p>amber</p>
<p>4. Strengthen governance and project management arrangements for the Cyber Park. This nationally significant programme is picking up momentum and it will be important that clear and inclusive governance arrangements are established with senior level representation. The peer team also suggest a single, senior level government contact be established to provide a link across different departments and who is able to relay key government messages to the governance group.</p>	<p>A new governance structure was agreed at the January programme board. The structure comprises three bodies;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sponsoring group • The programme board • And a joint strategic development board. <p>The development board will include representatives from external stakeholders, government bodies and industry specialists</p>	<p>Cllr. Andrew McKinlay Tim Atkins</p>	<p>A shared structure is now in place between CBC and TBC comprising a joint strategic development board that advises the Joint programme Board. This in turn guides the work of the Programme Delivery Board.</p> <p>In terms of officer support, we have taken deliberate decisions to ensure a clear split between officers driving the development and those officers that might be involved in determining planning applications.</p> <p>This has also been mirrored at cabinet with the creation of a new cabinet portfolio for cyber.</p> <p>This is providing effective governance over the cyber central project.</p>	<p>Green</p>

Recommendation – area for action	Initial thoughts on how CBC can respond	Cabinet / Officer leads	Progress – Jan 2020	R-A-G
<p>5. Continue to invest in and further improve the relationship with Gloucestershire County Council (GCC). The council and county council have already invested time in developing a positive and productive relationship and it is important to continue to build on this to work effectively in partnership to progress issues of shared importance, for example the Cyber Park and addressing deprivation.</p>	<p>The Leader, CX and executive directors will continue to build on the investment already made in mutually beneficial working relationships with GCC on matters of shared importance to both Cheltenham and the county of Gloucestershire.</p>	<p>Cllr. Steve Jordan Pat Pratley</p>	<p>Senior officers and members continue to have good working relationships with GCC colleagues and are actively involved in the following joint working arrangements;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Gloucestershire • Health and Wellbeing Board • Safer Gloucestershire • Central Glos Growth Board • Safeguarding Board and the new working together arrangements <p>The council is also looking to enhance partnership working on transport issues</p>	<p>green</p>
<p>6. Sustain the momentum that has been generated by the modernisation programme. A lot of goodwill has been built up from the initial stages of the modernisation programme. The opportunity is for this to enable a radical organisational shift to: reshape customer access, digitally enable services, maximise the use of data and business intelligence, create new ways of working, drive a commercial mind set and improve office accommodation. Some early wins would add momentum - the obvious candidate for this is the office accommodation where a quick decision is needed.</p>	<p>Modernisation business case for change to go to Cabinet in March</p>	<p>Cllr. Alex Hegenbarth Darren Knight</p>	<p>The Modernisation Case for Change was approved at March Cabinet; this creates a framework for our modernisation programme which has 4 work-streams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational design • Organisational development • Smart working and office environment • Technology and digital <p>The programme has commenced with the following in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Processes Reviews now completed • Target operating model work booked in for end of March • Proposed office accommodation plans about to go out for procurement • Increased training and development opportunities available 	<p>Green</p>

Recommendation – area for action	Initial thoughts on how CBC can respond	Cabinet / Officer leads	Progress – Jan 2020	R-A-G
<p>7. Housing delivery will need focus and capacity. The council has recently made a significant investment decision of £100m to increase housing supply. However, this is at a time when housing delivery has historically under-achieved. The step change in delivery will require skills, capacity and co-ordination around policy, development, design and construction.</p>	<p>This will be made an explicit priority within the new corporate plan</p>	<p>Cllr. Peter Jeffries Tim Atkins Martin Stacy</p>	<p>The £100m investment plan was approved in October 2018. A number of sites of key strategic significance have been agreed at Strategy Housing Delivery Group, and at May's Cabinet Member Working Group.</p> <p>Currently working with CBH on potential 'quick wins' for affordable housing delivery and potential sites for private rented sector housing delivery on small, non-strategic sites.</p> <p>In addition, CBC and CBH have committed to developing a communications and branding plan</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>8. Review inherent financial risks and build levels of reserves to withstand future uncertainty. The council's approach to the financial gap is to use the Budget Strategy (Support) Reserve to supplement the savings and additional income identified in its Savings Plan. The council's working balances stood at £1.4m at 31 March 2018 and the Budget Strategy (Support) Reserve was £1.5m. Given the level of uncertainty facing the council regarding future business rates and New Homes Bonus funding, and risks associated with the Savings Plan, then every opportunity should be taken to build levels of reserves to act as a contingency. Also ensure that staff and members are fully sighted on financial risks and the plans to mitigate these.</p>	<p>This will be undertaken as part of the annual budget setting process that will be presented to council on 18 Feb 2019.</p> <p>The MTFS is also being re-designed to look more like the new corporate plan.</p>	<p>Cllr. Rowena Hay Paul Jones</p>	<p>The council has always been aspirational in how it has used available funding to invest in Cheltenham and improve outcomes for our residents. However, recognising the need to mitigate known risks and forecast cost pressures, particularly those arising from changes in the way local government is financed post 2020/21 has meant enhancing the council's reserves to ensure it is able to meet any unforeseen costs in the future.</p> <p>The s.151 officer's section 25 report on the 2020/21 budget identifies that on a risk-based assessment, we should maintain a working reserve balance of £1,219,000 - the current working balance is £1,320,591. He goes onto recommend that any future underspends or windfalls are earmarked for transfer to either general balances or the budget strategy (support) reserve.</p>	<p>Green</p>

Recommendation – area for action	Initial thoughts on how CBC can respond	Cabinet / Officer leads	Progress – Jan 2020	R-A-G
<p>9. It will be important for CBC to develop an economic growth / skills strategy; engaging in this with local businesses and linking with business marketing. Although the council commissioned consultants to advise on an economic growth strategy a council economic growth strategy has not been developed. This means that there is no clear strategic direction or prioritisation of economic growth activity with aligned resources. In addition, Addressing skills for the future economy will be needed and at the moment is at an early stage. CBC should plan for providing residents with the skills in cyber security and related support services required for the future economy. It will also be important to address the annual net loss of 400 young people across the county so that they can see employment prospects that may encourage them to live and work in the area. This is a theme that CBC and partners could develop as a shared piece of work; consistent with CBC's corporate planning activity in knowing and understanding community need</p>	<p>As above: We will consider developing a supporting suite of strategies (Inclusive growth, Culture and creativity, tackling inequalities) that will set out a coherent plan for inclusive growth / skills / retaining and attracting young people</p>	<p>Cllr. Steve Jordan Tim Atkins Tracey Crews</p>	<p>Work has been undertaken in preparing a draft economic development action plan in collaboration with Gloucestershire Local Economic Partnership, Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce, Cheltenham Bid, Gloucestershire University, Gloucestershire College, Employment and Skills Board, Cheltenham Development Task Force and lead portfolio members of the Cabinet.</p> <p>However, following this engagement it became clear that to successfully address our challenges and build upon our opportunities, we needed a leadership vehicle to help drive the economic growth agenda. In response to this it was agreed with the lead Cabinet portfolio holder to take a different approach and work with strategic businesses to establish a Cheltenham Growth Board as agreed by Cabinet in May 2019</p> <p>In terms of officer capacity, the council is looking at interim arrangements to provide additional capacity – in the longer term, the target operating model will consider optimum organisational arrangements to support the growth agenda.</p> <p>In the meantime, the council is also coming forward with a social value policy that will go to cabinet in March.</p>	<p>Amber</p>

Recommendation – area for action	Initial thoughts on how CBC can respond	Cabinet / Officer leads	Progress – Jan 2020	R-A-G
<p>10. Strengthen the role of members: As part of the revised organisational structure it would be beneficial to review member portfolios and senior officer roles to provide dedicated political and managerial leads in relation to key priorities, for example on the Cyber Park and deprivation. It will also be important to develop a stronger awareness of the distinctive roles and responsibilities of officers and members. In addition, reviewing the role of backbenchers could add political capacity.</p>	<p>CBC will consider how best to strengthen the role of members and will take initial soundings on this recommendation at O+S on 11 February 2019</p>	<p>Cllr. Steve Jordan Pat Pratley</p>	<p>O+S members raised the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to strengthen the role of backbenchers through recruiting champions for particular areas of work and building an understanding of their skills and professional knowledge. • The role of scrutiny needs strengthening <p>In relation to the role of O+S, CBC has assigned the ED People and Change to be ELT lead for O+S</p> <p>An independent review of O+S has been commissioned and Campbell Tickell have presented their preliminary findings to O+S on 13 Jan 2020.</p> <p>The council has continued to support member awareness and development through a programme of members’ seminars.</p> <p>A programme of elected member induction is being developed to support new (and existing) members following the May 2020 elections.</p> <p>Cabinet member portfolios have been reviewed and it is proposed to create two new cabinet portfolios to provide additional political capacity on two key priorities for the council; cyber and climate change</p>	<p>Green</p>

Recommendation – area for action	Initial thoughts on how CBC can respond	Cabinet / Officer leads	Progress – Jan 2020	R-A-G
<p>11. Strengthen Place Governance: Although partnership working arrangements are good there are areas to strengthen. The Place Governance Group (PGG) is responsible for the delivery of the Cheltenham Place vision and for providing strategic co-ordination across Cheltenham’s agencies, partnerships, networks and fora, ensuring linkages with their strategies, plans and priorities. However, the PGG was described, “as still finding its feet”. The detailed actions set out in the Place Vision have yet to be translated into action plans that specify who leads, with what resources, what timeframe and the KPIs and monitoring mechanisms needed to review delivery against objectives. It may be necessary for the council to work with the PGG to move this work forward to ensure that the work of this partnership vehicle is not jeopardised.</p>	<p>CBC will consider how best to enhance the place governance group and any other strategic partnerships deemed necessary in consultation with key partners.</p>	<p>Cllr. Steve Jordan Cllr. Flo Clucas Darren Knight Richard Gibson</p>	<p>At the last meeting of the place governance group, partners accepted the peer review findings and expressed willingness to refresh the PGG both in terms of objectives and membership and to work collectively to be clear who about how it can best deliver the vision of the place strategy.</p> <p>A brief has been developed to get external support into deliver a workshop and some support for PGG that will be set within the context of both the place vision – what we want to achieve and systems leadership ie how we might work better together to deliver our collective ambitions.</p>	<p>amber</p>

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