

Briefing for Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 9th January 2014

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.

Car Parking

Government have launched a consultation on local authority car parking policies and enforcement with a deadline for response of 14th February 2014.

Disabled Facilities Grants

Currently approx £600k per year is spent on DFG in Cheltenham, jointly funded by CBC and government. The system is changing so that decisions transfer from CBC to Gloucestershire Health & Wellbeing Board while the funding remains the same. The District Councils Network is taking advice on the legality of districts having to fund grants over which they will have no decision making power.

Healthy Lifestyle Funding

The county council intend to allocate £50k to each county councillor to spend on promoting healthy lifestyles. Given the scale of this there may be value in providing advice on pooling/joint commissioning of part of that across Cheltenham. Since 9 of the 10 county councillors in Cheltenham are also borough members CBC may be able to assist on providing some options.

Leisure & Culture Trust

Rowena Hay will be taking a briefing paper on the set up costs of the trust to the Budget Scrutiny Working Group on 7th January.

New Homes Bonus

While the government recently reversed the previous decision to top slice the NHB to fund LEP's from 2015 they have announced that by Easter 2014 they will review how NHB is spent. There will also be consultations on proposals that NHB will NOT be paid where applications are approved on appeal and that planning conditions that time out will be deemed to be met. These could be significant changes and details of the consultation are awaited.

Unitary Government

District council leaders were invited to attend the 18th December meeting of the county scrutiny group looking at unitary government. Each gave their views and there was then a general discussion with the scrutiny group. Steve Jordan expressed the view that the current and potential work on shared services will realise most savings predicted for unitary government removing much of the justification. In addition the geography of Gloucestershire where the two major urban centres are close together in an otherwise largely rural county make drawing practical boundaries for any new councils difficult. The scrutiny group is due to have further meetings before producing a report.