

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 8th September, 2014

6.00 - 8.20 pm

| Attendees | |
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| Councillors: | Tim Harman (Chair), Colin Hay (Vice-Chair), Nigel Britter, Chris Mason, Sandra Holliday, Dan Murch, Chris Ryder, Max Wilkinson, Adam Lillywhite (Reserve) and Rob Reid (Reserve) |
| Also in attendance: | Councillor Jon Walklett (Cabinet Member Corporate Services), Paul Evans, Wayne Ellis and Paul Dennison (Severn Trent), Chris Riley (Gloucestershire Highways) and Rob Bell (Ubico) |

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

Councillors McCloskey and Payne had given their apologies. Councillors Reid and Lillywhite attended as their respective substitutes.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ryder declared an 'other' interest in agenda item 8 (Severn Trent – update on works in Cheltenham) as a member of Cheltenham in Bloom who were in receipt of funding from Severn Trent.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

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

Councillor Murch referred members to agenda item 11 of the minutes (End of year performance report) and the commitment from officers to circulate more information regarding the percentage of licensed premises inspections undertaken. To his knowledge this information had not been circulated.

Upon a vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 9 July 2014 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

No matters had been referred to the committee.

6. FEEDBACK FROM OTHER SCRUTINY MEETINGS ATTENDED

Councillor McCloskey had given her apologies and had therefore prepared a written update, which is attached at Appendix 1.

Councillor Clucas provided feedback from an earlier meeting of the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She explained that the committee had considered a range of topics and commented that her feeling was that such a sizeable agenda had made it difficult to discuss important issues to the degree to which she felt was necessary. Topics covered included;

- There had been a significant increase in the number of concerns being raised in relation to the safeguarding of adults in the period 2013/14. A 96% increase from 65 in 2012/13 up to 903 in 2013/14, however, this did seem to be plateauing with 108 reports in the first quarter of this year. Members of the committee had been in agreement that they would rather concerns were reported and no issues identified rather than not.
- The Integrated Safeguarding Structure would be operational by the end of next year. Members had been assured that in future Borough and County Councillors would be given details of any safeguarding issues that had arisen during an event in their ward in a more timely manner; in order that they could be better prepared for any press enquiries that they might receive.
- The configuration of the emergency services, particularly in Cheltenham was a concern. The threat to the Trust was significant as there had not been enough middle ranking doctors to monitor junior doctors but this gap had been filled by Consultants for the time being. Councillor Clucas had been concerned to hear that it was not possible to involve GP's as she was aware that this solution had been used in other areas.
- A CCG report had revealed that there had been an increase in June and July of almost 500 calls to the Gloucestershire Ambulance Service.
- Members had been assured that if and when an operation was cancelled, another date would be provided before the patient left the ward and if not, within 28 days.
- There had been an increase of 25% in malignancy referrals as a result of breast screening.
- DEMOS were looking at the provision of social care with an increasing aging population. Councillor Clucas would be interested to consider the findings of this report once it had been completed.
- Supervisors had been tasked with looking at frequent callers to the ambulance service and identifying where alternative and more appropriate support could be offered.
- The non-emergency transport service was not meeting it's KPI's.
- There was no GP from Cheltenham at the CCG. A GP from North Cotswolds was currently representing Cheltenham but it was anticipated that this would soon change.
- There were concerns about some of the decisions taken by the CCG regarding the out of hours service. Lay members of the Board would attend a future meeting of the committee and explain the process.

The Chairman thanked Councillors McCloskey and Clucas for the updates provided.

7. CABINET BRIEFING

The Cabinet briefing had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services, Councillor Walklett, gave apologies on behalf of the Leader, who had been prevented from attending. He talked through each of the items on the briefing and invited feedback from the committee.

There was consensus amongst members of the committee that there was no need and little value to undertake joint scrutiny of the new management agreement for CBH. Members were comfortable with the changes that were being proposed and satisfied that CBH would continue to keep members informed.

Councillor Hay, who had previously held the position of Observer on Ubico's Board, offered the committee his view. He felt that the Board focussed on the contract and how to deliver it rather than taking a wider view and considering in which direction waste collection would be moving over the coming years and what was needed to meet those future requirements. He was of the opinion that members were best placed to provide a broader and political view on the future, but also, that any such member should be a member of the Board rather than simply an observer. It was accepted by all members that having observers from each partner on the Ubico Board would become impractical with the addition of new partners going forward. However, members were reluctant to sever any link between the Board and elected representatives and agreed with the suggestion from Councillor Mason that two members representing all partner authorities could be a satisfactory compromise.

Members agreed with the principle of a 2020 Vision Member Advisory Group but decided against making a decision at this stage as they did not consider that there was any urgency to do so. The Chairman, along with Councillors Hay and Payne would discuss this matter outside of the meeting.

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services would take forward the committees feedback on these issues.

8. SEVERN TRENT - UPDATE ON WORKS IN CHELTENHAM

Three representatives from Severn Trent (Paul Evans, Wayne Ellis and Paul Dennison) attended the meeting, as well as an officer from Gloucestershire Highways, Chris Riley.

The representatives from Severn Trent talked through the PowerPoint presentation (attached at Appendix 2). As part of their business plan, Severn Trent recognised the impact that sewer flooding had on their customers. Over the last two years survey and analysis of the sewers in Cheltenham had been undertaken, which had identified sections of sewer that could no longer meet demands and posed the risk of sewer flooding. Investment of £6million would largely involve the replacement of existing sewers with much larger pipes and 15 projects would reduce the risk of sewer flooding to 52 properties. In developing a strategic solution, projects were batched together into geographical areas. Whilst this had resulted in a wider presence in the area than would be the norm, it also allowed for multiple site working which had helped with the planning of road closures and ultimately reduced the timescale of the overall project. In talking through the programme of current and future work, members were advised that work at some sites was almost complete,

with a number of sites due for completion ahead of schedule. Work to Lansdown Road was deferred after unforeseen services were located during initial works. This decision was taken so that the road could be re-opened whilst Severn Trent reviewed their options. One solution that was being explored with Dean Close School was the option to run the last 100 metres of the project through the School property and discussions were ongoing. Members were assured that Severn Trent were meeting their obligations and compensating businesses. They did however admit that there were some lessons learnt in the Tivoli area. Their commitment to the community extended to financial support for the recent 'Souk in the Suffolks' and the Cheltenham half marathon.

Before inviting questions from the committee, the Chairman referred members to the questions which had been submitted in writing, by Councillor Wilkinson (attached at Appendix 3). In response to the answers that had been provided to his written questions, Councillor Wilkinson commented that the business specific banners seemed to be an after-thought and that he felt there was a need for more support of back street businesses. In a supplementary to question 4, he asked why temporary permits weren't issued to the residents in Andover Street which would have allowed them to park in adjoining streets for the duration of the road closure. Severn Trent confirmed that there had been dialogue between all involved but no solution could be reached. This was a learning point and in future, discussions would start earlier.

Representatives from Severn Trent, along with an Officer from Gloucestershire Highways and Ubico, provided the following answers to member questions:

- Severn Trent's Compensation Manager had provided assistance to a number of businesses with their claims, of which a number had already been received and were either being processed or had already been finalised. The relationship that had been built with the Suffolk traders was a good example of the relationships that Severn Trent endeavoured to achieve during such works.
- The start date for work in Lichfield Drive had been deferred until the 15 September to enable the School to circulate leaflets to the students. These had been provided by Severn Trent and were being circulated by the School.
- Severn Trent, Gloucestershire Highways and Stagecoach were looking closely at the options for Canterbury Way, with one option being a temporary one way system. There was ongoing dialogue to ensure delivery of schemes with minimised impact on residents. Any parking restrictions would be communicated to residents by Severn Trent and with signage on the road itself.
- Road closures for essential works did pose issues to waste collections and whilst these road closures were communicated to Ubico, it was not always possible to gain safe access. A press release had asked residents that were affected by road closures to leave their bins out if they had not been emptied so that crews could make repeated attempts to gain safe access and make collections.
- If a site team was made aware of a resident requiring access for a taxi or community bus, it could work with the individual to make the necessary arrangements. Work was usually concentrated on a small

area at a time and it was therefore possible to allow some form of access.

- Gloucestershire County Council held a utilities co-ordination meeting which helped to identify opportunities for joined up working in specific areas.
- Large scale works by utility companies tended to be planned around resurfacing requirements and whilst Gloucestershire Highways endeavoured to protect roads, this did not extend to new supply or repair works. Severn Trent would be undertaking resurfacing to a greater degree than was required, which had been negotiated and funded by Gloucestershire Highways.
- Pre work, which included relocation of the gas and water supplies in Cleeve View and Whaddon Road would start prior to Christmas, with work to commence immediately after. The remaining three public exhibitions for future works would be held at the end of September and would be advertised in due course.
- When an area was identified for works to be undertaken, the process included the identification of alternative and appropriate routes for traffic. If a specific issue was identified (i.e. a School) then this would be documented in a risk assessment and method statement. If no specific issue was identified then this would not necessarily be documented (i.e. traffic cutting through car parks).

The Chairman thanked the representatives from Severn Trent and Gloucestershire Highways for their attendance which was very much appreciated by members. He asked them to maintain dialogue and whilst he didn't imagine it would be necessary for them to attend another meeting of the committee, he did suggest that it may be useful for them to revisit at the end of the process and discuss any lessons learnt.

9. UBICO PERFORMANCE

Rob Bell, Managing Director of Ubico, referred members to the performance update which had been circulated with the agenda.

He highlighted Ubico's financial performance. This was particularly topical as the accounts were being audited by Grant Thornton and whilst this work was not yet complete, indications were that they would be assured. Audit Cotswolds had also found that core financial controls at Ubico were 'satisfactory'. Though there were no audited accounts as yet; members were advised that Ubico had exceeded the financial targets that had been set. There were £184k of savings embedded in the 2013/14 budget which had been achieved and there was also an underspend of £50k. Cumulative savings for Cheltenham were in excess of £1million and £2.5 million for the partnership as whole. Ubico were on target to achieve £5million savings over 5 years.

The Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) had undertaken independent benchmarking of cost and quality compared to other authorities and found Ubico to provide a good quality service and good value for money putting them in the top quartile for both. Whilst there had been some contract variations of over £10k; since April 2012 there had been no extra work orders raised or invoiced, with Ubico taking the view that if something was within budget, they would simply get on and do it.

He explained that the vision for Ubico was to continue to build performance and reputation and this could include doing work with or for, Tewkesbury Borough, Stroud District, Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire Councils. No decisions regarding expansion had yet been taken but discussions were proving encouraging and a bigger company would ultimately mean increased savings for Cheltenham through further economies of scale.

The Managing Director of Ubico explained the performance monitoring regime that was in place, which included weekly, monthly, quarterly and ad-hoc meetings with customer services, the Client Liaison Officer, Cabinet members and Scrutiny.

He invited questions on performance and provided the following responses to member questions:

- Recycling in Cheltenham was at 48.71% and Cotswolds at approximately 60% but the two authorities were not like for like, with urban authorities such as Cheltenham struggling to achieve recycling rates similar to those of rural authorities, such as Cotswolds.
- Performance at bring sites had improved since the last scrutiny review and there were occasions when banks appeared to be full but were not (e.g. if someone had stacked card on top or failed to feed it into the bank properly). All businesses were required to have arrangements in place for the collection of their commercial waste and any business found to be using a bring site could be prosecuted. Ubico did not have powers of enforcement and as such any concerns would be reported to the public protection and enforcement team to investigate.
- The plastic scheme was performing well and whilst it was still relatively new, it had proved popular with residents. Because this was simply a trial, there were not spare banks to replace those that needed to be emptied. A report would be taken to Cabinet at some point regarding the future of the plastic scheme and were the trial to continue, more banks would be available.
- There were occasions when an issue was logged as a complaint when it was in fact a request for service (i.e. waste is blown into the road from people on their way to the bring site and residents call for it to be cleared). He commented that 14 days was too long to resolve issues such as this and that he would rather see the target reduced so that the figures were more meaningful. He would raise this with Customer Services when he next met with them.

The Chairman thanked the Managing Director for his update and attendance at the meeting.

10. PUBLIC ART PANEL UPDATE

Wilf Tomaney, the Townscape Manager, introduced the item which had been circulated with the agenda. At the last meeting the Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles suggested that the governance and accountability of the panel needed to be reviewed. Item 3.1 of the paper set out a number of the perceived issues regarding the governance and accountability of the panel and a number of options were detailed at item 4. For those members that were not aware, the Townscape Manager explained that the funding available to the panel was

predominantly derived from Section 106 monies, which was location specific, generated from a development site and generally to be spent in the vicinity of that site. Public Art was reviewed by the Social and Community O&S Committee in 2011 and Appendix 2 outlined progress in relation to those recommendations.

The Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles advised the committee that her main concern, as the accountable member, was the lack of any form of process for selecting and electing members and clarity regarding lines of authorisation for spending decisions reached. She was however, comfortable that the panel was working effectively.

Members agreed that there were governance issues and were of the opinion that a workshop, to which, Councillors Harman, Payne, Hay, Ryder and all members of the panel should be invited. This workshop would provide clarity as to the issues and how best to resolve them.

The Townscape Manager was due to attend a meeting of the panel on Wednesday (10 September) and would feedback the request that a workshop be arranged.

11. UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY TASK GROUPS

The committee reviewed the scrutiny task group summary and two draft one page strategies which had been circulated with the agenda. The following actions were agreed;

Review of Public Art Governance – An update on progress relating to the recommendations of the STG that were taken to Cabinet in December 2011 had been considered by the committee. Members agreed that a workshop should be arranged in order that all parties could better understand the workings and any missings from the governance arrangements for the Public Art panel.

Pub Closures – A meeting of interested members would be arranged in order that the ambitions and outcomes for the review could be determined.

Cheltenham Railway Station – Members considered the draft one page strategy that had been circulated with the agenda. They agreed that the ambitions and outcomes for the STG remain unchanged. The timescale for the review would be agreed once the task group were clear about the franchise renewal process and timescales associated to that.

Cycling and Walking – Members considered the draft one page strategy that had been circulated with the agenda. They agreed that the ambitions and outcomes for the STG, with the addition of 'The Cheltenham Transport Plan to be considered' to the ambitions.

12. REVIEW OF SCRUTINY WORKPLAN

The committee reviewed the latest version of the work plan, which had been circulated with the agenda.

The work plan would be updated as necessary following this meeting and members were reminded that they could access the document via the intranet.

Councillor Britter asked that 'Integrated Transport' be added to the work plan with a view to possibly setting up a task group to look at the issue, once the cycling & walking and Cheltenham railway station task groups had concluded their work, as they may identify wider issues. This would be added to the work plan under a new heading 'items for a future meeting'.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday 3 November.

Tim Harman
Chairman