

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**Monday, 14th January, 2019**  
**6.00 - 7.50 pm**

<b>Attendees</b>	
<b>Councillors:</b>	Chris Mason (Chair), Klara Sudbury (Vice-Chair), Sandra Holliday, Paul Baker, Max Wilkinson, Dilys Barrell, Iain Dobie, Dennis Parsons and Martin Horwood (Reserve)
<b>Also in attendance:</b>	Pauline Hartree and Paul Jones

### Minutes

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Councillors Payne and Stafford. The Chair welcomed Councillor Horwood as a substitute for Councillor Stafford.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS**

The amendment to the minutes of the meeting of 29 October 2018 was read out by the Chair and agreed by members.

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2018 and on 26 November 2018 be agreed and signed as an accurate record.

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

A member question had been submitted by Councillor David Willingham. The question and the Chair's response had been circulated to members of the committee. The Chair suggested that it would be appropriate to consider the question as part of agenda item 9 and this was agreed.

**5. FEEDBACK FROM OTHER SCRUTINY MEETINGS ATTENDED**

There had been no meetings of the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee since the last O&S meeting. Councillor Horwood briefly updated members on forthcoming agenda items for the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee which were noted.

Councillor Brownsteen joined the meeting at 7.15pm and gave a verbal update on the Police and Crime Panel informal briefing held on 9 January 2019 with the relevant Gloucestershire County Council cabinet member.

The cabinet member's view is that the proposal for the police and crime commissioner to take over leadership of the fire rescue services is not right for the fire and rescue service, the county council nor the public. To support this

view his compelling arguments are that there is a new head of fire and rescue coming in, the fire and rescue staff are opposed and that the service has a clear 3 year plan. The cabinet member also referenced evidence from areas where the fire and rescue service is part of the police and crime commissioner's remit that this model doesn't work. Public consultation on this closed on 21 December 2019.

Councillor Brownsteen feels strongly that the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner is apolitical and this should be taken in to account at all levels.

A member pointed out that District, Borough and County Councils are unanimous that governance arrangements should stay as they are.

## **6. CABINET BRIEFING**

The Leader referred members to the briefing which had been circulated with the agenda.

In response to a question regarding the allocation of funds arising from fines resulting from the Boots Corner experimental traffic order, the Leader committed to updating members of the committee once he's had a response from Gloucestershire County Council.

## **7. BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2019/2020**

The Chair invited the Chair of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group to update members on the recent meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group which considered the budget proposals for 2019/2020.

Councillor Babbage explained that the Budget Scrutiny Working Group is tasked with scrutinising the process behind developing the budget rather than the detail of how the budget is allocated. Members of the Working Group took the opportunity to raise questions with the relevant officers. In particular, there were very few questions on the Housing Revenue Account. Members of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group noted that the medium term financial strategy is broadly in line with expectation.

A member noted that there were a number of changes to how funds are allocated, for example to Publica and would like more information about that.

A member expressed concern that there were no papers to support this important item and felt strongly that it could not be properly discussed without a supporting report. The member formally moved that discussion be adjourned until the next meeting of the committee.

Upon a vote it was

RESOLVED THAT this item be adjourned to the next meeting of the committee

## **8. LEISURE AT REDEVELOPMENT**

Mark Sheldon, Director of Corporate Projects, briefly summarised the key points from the briefing note, circulated with the agenda, on the lessons learned from the recently completed Leisure-at-Cheltenham redevelopment project. Mr Sheldon particularly highlighted the following:

- This was a £2.5 million project which was delivered on time and within budget
- The Cheltenham Trust initially led the project and identified Alliance Leisure Services (ALS) as the design and build contractor.
- The council subsequently approved a revised approach to the financial and project management due to limited resources at The Cheltenham Trust which resulted in the council contracting directly with ALS as the development partner.
- This change of approach resulted in some delay to the start of the project
- The instigation of the Joint Commissioning Group which convened on a weekly basis throughout the project ensured the project maintained momentum and stayed on track to a successful conclusion.

A member asked if the initial procurement process and set up was not as the council would have done it and in response Mr Sheldon emphasised that the council would not have normally adopted this type of procurement process for a contract of this nature but that no criticism of The Cheltenham Trust is intended.

In response to a question regarding additional works, Mr Sheldon explained that in any design build project of this scale and nature it is inevitable that unexpected works will crop up. He felt that expenditure from the contingency had been well managed and scrutinised through the Joint Commissioning Group which developed a criteria for signing off spending decisions.

A member noted that although the project was delivered within budget, this included a contingency and asked if the balance had been right between the planned budget and level of contingency. Mr Sheldon felt that on balance the level of contingency was right and acknowledged that there was benefit to having cost certainty, although there is always learning from projects of this nature.

In recognising that it is good practice that the lessons learned briefing note highlighted what had not gone so well, as well as the successes, a member enquired about the concerns which had been shared about the contractor. Mr Sheldon explained that these were mainly around timescales and that property services colleagues felt that more preparation and preconstruction work was needed. In summary, Mr Sheldon thought that on balance the contract delivered a good outcome.

The Chair thanked Mr Sheldon for his insights.

## **9. HIGH STREET AND BOOTS CORNER PUBLIC REALM CONCEPT DESIGN - PROJECT INITIATION DOCUMENT**

The Chair reminded members that the purpose of this item is to discuss and agree appropriate scrutiny arrangements for this project rather than examining the detail of the project.

Ken Dale, the council's Townscape Manager, explained that the objective of the project – which builds upon the first phase of works recently completed in the

High Street (east) - is to recommend a concept design and costs for Boots Corner and vicinity and the High Street from Rodney Road to Winchcombe Street.

Mr Dale updated members that the original plan had been to focus on improving the Strand and Cambray Place, however, since summer 2018, there has been a central government moratorium on the introduction of new 'shared space' schemes as a result of concerns about accessibility. Previous discussions indicated that Gloucestershire County Council's view was that this moratorium applies to changes to the Strand and Cambray Place. However they are now reviewing their opinion as the area is already shared space. Mr Dale also advised that as the transport trial is being extended, any actual works around Boots Corner will be delayed. He is hopeful that the moratorium issue will be resolved in the next few weeks, allowing the project to determine which areas should be designed first.

Mr Dale also noted that works can only proceed as and when the source of funds is agreed.

As mentioned earlier in the meeting, Councillor Willingham's question relates to this item; he has requested that this project is fully mindful of the planned review of street trading as the street trading policy and townscape need to be aligned. This was fully acknowledged by Mr Dale who confirmed that liaison with the street trading review will be included in the scope of the project.

Members raised the following points and questions:

- It would be very helpful for Gloucestershire County Council to provide timescales for the resolution of their interpretation of the 'shared space' moratorium – Mr Dale reported that latest information is that Gloucestershire County Council are trying to resolve this in the next few weeks, particularly given that the moratorium covers new design rather than existing 'shared space', which the Strand and Cambray Place most probably are.
- Important that the project scope involves consultation with Insight Gloucestershire and other disabled groups to ensure their views and needs are taken in to account, particularly their concerns about 'shared space' areas. Mr Dale confirmed that the stakeholder group for this project will represent all interested parties as detailed in the project initiation document but to let him know if any other groups need to be represented.
- Suggestion that a scrutiny task group be set up and that a representative from this committee sit on the project board.
- Fully supportive that this phase should focus on Cambray Place and the 'Strand' area of the High Street.
- Is it necessary to use external consultants? In response, Mr Dale advised that Gloucestershire County Council provides some support but that they don't have the capacity to provide the expertise required.
- Confirmation that wherever possible locally procured materials are used and that the planting will contribute towards biodiversity. Mr Dale confirmed that wherever possible local materials would be used, taking in to account procurement requirements. Biodiversity will be the priority for the planting schemes.
- The need to take in to account potential events space

The role of overview and scrutiny was discussed, with the following outcomes:

- An interim report be brought back to overview and scrutiny following the stakeholder group consultation at a date to be determined
- It was proposed, and seconded, that a ward member representative should be part of the stakeholder group – this was unanimously agreed.

#### **10. REVIEW OF SCRUTINY WORKPLAN**

The Chair confirmed that a detailed briefing session is being arranged for March 2019 covering travellers and other unlawful occupants of council land, the date for which will be confirmed as soon as possible. It was agreed that all council members will be invited to this.

The review of UBICO's annual report and performance will be added to the workplan.

A member requested that the proposal that Gloucestershire's Area of Natural Beauty change status to become a national park be added to the workplan. The Chair asked for more information on this for consideration.

Following the adjournment of the item to consider the view of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group, members discussed the inclusion of this item on the workplan. A member gave a view that the preference is for budget reports to come to the committee to allow scrutiny of the savings and other financial plans to be taken in to account by Cabinet. In any event, an agenda item would need to be supported by a written report of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group.

Members considered the scrutiny topic registration form from Councillor David Willingham. Following discussion on the possible role of O&S given the wide ranging elements and organisations involved, upon a vote:

It was **RESOLVED** that this would be added to the workplan and that representatives from the relevant organisations will be invited to attend a future meeting.

#### **11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for 6pm on 11 February 2019

Chris Mason  
**Chairman**

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