

COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

28 JULY 2020

Present:

Councillor Stephen Andrews - Chair

Councillors -

Claire Bloomer
Gina Blomefield
Patrick Coleman
Stephen Hirst

Andrew Maclean
Dilys Neill
Richard Norris
Gary Selwyn – Vice Chair

Officers -

Interim Chief Executive
Head of Climate Action
Business Manager, Localities

Chief Finance Officer
Democratic Services

Observers: Councillors Ray Brassington, Rachel Coxcoon, Jenny Forde, Joe Harris

Apologies received from Councillors Theodoulou and Roly Hughes

OS.1 SUBSTITUTION ARRANGEMENTS

Councillor Stephen Hirst was substituting for Councillor Ray Theodoulou

OS.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(1) Member Declarations

Councillor Selwyn indicated that he had been the Liberal Democrat representative on the panel which met and discussed the Tetbury and Fairford sports centres seven years ago. This did not exclude him from taking part in the discussion and subsequent Task and Finish Group.

(2) Officer Declarations

There were no declarations of interest from Officers.

OS.3 MINUTES – 28 MAY 2020

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 May 2020 be approved as a correct record;

Record of Voting - for 8, against 0, abstention 1, absent 1.

OS.4 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

OS.5 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No questions had been received from the Public.

OS.6 MEMBER QUESTIONS

No questions had been received from Members.

OS.7 CALLED-IN DECISIONS

No executive decisions had been the subject of Call-In since the Committee's previous Meeting.

OS.8 BROADBAND WITHIN THE COTSWOLDS

The Operations Manager for Fastershire updated Committee. He explained that superfast broadband was now provided to 95% of properties within the district and Cotswold was eleventh on a list out of twenty of areas having access to full fibre broadband. A strategy had been approved which would focus on grants to help businesses and residents have access to broadband. Less than 1500 properties needed investment to supply broadband. The Cotswolds was an attractive area for companies to provide broadband. It would be 2030's until 100% of broadband is provided within the Cotswolds. .

Discussion focused on areas such as new housing in Tetbury and the delays in negotiating a wayleave to provide broadband to houses, it was explained that more trenching may be required to provide broadband to these areas. Other new estates such as Moreton Park had commercial deployment; gigaclear would not be able to provide broadband in these areas.

Members were pleased with the progress made and thanked the Operations Manager for his presentation, asking if he would update the Committee again in 6-9 months' time.

OS.9 UPDATE ON CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION

A report had been presented to the Committee on the work which was being carried out on the 'Climate Emergency'. Climate issues were now part of the Council's priorities and formed the basis of projects such as the Rugby Club Car Park, energy efficiency at Trinity Road and work with the communities to encourage using renewable technology. A report on the Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan would be presented to Cabinet in September 2020.

Discussion was focussed on how the Council engaged with staff and the wider community, there was a lot of enthusiasm within communities for suitable, safe routes for cycling.

The high street recovery fund was being administered by Gloucestershire County Council, funding to the district council was small. Members queried whether Officers were being able to access advice and grants from other bodies and government grants, together with working alongside organisations such as the Cotswold Conservation Board.

Concern was expressed that more cars would be on the roads as children go back to school and Members were keen for every opportunity to highlight the Cotswolds within the context of Gloucestershire Transport Strategy.

Work on Town Centres was being carried out in two phases, with softer measures being put in place in relation to pavement marking and signage. Information was being sent out to relevant Town and Parish Councils and Officers were looking at how areas around the County were dealing with these issues, working with the community to move forward with the change.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Record of Voting - for 9, against 0, abstention 0, absent 0.

OS.10 MEMBER BRIEFING NOTE – CRIME AND DISORDER

A report was presented to the Committee on the Crime and Disorder responsibilities of the Council, a suggestion was that the Committee received an annual update to review and scrutinise the work being carried out, as this Committee had a responsibility to act as the Crime and Disorder Committee for the Council. It was noted that Councillor Brassington represents the Council on the Police and Crime Panel.

Councillor Forde, as Chair of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) addressed the Committee and highlighted that, since she became Chair, the aim was to raise the profile of the Committee. Representatives of the CSP work with colleagues across services in Gloucestershire, including the Education service. Within the County the CSP were the first to meet after lockdown and continued to meet weekly throughout the lockdown. Key officers and organisations across the Council and County worked well together, and contributions from this Committee, to the CSP would be welcome.

It was suggested that Councillor Brassington should be co-opted onto the Committee, as a voting Member, in his role as a member of the Police and Crime Panel.

Councillor Brassington explained that his role on the Police and Crime Panel is completely separate to the responsibilities of this Committee.

Members did reiterate that the Police and Crime Panel was a separate body and scrutiny is part of the job of every Councillor.

RESOLVED that note the report and comments made be noted and the terms of reference be completed in order for the Committee to act as the Crime and Disorder Committee when necessary

Record of Voting - for 9, against 0, abstention 0, absent 0.

OS.11 SUMMARY FINANCE/SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report was presented to the Committee for the year end 2019/20.

The format for reporting performance was to change, giving a clear indication of the split between Publica and the Council. The new format report would be presented to the Committee in September 2020. This was welcomed by the Committee.

Members questioned the customer satisfaction rate. Officers explained it was recognised that the website was not user friendly when the indicators were reported, although the Council's website had been updated and Quarter 1 will see a higher level of satisfaction.

Requests for green bin licenses had reduced in the last year, and it was considered that residents may be using their own compost bins to dispose of the waste, but there was no reason for concern.

RESOLVED the report and any comments made be noted.

Record of Voting - for 9, against 0, abstention 0, absent 0.

Note: Members wanted to express appreciation at the amount of additional work that staff had carried out to provide services across the district during the Covid emergency and the contributions made in the year before Covid-19 Pandemic.

OS.12 TETBURY AND FAIRFORD TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Chair introduced this item to agree the terms of reference for the group and the Members of the group. It was considered that three Members should be part of the group with three Officers giving support, with the first meeting to be arranged as soon as possible.

The purpose was to learn the lessons from what had been seen by the public as a failure of the Council to continue to provide or support sports centres in Tetbury and Fairford.

The Group would consist of:

Councillors Gary Selwyn (Chair), Gina Blomefield and Dilys Neill
Officers - Group Manager - Strategic Support, Chief Accountant and Democratic Services

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the membership of the group be approved;**
- (b) the Terms of Reference be agreed;**
- (c) the Chair convenes a meeting of the group as soon as possible.**

Record of Voting - for 9, against 0, abstention 0, absent 0.

OS.13 DRAFT WORK PLAN 2020/21

Items to be added to the Work Plan

Review of Community Grants Schemes and their operation – was this being operated well; were monies being distributed equitably across the district; was the application process appropriate.

Local Government reorganisation in Gloucestershire – when coming out of a crisis it gives time for change was the Council in the best position and ready for the change to two tier local government.

Local Plan - Housing

RESOLVED that the work plan be noted and the items above added to the work plan.

The Meeting commenced at 4.00pm and closed at 7.00pm.

Chair

(END)