

COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

17TH SEPTEMBER 2015

Present:

Councillor Lynden Stowe - Chairman
Councillor NJW Parsons - Vice-Chairman

Councillors -

Sue Coakley Mrs. SL Jepson
C Hancock

Observers:

SI Andrews JA Harris
Mark F Annett RC Hughes
AR Brassington MGE MacKenzie-Charrington
RW Dutton

CAB.25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C Hancock declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in respect of agenda item (8) (The Old Prison, Northleach - Heart of The Cotswolds Project) as a Trustee of Friends of the Cotswolds. He withdrew from the Meeting during the consideration of, and decision on, such item.

There were no declarations of interest under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

There were no declarations of interest from Officers.

CAB.26 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 9th July 2015 be approved as a correct record.

Record of Voting - for 4, against 0, abstentions 1, absent 0.

CAB.27 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been received.

CAB.28 MEMBER QUESTIONS

No questions had been submitted by Members.

CAB.29 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader wished to place on formal record his congratulations, on behalf of the Council, to Lucy Cater, Audit Services and Consultancy Manager within Audit Cotswolds, who had recently won the 'inspirational leader in the public sector' category at the inaugural Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors Audit & Risk Awards. The Leader was delighted to see national recognition of Lucy's achievements.

CAB.30 2020 VISION PROGRAMME

The Leader of the Council introduced this item.

The Cabinet was requested to consider the report to the 2020 Vision Partnership Member Governance Board, which set out the proposed way ahead for the 2020 Vision Programme, and make recommendations thereon to the Council at its Meeting later in the month.

The circulated documents provided detailed information regarding the partnership venture and, in particular, the arrangements by which the authorities could become more efficient and effective by working together but without sacrificing their political sovereignty, culture and decision-making. The papers also included a copy of the detailed Business Case, which had been independently reviewed and verified.

The Leader explained that the proposals were the result of many months of hard work, and sought to secure significant financial savings whilst protecting front-line services. Further benefits of shared services included access to greater capacity and increased service resilience.

Each partner council would consider the report through its formal processes by the end of October. It was recognised that there remained a possibility of not all councils agreeing to the recommendations within the report. In this connection, the Leader expressed the hope that all four partners would commit to the programme moving forward but reiterated that the business case remained positive with three partners, with significant savings capable of being achieved. However, he believed that it was critical to avoid any further delay, so that savings could be generated at the earliest opportunity and uncertainties and insecurities could be removed, particularly insofar as staff members were concerned. Furthermore, the programme was sufficiently flexible for others to join at a later date.

The Leader explained that a Member engagement event had been held in July 2105, involving Cabinet/Opposition Party/Scrutiny Members from the four authorities. The event had enabled a broad discussion about the programme, including in relation to deliverables and concerns, and had proved successful.

It was reported that 17 items of feedback had been received as a result of the public consultation exercise, covering the four council areas. It was noted that there had been a mix of views, which had been expected, and some had been area-specific.

It was also reported that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been invited to comment on the report. The Committee had been supportive, with the main substantive issue being a request to consider the issue of future

cross-party involvement. One Member had requested that additional information be made available regarding the Council's "baseline funding position", and such data had been included at Annex B to the circulated report.

The other Cabinet Members were fully supportive of the proposals, and endorsed the Leader's hope that the programme would move forward with four partners. In response to a question, it was explained that the savings to be accrued by each partner were dependent upon the level of shared services to which each was prepared to commit, i.e. the greater the level of sharing then the greater the financial benefit.

RESOLVED that the Council be RECOMMENDED:

- (a) to enter into the Shared Services Partnership Structure described in Appendix A to Annex A to the circulated report;**
- (b) to determine an appropriate consequential revised Senior Management Structure for the Council (prior to establishment of the Joint Committee);**
- (c) to adopt the Commissioning Strategy given at Appendix B to Annex A to the circulated report;**
- (d) to approve the Business Case shown at Appendix C to Annex A to the circulated report;**
- (e) to note the financial implications, costs and benefits shown in Section 13 of Annex A to the circulated report;**
- (f) to agree to the establishment of the 2020 Vision Joint Committee in accordance with Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972, Section 9EB of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Arrangement for the Discharge of Functions)(England) Regulations 2012, with draft Constitution as given in Appendix D to Annex A to the circulated report;**
- (g) to delegate authority to the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources), in consultation with the Leader, the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer to finalise and complete the Inter Authority Agreement (including the Constitution) and other documentation on terms to be approved by the Joint Head of Legal and Property Services and to take all necessary steps to create the 2020 Vision Joint Committee by April 2016;**
- (h) to agree that the existing Member Governance Board arrangements will continue until the 2020 Vision Joint Committee is created;**
- (i) upon the establishment of the 2020 Vision Joint Committee:**
 - (i) to authorise the delegation to the 2020 Vision Joint Committee of this Council's functions as described in the Constitution for the 2020 Vision Joint Committee;**

- (ii) to agree to appoint Forest of Dean District Council as Administering Authority to provide administration support to the Joint Committee;
- (iii) to agree to appoint Cotswold District Council as the Accountable Body to provide financial support to the Joint Committee and enter into any contracts required on behalf of the Joint Committee;
- (iv) to agree to appoint the following Councils for the following functions of the Joint Committee:

 Forest of Dean - Monitoring Officer
 Cotswold - S151 Finance Officer
 Forest of Dean - Clerk to the Joint Committee; and
- (v) to agree to appoint the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Partnerships as this Council's representatives to the 2020 Vision Joint Committee;
- (j) to confirm the appointment of David Neudegg as the Partnership Managing Director;
- (k) pursuant to Section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972, to make available to the Joint Committee such staff as are required by the Joint Committee to fulfil the functions delegated to it;
- (l) to receive a report and business case during 2016 on the establishment of a local authority company for the delivery of the functions of the 2020 Partnership, or alternatively the continuation of the Joint Committee;
- (m) to delegate authority to the Head of Democratic Services to make any consequential amendments to the Council's Constitution.

Record of Voting - for 5, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

CAB.31

THE OLD PRISON, NORTHLEACH - HEART OF THE COTSWOLDS PROJECT

The Deputy Leader of the Council introduced this item.

The Cabinet was requested to consider support for a lottery submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) from the Friends of the Cotswolds in respect of the further development of The Old Prison, Northleach.

The circulated report provided details of the HLF application, the benefits that would accrue from the development proposals, and financial projections. The Deputy Leader emphasised that the proposals acknowledged the importance of conserving and preserving the building and the collection. He explained that the total project cost, including the three-year activity programme, was estimated at £5.35 million, of which the Friends would seek to raise £1.5 million. The anticipated cost of the collection store extension was approximately £200,000.

The Council had been requested to contribute £50,000. It was noted that the HLF placed great emphasis upon financial support from the local authority on applications of this nature; and that, in light of the Council's significant investment in the facility via an undervalue sale, the Friends were requesting a relatively small scale sum by comparison to the overall scale of the project. It was also pointed out that, in view of the timetable for the project, any such extension was unlikely to be constructed until 2017/18 or 2018/19 financial year and, in any event, the grant would be conditional upon a successful HLF bid.

In referring to the Council's desire to maximise public access to the site, and noting the visitor figures provided, the Leader asked for the Council to be provided with footfall/visitor figures on a regular basis, split between the collection and the café, if possible.

RESOLVED that:

(a) the aims and objectives of the Heart of the Cotswolds Project be supported;

(b) an 'in principle' allocation in a sum of £50,000 from the Council Priorities Fund be approved in support of the application.

Record of Voting - for 4, against 0, abstentions 0, interest declared 1, absent 0.

CAB.32

ALLOCATION OF FUNDS FOR CAR PARK DEVELOPMENT FEASIBILITY STUDIES

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Partnerships introduced this item.

The Cabinet Member reminded Members of the project, launched in April 2015, which would seek to "effectively manage the availability of parking to meet the current and future parking needs of Cirencester reflecting the development growth identified within the Local Plan", and of the following key project requirements:-

- to ensure current and future off-street parking demands in Cirencester were effectively managed;
- to inform Local Plan Policies for existing and future car parks, including opportunities for alternative use;
- to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the consideration of planning applications in Cirencester which had parking implications, the Council's acquisition and disposal of land and property and the management of the Council's existing parking assets;
- to ensure well-informed planning decisions were made based on up-to-date evidence.

The Cabinet Member explained that the project would assess current parking capacity and the likely increase in parking demand as a result of anticipated development in the town, in line with the Local Plan; and solutions for meeting that future parking demand would be developed, to include direct provision by the Council or provision by the private sector. The project would be steered by

a Member-led Board. As part of the work, the Council would need to consider options for maximising the effectiveness of its existing car park assets, including redesign to maximise capacity and provision of decked car parks.

In the circumstances, Cabinet was requested to allocate funding for the commissioning of relevant feasibility studies in support of the project.

In response to a question, the Cabinet Member confirmed that the project related to Cirencester.

RESOLVED that funding of up to £75,000 be allocated from the Council Priorities Fund for feasibility studies to be commissioned to enable suitable car parks to be identified for redevelopment.

Record of Voting - for 5, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

CAB.33

REPLACEMENT AIR CONDITIONING PLANT AT COTSWOLD LEISURE CENTRE, CIRENCESTER

The Leader of the Council introduced this item.

It was explained that approval was sought for the replacement of the air conditioning plant at Cotswold Leisure Centre, Cirencester, to be financed partly through the reallocation of funding contained within the Council's approved capital programme; and, also, the appointment of a contractor to carry out the works.

It was noted that the existing three air conditioning systems had been installed in 2006, when the Centre had been constructed, but had consistently caused both increased maintenance and controllable climate condition issues over the past few years due to low capacity ratings and multiple component failures. This had resulted in higher than desired internal temperatures during particularly hot periods and increased annual plant replacement spend. The plant was now deemed to be obsolete, with parts increasingly difficult and expensive to source, which had led to increasing costs and system downtime. Further maintenance was considered to be economically unviable.

While acknowledging the need for the replacement works to go ahead, particularly to ensure that users of the facility were not inconvenienced or disadvantaged, concern was expressed at the need to replace the equipment far earlier than had originally been expected. It was suggested that Officers review the specification and expected 'life' of the previous equipment, and then contact the suppliers to ascertain whether they would be prepared to contribute towards the cost of the replacement plant.

RESOLVED that:

(a) a re-allocation of £59,000 from the Health & Fitness Equipment replacement budget in the Council's 2015/16 Capital Programme be approved to fund the replacement of air conditioning equipment at Cotswold Leisure Centre, Cirencester;

(b) Contractor B (identified within the circulated report) be appointed to undertake the air conditioning works.

Record of Voting - for 5, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.**CAB.34 SUMMARY FINANCE/SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT - 2015/16
QUARTER 1**

The Leader of the Council introduced this item.

The Cabinet was requested to consider and comment on the overall finance/service performance for the first quarter of the 2015/16 financial year. While acknowledging that the data only reflected the first three months of the year, the Leader congratulated staff on performance to date, particularly in terms of the key tasks and efficiency measures. The Leader felt that such performance boded well for the remainder of the year.

It was reported that, when considering the performance report at its recent Meeting, the Overview and Scrutiny had asked Officers to clarify the situation regarding the number of long-term empty properties, and to forward a progress report, including a definition of what constituted a 'long-term empty property' to Members. In this connection, it was reported that numbers had already reduced, from 315 to 288, which was much closer to the target figure of 260. Work, and monitoring, was continuing with a view to at least attaining the target.

RESOLVED that service and financial performance for Quarter 1 of the financial year 2015/16 be noted.

Record of Voting - for 5, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 0.

**CAB.35 SCHEDULE OF DECISION(S) TAKEN BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
AND/OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBERS**

The Cabinet noted a Schedule detailing decisions taken by the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader of the Council, and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing.

CAB.36 ISSUE(S) ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND/OR AUDIT

There were no issues arising from Overview and Scrutiny and/or Audit.

CAB.37 OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business that was urgent.

The Meeting commenced at 4.00 p.m. and closed at 4.49 p.m.

Chairman

(END)