

COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1ST SEPTEMBER 2015

Present:

Councillor Jim Parsons - Chairman
Councillors -
SI Andrews SDE Parsons
JA Harris NP Robbins

Substitutes:

Miss AML Beccle

Apologies:

Julian Beale (absent on other Council business) RG Keeling

OS.17 SUBSTITUTION ARRANGEMENTS

Councillor Miss AML Beccle substituted for Councillor Julian Beale.

OS.18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(1) Member Declarations

Councillor JA Harris declared an interest in respect of Agenda Item (13) - County Matters - because he was also a Member of Gloucestershire County Council.

Councillor SDE Parsons declared an interest in respect of Agenda Item (13) - County Matters - because he was also a Member of Gloucestershire County Council.

Councillor NP Robbins declared an interest in respect of Agenda Item (13) - County Matters - because he was also a Member of Gloucestershire County Council.

(2) Officer Declarations

There were no Declarations of Interest from Officers.

OS.19 MINUTES

RESOLVED that, subject to the amendment of the commencement time of the Meeting to read '11.00 a.m.', the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 1st July 2015 be approved as a correct record. Record of Voting - for 4, against 0, abstentions 2, absent 1.

OS.20 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements from the Chairman.

OS.21 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been received.

OS.22 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

No questions had been received from Members.

OS.23 CALLED-IN DECISIONS

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

OS.24 CIRENCESTER HOSPITAL REVIEW 2015

The Chairman explained that he had considered it would be useful for the Committee to have a presentation on the Cirencester Hospital Review 2015.

The Chairman introduced Becky Parish, Jonathan Jeanes and Zaheera Nanabawa of the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, and Duncan Jordan of the Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust, and welcomed them to the Meeting.

Ms Parish, Mr. Jeanes and Mr. Jordan amplified aspects of the Cirencester Hospital Review 2015, drawing attention to the changing medical landscape; the Clinical Commissioning Group perspective; the starting point for the review; the current situation at Cirencester Hospital; potential future developments; current work in progress; staffing and funding; medical cover; the agreed new medical cover model; and financial considerations. They then responded to various questions from Members, including in relation to outpatient and diagnostic services; refurbishment of the former 'Stratton Ward' at the Hospital; admission and discharge policies; future resilience and capacity; arrangements for day case surgery; the options for the reallocation of savings; the potential for further changes in service provision in the future; access to facilities within the minor injury and illness unit; and community services in the North Cotswolds. Ms Nanabawa then apprised the Committee of various aspects relating to the South Cotswolds Locality Development Plan 2015-17, drawing attention to an overview of the Plan and the key priorities therein. Ms Nanabawa responded to a question from a Member relating to consultation with, and the involvement of, Town/Parish Councils in the Locality Plan.

The Chairman thanked Ms Parish and her colleagues for their presentation and they withdrew from the Meeting.

OS.25 DEVELOPMENT-RELATED MATTERS

(i) The Local Plan - Timetable

The Committee was apprised of progress relating to the timetable for the emerging Local Plan.

A Member commented that the public perception had been that the Plan would be in place in 2015. In response, the Committee was reminded of the various stages and processes relating to the emerging Local Plan, including examination by an Inspector at which the Council could face challenge on its supporting evidence. The Committee was assured that the Local Plan was a top priority for Officers and that any impacts on the timescale would be reported to the Local Plan Programme Board. The Committee was reminded that the Government had announced that it expected all Councils to have a Local Plan in place by 2017, and it was considered that the Council should publicise its current position and remind members of the public of the reasons why the process was taking time.

(ii) Community Infrastructure Levy

It was reported that work on the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was progressing in tandem with work on the emerging Local Plan. In response to questions from Members, it was reported that the major infrastructure projects for the strategic housing site at Chesterton, Cirencester were likely to be drainage, education and highways; and the Council would have to decide whether to follow the CIL or Section 106 Agreement route in its consideration of large developments and, particularly, the strategic housing site at Chesterton, Cirencester.

(iii) Section 106 Agreements

The Committee was reminded that the Council was able to seek Section 106 Agreements in respect of site-specific contributions and that Officers would seek to ensure that future developments did not fall between the CIL and Section 106 Agreement processes when the CIL process was introduced. In response to a question from a Member, it was reported that a Section 106 Agreement was the preferred delivery mechanism for any community improvements accruing from the proposed development at Chesterton, Cirencester. It was further reported that Officers would meet representatives of Cirencester Town Council to discuss this issue. In response to a further question from a Member, it was reported that work was progressing to establish a data base of historic Section 106 Agreements as part of an 'holistic' approach to such Agreements.

(iv) The Building Control Service

The Committee was apprised of progress in relation to the Building Control Service, including publication of a Marketing Plan and the establishment of a partnership with a local architectural company.

The Committee was invited to consider, and comment on, a report to the 2020 Vision Partnership Member Governance Board, in advance of its consideration by the Cabinet and the Council.

The circulated report set out the outline Business Case, including detailed financial implications for the 2020 Vision Programme, and the Chief Executive amplified the key elements of the report and responded to various questions from Members relating to the potential impact of devolution for Gloucestershire; crisis management; business continuity; potential costs and savings; the provision of 'local' and 'specialised' services; staff consultations; engagement across the political spectrum; and democratic accountability.

A Member expressed concern that he had not been able to balance the figures quoted in the circulated report. In response, the Chief Executive explained that the circulated report was, in effect, a 'first draft' and that consideration would be given to improving the layout of the tables for future versions. The Chief Executive also undertook to ensure appropriate reference to devolution, business continuity and resilience was included in the Business Case and to consider the issue of future cross-party involvement.

RESOLVED that the Committee's comments be forwarded to the Cabinet and the Council.

Record of Voting - for 6, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 1.

OS.27 SUMMARY FINANCE/SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT - 2015/16
QUARTER 1

The Committee considered a report summarising overall finance/service performance for the Council in the first quarter of the financial year 2015/16, with particular focus on progress towards achieving the Council's top tasks and efficiency measures, and providing information on the Council's capital expenditure, capital receipts and use of reserves.

Officers amplified aspects of the circulated report and the following points were made during the detailed consideration thereof:-

(i) Paragraph 1b., page 113 - a Member expressed concern that no-one from the Legal and Property Services Section was present to respond to potential questions relating to the Council's land and property portfolio. In particular, the Member was seeking further information about costs and potential solutions relating to the Old Memorial Hospital, Cirencester and the Strategic Director and/or Head of Service were requested to provide further details.

(ii) Appendix 'B', page 116 - in response to a question on recycling, it was reported that a new campaign reminding people of the green waste collection facility was due to be launched.

(iii) Appendix 'B', page 119 - Officers were requested 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.

RESOLVED that the report be noted, and the comments made forwarded to the Cabinet.

Record of Voting - for 6, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 1.

OS.28 COUNTY MATTERS

The Committee received updates in respect of Gloucestershire County Council's Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel.

The Chairman commented that representatives of the 'NHS 111' service and the Ambulance Trust had been invited to make a presentation to the next Meeting of the County Council's Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

It was suggested that the Chairmen and/or this Council's representatives on the Economic Growth and Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and the Police and Crime Panel, should be required to provide feedback on the work of those Committees/Panel to this Committee on at least an annual basis.

OS.29 QUARTERLY DIGEST

The Committee was requested to identify any issues arising out of the Quarterly Digest for future debate and/or action.

No specific issues were highlighted.

OS.30 WORK PLAN 2015/16

A suggested Work Plan for the remainder of the Council Year was circulated for consideration.

It was suggested that a review of the contract with Eunomia, the consultants who had advised the Council on its acquisition of the SITA depot/waste transfer site in South Cerney, be considered for inclusion in the work plan.

OS.31 OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business that was urgent.

The Meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m., adjourned between 11.30 a.m. and 11.40 a.m., and closed at 12.37 p.m.

Chairman

(END)