



Minutes of a meeting held remotely of Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 February 2021

In accordance with relevant legislation, these minutes are a record of decisions taken. They are not intended to be a verbatim account of the meeting. A full recording of the meeting can be accessed by the Facebook link at www.Cotswold.gov.uk

Councillors Present:

Stephen Andrews - Chair

Claire Bloomer
Gina Blomefield
Patrick Coleman

Dilys Neill
Richard Norris
Gary Selwyn – Vice Chair

Ray Theodoulou

Councillor Clive Webster observing.

Officers:

Deputy Chief Executive
Executive Director, Commissioning
Forward Planning Manager
Business Manager, Corporate Responsibility
Democratic Services

Chief Executive
Development & Planning Enforcement Manager
Senior Infrastructure Delivery Officer
Chief Accountant

OS.53 Apologies were received from Councillor Roly Hughes,

OS.54 **Substitute Members** - There were no substitute arrangements.

OS.55 **Declarations of Interest** - No declarations of interest were received from Members or Officers.

OS.56 **Minutes – 2 February 2021**

Subject to typographical errors previously notified to Democratic Services, the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2021, be approved as a true record.

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

OS.57 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair announced that the final report of the Task and Finish Group - Fairford and Tetbury Leisure Provision, which was due to be considered by Committee at this meeting, would now be presented to Committee on 25 May 2021.

OS.58 **Public Questions** - No questions had been received from the public.

OS.59 **Member Questions** - No questions had been received from Members.

OS.60 **Called in Decisions** - No executive decisions had been the subject of Call-In since the Committee's previous Meeting.

OS.61 **Cotswold District – Section 106 Monitoring Update**

The Forward Planning Manager introduced this item, explaining that the Council was required to provide an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS), to the Government, which increased transparency of all financial and non-financial developer contributions to Section 106 agreements. £16,635.42 had been collected from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), with £1,873.69 being set aside for neighbourhood contributions.

The Council currently held approximately £1.1 million of allocated Section 106 funds. Since the IFS was published the CIL team had secured additional payments totalling £566,124.80. No monies relating to historic S106 agreements had been repaid this year.

Elements of this money would be allocated to Town and Parish Councils and affordable housing. Monitoring fees could be charged to developers, although this required the developer to engage with the Council.

Officers were working with West Oxfordshire District Council to integrate CIL and S106 operations. This would mean that a dedicated officer could monitor S106 monies, with officers negotiating with developers to enable the effective collection and spending of the monies. This would improve the process and performance measures.

Committee requested, in order to add a layer of transparency to the process, a monitoring report be presented to the Committee annually, this could include statistics.

The Committee expressed their appreciation to officers who had worked on these issues.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

OS.62 **Planning Enforcement Update**

The Development & Planning Enforcement Manager presented the report, highlighting two key issues. Firstly, that the Assistant Enforcement Officer post had been made permanent and secondly, that a re-design of the enforcement service would be taking place in the coming months, with a view to moving to a proactive approach to enforcement.

The service was not a shared service with the Forest of Dean or West Oxfordshire District Councils, although in future a joint administrative service could be a possibility.

The team, currently, consisted of four officers and was delivering the service at capacity. The oldest cases go back to 2017/18, with a high number of cases for a small team to deal with, although the team was producing good results.

Committee requested that it be kept updated. Members asked that congratulations and best wishes be passed to the enforcement team for all their hard work.

RESOLVED that the report and any comments made be noted.

OS.63 Financial, Council Priority and Service Performance Report – 2020-21 Quarter Three

The Chief Executive presented the report, highlighting that Publica Staff were doing an absolutely fantastic job with the Covid-19 recovery programme. To date 1000 grants had been paid to various businesses, there had been a lot of redeployment of staff to critical service areas and overall the performance was very high, although in a few areas performance had dipped.

Committee discussed issues such as business rates collection, parking income, investment income and the impact of Covid-19 on these streams of revenue. They noted that affordable housing was a priority of the Council and asked questions around the number of complaints made regarding the processing of business grants and whether negotiations had begun with SLM regarding the leisure contract.

The Committee acknowledged the ongoing work around fraud prevention in relation to housing benefit and council tax single person discount.

The Chief Executive stated that he was starting to look at lessons to be learnt from the pandemic, and how this Committee could review the issues in the next civic year.

Broadband was also discussed, noting that £500,000 had been allocated for improving the services in the district. The Council was working with Fastershire and Members considered that this should be rolled out as a priority. Committee would like to be reassured that the process of rolling out fibre broadband in the district was taking place, and requested that a letter be written detailing what was required.

The Capital Programme Investment Board would be looking at investment opportunities and making recommendations before any money was invested in projects. Committee highlighted that there should be milestones for particular projects measuring performance against the Corporate Plan.

Committee then discussed the performance report and thanked officers, giving them their congratulations, on a well presented and easy to understand report.

Issues discussed on the performance report included household waste and recycled waste income stream and the percentage of waste sent to the incinerator. Members felt that planning enforcement should be included in the performance report when the service review had taken place. They also thought that improvements could be made in terms of budget setting around expenditure, plus committed monies against the Corporate Plan and that the quarterly report could show how performance was being delivered against Council's plans.

RESOLVED that the overall progress on the Council priorities, service delivery and financial performance for 2020-21 Q3, be noted.

OS.64 Quarterly Digest

Members gave updates on Gloucestershire County Council's Scrutiny Committees.

OS.65 Work Programme

A draft work programme was presented to the Committee. An informal work planning meeting would be arranged to discuss the programme for 2021/22, with officers.

Members thanked Christine Gore, the Executive Director, Commissioning, for the support she had given whilst in her current role and previous roles within the Council, in recognition of her impending retirement.

The Meeting commenced at 4.00pm and closed at 6.53pm.

Chair
(END)