



**Minutes of a meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 31 October 2023**

Councillors present:

Gina Blomefield – Chair  
David Cunningham  
Patrick Coleman  
Angus Jenkinson

Gary Selwyn  
Ian Watson  
Michael Vann  
Tony Slater

Clare Turner - Vice-Chair  
(acting)  
Jon Wareing

Officers present:

Robert Weaver, Chief Executive  
David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and  
Chief Finance Officer  
Ana Prelici, Democratic Services Officer  
Caleb Harris, Senior Democratic Services  
Officer  
Andy Barge, Group Manager - Strategic  
Support

Susan Hughes, Business Manager for Support  
and Advice  
Claire Locke, Assistant Director for Property  
and Regeneration  
Maria Wheatley, Shared Parking Manager  
Jacqueline Wright, Community Wellbeing  
Manager

Cabinet Members present;

Councillors

Tony Dale- Cabinet Member for the Economy and Council Transformation  
Paul Hodgkinson- Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture  
Lisa Spivey- Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Safety (substituting for Deputy  
Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance)

**OS.287**      **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Dilys Neill and Roly Hughes.

**OS.288**      **Substitute Members**

Councillor Patrick Coleman substituted for Councillor Roly Hughes, and Councillor Ian Watson substituted for Councillor Dilys Neill.

**OS.289**      **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

**OS.290**      **Minutes**

The information on the training, under the Chair's announcements was amended to "had attended the recent LGA two day training session for Chairs of Overview & Scrutiny with sixteen O&S Chairs from across the country – mainly from County Councils."

'vision information' was addressed as an error.

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2023.

**OS.291**      **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair stated that the spotlight meeting with Great Western Railway (GWR) was still going ahead despite the reversal of plans to close rail ticket offices.. Members would be invited to pre-submit questions to facilitate the meeting.

The Chair also highlighted that the Budget and MTFS papers had been excluded from the printed pack, which was not acceptable.

The Committee then introduced themselves.

**OS.292**      **Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

**OS.293**      **Member Questions**

There were no member questions.

**OS.294**      **Community Safety Partnership**

The purpose of the item was to exercise the function of the Crime & Disorder Committee through review of Cotswold Community Safety Partnership strategy and delivery. The Chair introduced the item, and stated that, as Cotswold District Council did not have a separate Crime and Disorder Committee responsibility for receiving the annual Community Safety Partnership update falls under the Overview & Scrutiny Committee remit.

The Chair invited the Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Safety to address the Committee. The Cabinet Member thanked Officers for their work enabling the partnership. The Cabinet Member stated that the recent focus of the group was to ensure that all action points had identified owners to ensure partnership working and delivery of the actions.

Members discussed the report, including the following points;

- What was the Community Safety Partnership doing to address anti-social behaviour? The Committee requested further detail on the multi-agency community response being undertaken. The Cabinet Member stated they would ask ERS Service Lead to provide more information on this to members.
- Members discussed that, due to the various agencies and pathways involved with crime prevention, it seemed more work was needed to publicise the ways for residents needing help to get in touch. The Cabinet Member stated that an information sheet had been produced, and would be shared with the Committee and that the work on the action plan would also address this.

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- Neighbourhood watch initiatives were discussed, of which the District had one of the highest numbers in the country. It was stated by the Cabinet Member that WhatsApp groups also served this function.
- Another element of the work which was discussed was work around young male carers. The Business Manager for Communities and Wellbeing stated that the focus of the work was to reach creatively those who need help e.g. through mobile provision of services.
- Due to the importance of the work, Members asked that an update be brought to the Committee in six months.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Jenkinson and Seconded by Councillor Cunningham.

RESOLVED: To note the update and receive a further update in six months.

Voting record For 10, Abstentions 0, Against 0

**OS.295**      **2024/25 Budget Strategy and MTFs Update Report**

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Safety introduced the item, alongside the Deputy Chief Executive.

The purpose of the report was to set out the Budget Strategy to support the preparation of the 2024/25 revenue and capital budgets and presents an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) forecast.

Budgetary pressures were noted, with reserves being utilised. The budget setting process was also made uncertain by the fact that the final local government settlement had yet to be received; the Local Government Association was actively lobbying for this

The Deputy Chief Executive stated that a risk adverse approach had been taken to the budget setting, with reserves being built up wherever possible. However, due to the budget gap, it was noted that tough decisions would have to be made. The Cabinet Transformation Working Group had been looking at ways to make savings.

Members discussed the report and raised the following points;

- Member discussed whether colour printing was needed for committee report packs, although the Cabinet Member pointed out that all members could opt out of printed copies, and encouraged them to use digital papers as much as possible.
- The savings and income generation proposals included £1.5m from proposals such as Sunday charging in car parks, cost recovery of garden waste collection services, and changes to the waste and recycling collection services to achieve increased efficiency. The UBICO savings were discussed, with the Deputy Chief Executive stating that the savings were made through rezoning and re-evaluation to clear nearby residual waste. It was also stated that Garden Waste collection was a discretionary service.
- The Cabinet Transform working group was discussed. The Director of Governance and Development stated that the minutes of these were not publically available due to the confidential nature of the group, but that proposals would be presented to Council through the budget process.
- An asset management strategy was being developed.

- Concerns were raised around the ambitions of the capital programme given current market volatility.
- Members discussed the proposals to take the provision of services back in house and the costs that would be associated with this. The Deputy Chief Executive stated that the review and transition plans would need to be within the MTFs. The Deputy Chief Executive also warned members to exercise caution over discussing the proposals, as officers employed by Publica were in the room.

RESOLVED: To note the report.

## **OS.296**      **Playing Pitch Strategy**

The Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture introduced the item.

The purpose of the report was for Cabinet to consider the findings and recommendations proposed by consultants commissioned to develop a Playing Pitch Strategy for the District and to approve the Strategy.

The Cabinet Member explained that the strategy focused on sports which were played on sports pitches. The strategy set out how many playing pitches existed, and what the need was, including if improvements were needed. The Strategy would form an evidence base for the local plan, and included natural grass and artificial (3G) pitches for Football, Hockey, Polo and Rugby. The Cabinet Member thanked Officers for their work on the report.

Members discussed the report, raising the following points:

- The emergence of new trends in sports e.g. women's football and Cricket demand was mentioned, and whether this was incorporated into the strategy. The Assistant Director for Communities stated that the strategy had been developed with the best available information, which predated the increase in demand, but that if the demand was greater than provision, the Council could work with Town and Parishes and educational establishments to look at increasing provision.
- Cllr Ian Watson stated that he had been working with Sir William Romney's School and the Football Foundation, and that they had received a £1m grant for 3G pitches. A conversation about including this within the strategy would be had with the Assistant Director and Cabinet Member.
- Members discussed 3G synthetic pitches, in light of recent European Union ban on 'intentionally added microplastics' onto the European market, which included rubber infill for 3G pitches. The Cabinet Member and Assistant Director highlighted that there was a ban on rubber infill but not a ban on 3G pitches. They stated that the Council was following Sports England guidelines, and that 3G pitches had benefits such as being able to be constantly utilised (unlike natural grass).
- The Committee discussed whether consideration was given to bowling greens, as these weren't in the strategy. The Cabinet Member stated that they would look into this.
- Members discussed ways of ensuring developer contributions, including CIL and that the new playing pitches at the Steadings are included within the strategy.
- The Committee were keen for the Council to encourage more volunteers to offer their help to local sports clubs for both training and administration.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Cabinet that:

- 1) The provision of 3G pitches is reviewed to ensure that the provision is suitable and safe, in view of safety concerns about certain materials used in 3G pitches.
- 2) Consideration is given to whether it would be appropriate to include the provision of bowling greens within the Playing Pitch Strategy.
- 3) The new pitches planned at the Steadings development are factored into the Playing Pitch Strategy, if this has not already been done.
- 4) Consideration is given to whether the use of Community Infrastructure Levy to fund sports facilities can be formalised in the Local Plan.
- 5) The Council encourages more volunteers to support local sports clubs.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Wareing and seconded by Councillor Watson

Voting record For 10, Abstentions 0, Against 0

#### **OS.297**      **Car Parking Strategy**

There was a comfort break at 7:09pm, and the meeting resumed at 7:18pm.

Cabinet Member for the Economy and Council Transformation introduced the item. The purpose of the report was to outline the approach to reviewing and updating the parking strategy to ensure best use of Council assets.

Members discussed the report, and raised the following points;

- Ensuring that bicycle transport is included within the strategy. The Cabinet Member agreed that the reliance on cars needed to be reduced, and that would look to include bicycle parking within the strategy.
- Some of the Public Toilets owned by the Council were located within car parks, it was noted that it was important to ensure joint up working within these two areas.
- Car parking provision should include suitable provision of disabled bays and bays that are sufficiently wide.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Cabinet that:

- Consideration is given to whether more can be done on the widening of car parking bays within the Car Parking Strategy
- Consideration is given to the level of need for, and provision of, more disabled parking spaces.
- The provision of secure bicycle parking (for pedal and electric bicycles) is included within the strategy.

Voting record For 10, Abstentions 0, Against 0

#### **OS.298**      **Public Conveniences Review Group terms of reference**

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Councillor Tony Slater, as the Chair of the Public Conveniences Review Group, introduced the item. Councillor Slater outlined progress that had been made on work. The Terms of reference had been agreed at the first meeting of the review group. The next steps for the group, having reviewed the toilets within the district were to proceed with a business case.

The Chair of the Committee stated that the group would need to report back in January, but seemed to be progressing well. The Chair also thanked the Review Group for their work.

Members discussed cashless payment in public toilets. The Deputy Chief Executive stated that this £50,000 had been set aside for this.

#### **OS.299**      **Updates from Gloucestershire County Council Scrutiny Committees**

Councillor Neill sent her apologies for the meeting, and therefore the Chair read out their report. The report highlighted that the focus of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee was Flu, COVID and integrated care. The main concerns were mental health and waiting times.

Councillor Jenkinson, as the representative on the Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee, had provided a written report which would be distributed with the minutes of the meeting. Cllr Jenkinson summarised the report.

The Moreton – Burton on the Water – Cheltenham bus service was mentioned, with members asking how frequent this was. Cllr Jenkinson stated that he would distribute this information after the meeting.

RESOLVED: To note the update

#### **OS.300**      **Forward Plan and Work Plan**

The Chair stated that the next meeting of the Committee would focus on the Local Plan, including the Housing Strategy.

Recommendations from the Public Conveniences Review Group would be added to the agenda for January's meeting.

Members referred to the Publica Review, which had been scheduled for November's Cabinet but was not on the agenda for pre-decision scrutiny at Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Chief Executive stated that there was no constitutional requirement for pre-decision scrutiny and that an all Member's briefing would take place, which should answer questions Members had. The Committee felt however, that there was value in the Overview and Scrutiny looking at the proposal in addition to the all member briefing, and proposed that a provisional meeting was scheduled after the briefing on 15 November 2023.

The resolution was proposed by Councillor David Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Slater.

RESOLVED: To accept the work plan, as amended, including a provisional special meeting to look at the Publica Review.

Voting record For 10, Abstentions 0, Against 0

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The Meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and closed at 8.05 pm

Chair

(END)