

CABINET DECISIONS 2 November 2023

Issue(s) Arising from Overview and Scrutiny and/or Audit

The recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Parking Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy items were presented in the supplement provided to Cabinet with the responses from the relevant Cabinet Members included. The Cabinet Members highlighted that they would address the recommendations at the respective agenda items.

PUBLICA REVIEW

To consider the Human Engine (consultants) Report that the majority of council services are returned to the Council as per the detail provided on page 12 of the Human Engine report) and to approve the recommendations.

The Leader, who had joined the meeting remotely, was invited to introduce the report. The Chief Executive addressed Cabinet about the recommendations and specifically the transition plan at Recommendation 2. The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Spivey and seconded by Councillor Hodgkinson.

Cabinet AGREED to recommend to Full Council to:

1. APPROVE the recommendations set out in the Human Engine report (that the majority of services are returned to the Council as per the detail provided on page 12 of the Human Engine report)
2. AGREE That the Chief Executive oversees the creation of a detailed transition plan for subsequent agreement by Cabinet and Council
3. ENDORSE the approach to the further due diligence outlined in the financial implications of the report including analysis of the detailed payroll data required, which will be essential to calculate the short and long-term costs associated with the recommendations set out in the Human Engine report.

PARKING STRATEGY

To consider proposals to undertake a full review of the Council's parking provision to ensure the efficient utilisation of the Council's off-street carparks and support access to the District's Town Centres including the gathering of further data on carpark usage ensure best use of Council assets.

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation, Councillor Tony Dale introduced the report. The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Dale and seconded by Councillor Layton.

Cabinet

1. AGREED to review and update the Parking strategy to better reflect the changing needs of service users.
2. AGREED to undertake a full review to understand the requirements of the Council's future parking provision as detailed in Annex C.
3. ENDORSED the proposal at paragraph 7.1 to employ the services of a professional customer insight gathering company.

PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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

Health, Leisure and Culture introduced the report and outlined the strategy to Cabinet. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendations for this item were also considered and the responses were outlined from the supplement. Questions on accessibility within the Strategy and gender specific sports would be taken to the officer for consideration. The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Hodgkinson and seconded by Councillor Bloomer.

Cabinet

1. ENDORSED the findings of the consultants and APPROVED the Playing Pitch Strategy, including the key recommendations and site specific action plan;
2. AGREED TO AUTHORISE officers to work in partnership with other organisations to establish the feasibility and funding sources for the projects identified within the strategy and to prepare business cases, where opportunities arise, and bring them forward for consideration;
3. NOTED that the resources needed to develop these partnerships and implement the action plan will be met from existing resources by reprioritising existing work.

2024/25 BUDGET STRATEGY AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) UPDATE

Budget Strategy set out to support the preparation of the 2024/25 revenue and capital budgets and presents an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy forecast. It was noted that the Strategy was required to manage the upcoming financial uncertainties faced by the Council and to protect essential services. The Deputy Chief Executive and S.151 Officer (CFO) was then invited to speak. The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Spivey and seconded by Councillor Layton.

Cabinet

1. APPROVED the 2024/25 Budget Strategy as outlined in Section 4 of the report.
2. NOTED the forecast surplus on the General Fund revenue budget in 2024/25 and proposed transfer to the Financial Resilience Reserve.

Schedule of Decisions taken by the Leader of the Council and/or Individual Cabinet Members

Cabinet NOTED the schedule of decisions taken.

Date of Publication: 3 November 2023

Closing Date for Call-In: 13 November 2023 (5pm)

Action Embargoed until: 14 November 2023

PLANNING

Under the government's criteria for designation, a planning department must decide over 70% of its planning applications on time in order to avoid being placed into special measures.

In April this year CDC was only just under the required 70% rate required at 69.6% of applications processed within the required timeframe and was warned therefore of being at risk of being put into special measures. The levelling up secretary gave the authority until June 2023 to "demonstrate improved performance" before formally designating their planning department.

When a planning department is put into special measures, applicants may send their planning applications directly to the Planning Inspectorate, rather than the local planning authority.

CDC has escaped intervention after improving their planning performance on non-major applications. Chief executive Robert Weaver said it was "highly unfair" as

the CDC rate was only 0.4% below the threshold. Despite this, he added that "considerable work" has been done to improve planning performance. Regardless, the DLUHC has insisted they will continue to monitor the performances of all nine planning authorities under the threat of official designation.

Planning Fees to increase from 6 December 2023

As part of the Levelling Up Act, Planning Fees are to be increased to assist Councils with respect to providing the Planning Service. This is to be welcomed and will assist in reducing the overall cost of delivering the planning service (planning fees only account for approximately 50% of the total cost of running the service)

The Fees for householder development will rise by 25% and all other application types will rise by 35%. The fees will be reviewed yearly and will be increased in line with inflation.

The Government has also removed the free go provision for planning applications and has introduced a tighter planning guarantee which means that any applications over 16 weeks old with no extension of time agreed will be liable to a refund.

LICENSING AND PLANNING

Owing to being involved with a number of complex and controversial licensing applications in 2023, I am better informed about the relationship between Licensing applications and planning. When the Licensing Act 2003 was introduced it introduced a presumption that a licence would be granted and could only be refused on very limited grounds. The grant of a licence was to be an administrative function rather than the previous procedure which involved a hearing before Magistrates. The four licensing objectives detailed in the 2003 Act are:

1. the prevention of crime and disorder;
2. public safety;
3. the prevention of public nuisance;
4. the protection of children from harm.

Proposals to have greater cooperation between Licensing and Planning have not materialised. The fact that a licence may be opposed would not be a reason for planners to object. To do so would raise too many problems.

Planning considerations are therefore not applicable when licences are applied for. If the Licence requires planning consent that is not the business of the licensing panel, which renders most representations from the public to licence applications largely irrelevant.

Public nuisance is a very wide term and has to be more than a general inconvenience. It has to be something which is actionable by the person aggrieved and to be something which causes damage. Successful opposition to licensing applications has been rare since the 2003 Act. Any objection needs to have a considerable amount of backing from those who are affected by the licence if granted.

A Special Advisory Group is formed for events such as:

- Events of an unusual nature
- Events with significant numbers of attendees
- Events with a significant or unusual level of risk
- New venues
- Events or venues where there has been previous issues or incidents

The Safety Advisory Group brings together competent professionals such as Highways, Police, Fire and Ambulance services. Their role is to set out best practice guidelines to event organisers and provide a cohesive response to any eventualities that may arise. After considerable public concern over certain new significant events being held in

the Cotswolds this summer, CDC have now improved their systems to include a portal for licence applications where representations from Parish Councils and the public can be submitted.

Truck stop facility, HGV and car parking, drivers facilities building, vehicular access, service yard and landscaping Land At Gloucester Road Stratton Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 2LJ

This application has seen several case officers come and go and at the Planning Committee hearing in March 2022, the vote to refuse was unanimous.

Local objection was supported by CPRE, the Cotswold National Landscape and other countryside groups and was so strong that the Cotswold Area Residents Group was formed to put up their own legal counsel, who worked seamlessly alongside the CDC and their Counsel during the appeal process. I congratulate CARG and their Counsel on their thoughtful, collaborative and positive approach.

The two main issues were the effect on the character and appearance of the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and whether there is a need for the development, where there is scope to develop outside of the AONB.

Finally, as many of you already know, I am passionate about protecting this beautiful part of the Cotswolds. The official National Planning Policy Framework phrase 'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty' is inscribed on my heart.

Cotswold District Council - capital grants up to £10K for village halls and community buildings.

Capital grants of between £2000 and £10,000 for village halls and community buildings, with 20% match funding required. The councils are keen to support decarbonisation, energy efficiency, and digital connectivity, but all capital projects for community buildings will be considered.

The deadline for applications is 8th January for the first round of funding, and then 12th July for a second round of funding. If you need support with your application, contact info@grcc.org.uk

POLLING DISTRICTS AND STATIONS - A consultation triggered by the revised Constituency Electoral Boundaries

Cotswold District Council is required to undertake a review of all polling districts and places every 5 years. The next one is due to be completed by 31 January 2025. However, given the imminent changes to Parliamentary constituency boundaries, and the upcoming Police and Crime Commissioner election in May 2024, it has been agreed that the review should be carried out as soon as possible so that polling districts and places are approved ahead of those elections and reflect the new constituency boundaries.

Consultation on the polling districts and stations is now open and will run until 12 December. Feedback and final recommendations will be considered at Full Council on 24 January 2024. Please register your views on the current polling stations and any alternatives you may wish to be considered via this link:

Comments and feedback on the document should be emailed to elections@cotswold.gov.uk by Tuesday 12 December or please write to The Elections Team, Cotswold District Council, Trinity Road, Cirencester, GL7 1PX.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE POLICE

GCC Council Meeting – 8 Nov 2023 - Policing in Gloucestershire

Based on performance data from 2020, Gloucestershire Police went into Engage/ Special Measures. The main reason for this was due to lack of investment in Officers, Police Community Support Officers and front-line police staff, and a lack of investment in IT (the crime record management system was the oldest in England and Wales!).

Since then, in less than three years, The Police & Crime Commissioner has delivered on six significant manifesto promises:

300 more officers

- Funded over 400 more Officers, Police Community Support Officers and front-line police staff
- new Enhanced Operating Model since June this year, which continues to grow officer numbers deployed on 999 response duties, neighbourhood police, investigation teams, rural police and detectivesmodel increases by more than another 100 officers by spring 2024.
- Specialist Vanguard team reinforces neighbourhood police, helping to increase arrests of prolific offenders and solving more crimes
- 25% increase in Special Constables operational hours compared to last year, with 35% more vehicle stops. We now have more Specials per 1000 population than any other force in the country!

Anti-social behaviour cut in half

ASB cut by well over 50% across the County

Attending more ASB incidents

Growth in Police Community Support Officers

Championing neighbourhood police and crime prevention

Deployment of SOLACE multi agency ASB teams across County

Extra CCTV, lighting, security devices for buildings, personal alarms

Community Speed Watch Plus trial programme that stops 90% of persistent speeders on our rural and urban roads.....to be rolled out across the County

Larger speed enforcement team

ASB Case Reviews for persistent problems

Drug-dealer disruption operations – drug offences down 38%

One of the lowest rates of vehicle theft in the country in 2022

Budget Reform

Created financial headroom to recruit more officers and staff

Bid for and won more Government Safer Streets money than any other force in the country, as a percentage per head of population – more than £4M

Increased annual IT capital replacement/maintenance budget nine-fold (was around £350K pa, now almost £3M pa)

£7M investment in new Record Management System

Easier police contact

Faster 999 response time - wait times halved, despite significant increase in demand

Faster 101 response, current average wait 4.6 minutes, driving down hard towards the two minute target

Rural crime

Rural crime cost cut by 29% in 2022, whereas nationally, cost increased by 22%

Rural crime team doubled in size

50 more Automatic Number Plate Recognition Cameras on our rural roads

Home security devices for vulnerable and isolated properties

Wildlife cameras

Drones

Anti-poaching and hare coursing concrete blocks
Combined police and fire stations in rural areas

Internet and phone scams reduced

Fraud/scams account for more than 40% of all crime. Expansion of the economic crime unit. Ongoing crime prevention advice to business and vulnerable members of the public. Work more closely with Crimestoppers to develop social media campaigns to increase awareness of evolving scam techniques

Online crime fallen 31% from the three-year average, incidents of fraud down 9%

The PCC has empowered and supported the Chief Constable to exit Engage/Special Measures

Despite the force having six inadequates, exit from Engage in Sep 2023 the quickest of any force in recent times

New force Enhanced Operating Model a key factor in exit

Force now fully understands its crime demand

Now best in the country recording reported crime accurately and in a timely manner

Individual officer crime workloads are now more manageable

Picking up the phone faster to 999 and 101 calls

Responding faster to more incidents (28% improvement for Grade 2 emergencies)

Investigating more crimes, following up every reasonable lead

Attending all house burglaries[i]

Halving the time taken to complete investigations

Solving twice as many crimes as a year ago

Making more arrests – 24% increase

New Victims Care Hub

PCC Police and Crime Prevention Plan majored on tackling Male Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Initiatives to deliver a public health approach to crime, tackling the causes of crime, by countering our long-standing cultural norms and influencing behaviours including an effective campaign on Stalking, encouraging more women to report. Greater use of Stalking Protection Orders, Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworker

Collaboration

Excellent working relationships have been forged with GCC, the Fire Service, District and Parish Councils (new Advocacy Service), Third Sector, Charities, South West Commissioners, Government (Home Office and Ministry of Justice). SW Commissioners - tackling cross border drug and rural operations; reducing reoffending, such as homes built by prisoner programme; rural fly tipping campaign for tougher fixed penalty punishments

Working with Association of PCCs to influence Government on making Nitrous Oxide/Laughing Gas illegal, lobbying for amendments to the Levelling Up Bill to ensure the emergency services gain S106 funding from big housing developments to maintain cover (police equipment, police stations, etc)

[i] 1 in 4 burglaries in Gloucestershire (25%) are down to poor home security

Forthcoming Committee Meetings (underlined texts are linked)

There is no full Council meeting in December

Tues 7 Dec 6pm Cabinet

Wed 13 Dec 2pm Planning & Licensing

Thurs 21 Nov 2pm Licensing Sub-Committee (Taxis, Private Hire, and Street

Trading Consent Matters)