

## COMMUNITY SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

4 February 2016

7.00 pm – 8.28 pm

Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud

# 3

### Minutes

#### Membership

Councillor Chris Brine (Chair)	P	Councillor Elizabeth Peters	P
Councillor Jonathan Edmunds (Vice-Chair)	P	Councillor Gary Powell	P
Councillor June Cordwell	P	Councillor Nigel Prenter	P
Councillor Stephen Davies	A	Councillor Stephen Robinson	P
Councillor Julie Job	A	Councillor Chas Townley	P
Councillor John Jones	P	Councillor Penny Wride	P
Councillor Russell Miles	A		

P = Present    A = Absent

#### Other Councillors Present

Councillor Keith Pearson

#### Officers Present

Strategic Head of Customer Services  
 Democratic Services Officer

Accountancy Manager

#### CSLC.033

#### APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stephen Davies, Julie Job and Russell Miles.

#### CSLC.034

#### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

#### CSLC.035

#### MINUTES

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 December 2015 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.**

#### CSLC.036

#### PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None received

**CSLC.037**

**WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16**

The Committee updated the work programme for 2015/16. The following additional Item was agreed;

24 March 2016 – Cotswold Tourism Board Update

Discussion took place on the possibility of a Housing Summit to take place in March/April 2016 to include Homelessness.

**RESOLVED**            **To update and add the above to the work programme.**

**CSLC.038**

**BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2015/16 (Q3)**

The Accountancy Manager presented the report, explaining that this would be the last budget report of the financial year. The report focussed on the key variations.

During questions from Members the following issues were discussed:

- Youth Service funding
- Garden Assistance Scheme
- Discretionary Housing payments
- Neighbourhood Wardens
- Abandoned Vehicles

**RESOLVED**            **To note the outturn forecast for the General Fund Revenue and the Capital programme for 2015/16.**

**CSLC.039**

**PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

Councillor John Jones gave an update on projects:

- Risk Management of projects
- Dursley Pool fitness extension
- Museum and Walled garden project
- Pay and display machines
- Neighbour warden restructure

**RESOLVED**            **To note the update.**

**CSLC.040**

**MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Councillor John Jones asked the following questions of Councillor Chris Brine, Chair of Community Services and Licensing Committee:

**Question 1**

1. In view of the comments made by a prominent member of the ruling Alliance at this Council to the local media recently, concerning this Council's possible sale of some of its assets in the future to make ends meet, would you agree that these comments would have been better made at a meeting of this Committee,

which has first responsibility for ensuring the viability of the assets mentioned, or better still, that the comments were not made at all?

**Answer**

There is no decision being considered to sell some of the council assets. Any proposals to sell assets would have to follow a process and the decision would be taken by members through the committee system and Council.

**Supplementary Question**

Would you agree that the comments should not have been made at all, as the Councillor in question did not have a mandate to do this.

**Answer**

Full Council would need to decide on the future of its assets.

**Question 2**

We all know that difficult decisions may have to be made in the coming years through diminishing Government support, but would it not be better to look at increasing ways to address the likes of Council Tax and Business Rate evasion, and Benefit Fraud, and other known sources of failure to pay, before talking to the media?

**Answer**

The council has a very good track record for maximising the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates and making sure that housing benefit fraud is detected and dealt with. For Council Tax we were ranked 14<sup>th</sup> best in the England in 2014/15 collecting 99.04%. But we are not complacent and continuously work hard to proactively make sure that both residents and businesses apply for any reliefs, discounts and benefits that they are entitled to and then promptly pay what is due to the council.

Councillor Chas Townley asked the following questions of Councillor Chris Brine, Chair of Community Services and Licensing Committee:

**Question 1**

Discretionary Housing Payments

Based on current estimates what is projected 15/16 expenditure and numbers of claimants assisted by Discretionary Housing Payments split by reason:-

- A) Benefit Cap
  - B) Bedroom Tax/Spare Room Subsidy
  - C) Local Housing Allowance
  - D) Combination of welfare reforms
  - E) Award not for welfare reforms
- And total

**Answer**

In 2015/16 we have spent £52,724 to date against a budget of £90,077. We are unable to quantify the projected year end spend as it is driven by demand.

No. of claims to date

A) Benefit Cap -	<b>3</b>
B) Bedroom Tax/Spare Room Subsidy -	<b>77</b>
C) Local Housing Allowance -	<b>10</b>

D) Combination of welfare reforms	<b>23</b>
E) Award not for welfare reforms (1 risk of violence, 7 non-dep deductions)	<b>8</b>
And total	<b>121</b>

**Question 2**

Of the claims made so far 2015/16 (by reason as in 1 above) have been:

- A) Received
  - B) paid in full
  - C) partially paid
  - D) refused
- And total

**Answer**

Of the claims made so far 2015/16 (by reason as in 1 above) have been:

A) Received	<b>150</b>
B) paid in full	<b>121</b>
C) partially paid	<b>0</b>
D) refused	<b>29</b>
And total	<b>150</b>

The Meeting Closed at 8.28 pm.

**Chair**