

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Tuesday, 14 June 2016 commencing at 4:30 pm

Present:

Chair

Councillor P W Awford

and Councillors:

K J Cromwell, Mrs J E Day, R D East, D T Foyle, Mrs R M Hatton, Mrs H C McLain, T A Spencer, Mrs P E Stokes, P D Surman, M G Sztymiak, H A E Turbyfield and M J Williams

also present:

Councillors R E Allen and Mrs E J MacTiernan

OS.5 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 5.1 The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was advised to those present.
- 5.2 The Chair welcomed Norman Gardner, Bureau Manager for the Gloucester and District Citizens' Advice Bureau, to the meeting and indicated that he would be giving a presentation at Agenda Item 7. He also introduced Ann Reeder who was observing the meeting in order to provide independent feedback on the Committee. It was noted that Councillor R E Allen was in attendance in respect of Item 12 – Health and Wellbeing Strategy Monitoring Report and Councillor Mrs E J MacTiernan was also present as an observer.

OS.6 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

- 6.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs G F Blackwell (Vice-Chair) and G J Bocking. There were no substitutions for the meeting.

OS.7 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 7.1 The Committee's attention was drawn to the Tewkesbury Borough Council Code of Conduct which was adopted by the Council on 26 June 2012 and took effect from 1 July 2012.
- 7.2 There were no declarations made on this occasion.

OS.8 MINUTES

- 8.1 The Minutes of the meeting, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

OS.9 CONSIDERATION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

- 9.1 Attention was drawn to the Executive Committee Forward Plan, circulated at Pages

No. 16-19. Members were asked to determine whether there were any questions for the relevant Lead Members and what support the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could give to the work contained within the plan.

- 9.2 A Member questioned why cemetery provision in Tewkesbury town was included on the Executive Committee Agenda for the meeting on 31 August 2016 given that Winchcombe was responsible for its own provision. The Finance and Asset Management Group Manager advised that the cemetery in Tewkesbury town was almost at capacity and the options for future provision needed to be discussed with the Committee. Officers were currently in the process of putting this information together.
- 9.3 A Member noted that two items had been removed from the Forward Plan, the Financial Inclusion Policy which had been due to be considered on 13 July 2016 and the Policy for the Localism Agenda on Revenues and Benefits which had been due to be considered on 31 August 2016, and he asked when those items could be expected. In response, the Deputy Chief Executive explained that the financial inclusion work included the roll out of Universal Credit which had been put on hold by the government. As there was no expected date for that to happen, it was not possible to start work on the policy. In terms of the consideration of a new discretionary relief for business rates under the Localism Agenda, this would be picked up as part of the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy as it related to supporting the economy and promoting economic growth; she recognised that this was not reflected in the wording currently used on the forward plan.
- 9.4 A Member queried whether there was an expectation that Parish Councils would contribute towards the Environmental Warden and suggested that it should be brought forward from 23 November 2013, when it was currently scheduled for consideration by the Executive Committee, as Parishes were likely to have set their precepts prior to this date. The Deputy Chief Executive felt that this was a very sensible idea and she undertook to discuss this with the Officers involved.
- 9.5 It was
RESOLVED That the Executive Committee Forward Plan be **NOTED**.

OS.10 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

- 10.1 Attention was drawn to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2016/17, circulated at Pages No. 20-27, which Members were asked to consider.
- 10.2 A Member indicated that there had been a number of issues raised at the last meeting as a result of the review of Ubico and he questioned when a full report would be brought to the Committee. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that a report on enviro-crimes would be brought to the next meeting on 19 July 2016 and would include information regarding fly-tipping. A separate report on grounds maintenance would be brought to the meeting on 18 October 2016.
- 10.3 With regard to the pending items, the Corporate Services Group Manager advised that he was awaiting a response from Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue as to when they would be able to give a presentation to the Committee. In terms of the presentation from Severn Vale Housing which had been requested by Members during the review of the effectiveness of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, he sought a further steer from Members as to their specific concerns so he could approach the appropriate person within the organisation. A Member indicated that Severn Vale had recently undergone significant changes in terms of its operation and it may be beneficial for Members to learn more about the new structure. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that Severn Vale was keen to raise its profile and understand Member issues. She had attended a meeting earlier that afternoon where an open afternoon had been discussed with the intention of informing Members about the new operating model. She suggested that the most beneficial

approach would be for Members to attend the open afternoon and, if there were any specific issues arising, Severn Vale could be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee.

- 10.4 It was noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had asked to consider the Financial Inclusion Policy prior to the Executive Committee and this was currently included as a pending item. The Chief Executive indicated that financial inclusion was a very important part of the Council's work which impacted upon the way in which it supported its residents and how it worked with partners to provide that support. It had potential to make a really big difference to people's lives in terms of making them more economically viable and successful in order for them to make a better contribution to the community. As discussed under the previous item, the Financial Inclusion Policy had been removed from the Executive Committee Forward Plan, however, given the importance of the subject it would be appropriate for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to have a presentation on financial inclusion in order to understand the work which had been undertaken to date and provide an opportunity to ask questions. A Member felt that a standalone seminar would be preferable to an Agenda Item so that all Members could be invited to attend and another Member indicated that other partners should also be invited.

- 10.5 It was

- RESOLVED**
1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2016/17 be **NOTED**.
 2. That Members be invited to attend an open afternoon at Severn Vale Housing Society in order to learn about the new operating model and, should any specific issues arise, the appropriate representative from Severn Vale be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee.
 3. That a Financial Inclusion Seminar be arranged for all Members with relevant partners also being invited to attend.

OS.11 CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAU PRESENTATION

- 11.1 The Chair welcomed Norman Gardner, Bureau Manager for the Gloucester and District Citizens' Advice Bureau, to the meeting. Members were reminded that Tewkesbury Borough Council had had a relationship with the Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) since 2002. Each CAB was a separate entity and, in recent years, the Council had been working with the Gloucester and District CAB to which it provided a grant each year. It was considered that it would be beneficial for Members to hear about the work which the CAB carried out to ensure that it provided value for money.

- 11.2 The following key points were raised during the presentation:

- Our Aims – To provide the advice people need for the problems they face; to improve policies and practices that affect people's lives.
- Our Principles – The Citizens' Advice service provides free, independent and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities; it values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination.
- Our Locations – Tewkesbury Borough Council offices, Prior's Park, Bishop's Cleeve, Winchcombe, Brockworth, Cheltenham (town centre), Gloucester (city centre).
- Residents obtained advice – Face to face – 75.3% (79.5% in the previous year); by telephone – 12.6% (11.1% in the previous year); or by email – 12% (9.3% in the previous year).
- Client Profile (1) – By age: majority in 35-49 category; by employment: majority

in employment but the retired age group was also heavily represented which reflected the demographic of Tewkesbury Borough.

- Client Profile (2) – Health: the majority of clients were not disabled; Income Levels (total household income per month): the majority of clients had income of £401-£999 per month.
- Issues – Analysis of issues raised by clients April 2015 – March 2016: benefits – 28%; debt – 29%; employment – 10%; relationships – 9%; housing – 8%; legal – 4%; consumer – 4 %; other – 4%. Hot spots: Brockworth – 60%; Prior's Park – 10%, Churchdown St John's – 9%.
- Case Studies:
 1. Benefits – The client's claim for Personal Independence Payments (PIP) was refused; decision endorsed at appeal in December 2014. CAB assisted the client to appeal to Upper Tribunal based on the original tribunal not taking key factors into account. Upper Tribunal set aside the decision of the First Tier Tribunal and referred the case for a new hearing. CAB assisted the client at the new hearing and was awarded 'Enhanced Rate Daily Living' and 'Standard Rate Mobility' components; this meant that the client also qualified for Severe Disability Premium under her Employment Support Allowance claim. Awards were backdated to December 2013 with backdated payments totalling £18,971 and continuing weekly payments of £165.95.
 2. Debt and Housing – Single parent with mental health issues, caring for her 18 year old son who had learning and behavioural difficulties and her 17 year old daughter who was still at school, £23,000 in debt. Her registered social landlord had commenced possession proceedings which, if successful, would have left the family in a precarious position with a potential impact upon their health. Despite the best efforts of the CAB, an application to stay the order whilst a solution was sought was rejected. After negotiation, the CAB was able to persuade Severn Trent Trust Fund to clear the client's water arrears of £5,000, thus bringing the debt below the £20,000 limit for Debt Relief Orders. A Debt Relief Order for the write-off of £18,000 was applied for and confirmation of issue was received from the insolvency service at 11:05am; the possession hearing was due to start at 12:00noon that day. The CAB adviser arrived at Court at 11:55am with the written confirmation and the Court consequently rejected the application allowing the client to keep her home.
- Definitions – Financial Capability (1): knowledge, skill, motivation, awareness and confidence in relation to money management; Financial Inclusion: access to appropriate financial products and services allowing people to effectively manage their money regardless of their level of income or social status; Financial Exclusion: individuals cannot access financial products and services they need which means that those that can least afford to do so will end up paying more for their basic needs e.g. those people with pre-pay gas/electricity meters paid more per unit than people who pay by direct debit, buying goods on finance cost more without a good credit rating.
- Financial Capability (2): Tewkesbury Borough Council's Financial Inclusion Partnership; in conjunction with Tewkesbury Borough Council providing financial capability advice to Universal Credit claimants; training and workshops on financial inclusion, energy saving and switching suppliers, and support available etc. (to frontline teams e.g. food banks, GreenSquare Housing, and local communities e.g. Brockworth parent and baby group; one to one sessions (e.g. energy best deal extra, registered social landlord

financial health checks and individuals at children's' centres).

- 11.3 With regard to the case study on debt, a Member queried whether the client would receive any follow-up to ensure that she did not slip back into difficulty. The Bureau Manager for the Gloucester and District CAB advised that Gloucester City Homes did work with tenants and financial inclusion work was carried out with all those in debt, however, it tended to be that people did not want to go back once their debt had been cleared and approximately 25% did not return. Whilst the CAB would like to do more, it relied heavily on volunteers and it would be impossible to be more proactive without significant recruitment. A Member questioned how the CAB was funded and whether it was under financial pressure and was informed that, as well as the grant from Tewkesbury Borough Council, it had a number of contracts with various bodies such as Gloucester City Homes and Energy Best Deal. In addition, donations were received from organisations such as Zurich Insurance and Somerfield and work was also carried out with children's' centres. As a charity, the CAB had to be legally solvent; it was fortunate to hold contracts with Tewkesbury Borough Council and Gloucester City Homes and it would be anxious to extend those contracts once they came to an end. The CAB aimed to keep around six months of trading expenses in reserve; there was currently around four to five months in reserve but this was still in excess of the three months recommended by the Charities Commission.
- 11.4 A Member questioned how the changes being brought about by the introduction of Universal Credit, whereby people in receipt of benefits would be expected to pay their own rent as opposed to the payment being made directly by the Council, would be managed. In response, Members were informed that, when Universal Credit was eventually rolled-out, the Government would be providing funding to the CAB to enable it to offer personal budgeting advice. As there had only been a partial roll-out so far, face to face support packages had been offered on a one-to-one basis, however, only one person had taken this up so far and a second person had failed to turn up for their appointment. People found it hard to admit that they needed support and there was a culture of not wanting to face problems until it was too late. The Bureau Manager for the Gloucester and District CAB explained that one of the main issues was that people currently received benefit payments on a weekly or fortnightly basis whereas Universal Credit would mean that they would be paid monthly so budgeting would be vital. He indicated that 80-90% of people seen by the CAB were in debt through no fault of their own, for instance, as a result of marriage collapse, job losses etc. but all were faced with the same stigma. A Member queried whether it would be beneficial for other organisations to make referrals to the CAB when people failed to pay their rent and he was informed that this already happened through Severn Vale Housing Society and GreenSquare Housing.
- 11.5 The Chair thanked the Bureau Manager for the Gloucester and District CAB for his informative presentation and it was

RESOLVED That the Citizens' Advice Bureau Presentation be **NOTED**.

OS.12 GLOUCESTERSHIRE HEALTH AND CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE UPDATE

- 12.1 Members received an update from Councillor Mrs J E Day, the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on matters discussed at the last meeting held on 17 May 2016.
- 12.2 Councillor Day advised that workforce challenges cut across all services and organisations and were impacting on health and social care providers' ability to meet their targets. It was therefore important for the Committee to gain a better understanding of this matter and what plans were in place to mitigate the issue. The Committee would revisit this area to see what progress had been made,

particularly with regard to the development of the nursing associate and apprenticeship courses at the University of Gloucestershire.

- 12.3 In terms of the 12 month review of the Out of Hours service, Members had been advised that most of the challenges that had been identified at the six month review remained and the service continued to struggle to meet both national and local targets. Workforce issues again impacted on the delivery of the service and had necessitated the closure of the Primary Care Centres, particularly those in rural areas. There had been a significant increase in the number of walk-ins to the service which had to be managed alongside those that had come via the NHS111 route; this was a particular issue in Gloucester. It was noted that many of those cases were not urgent and the Committee would continue to closely monitor the service.
- 12.4 The Committee had also been made aware that there were issues relating to the availability of the Minor Illness and Injuries Unit overnight at Stroud Community Hospital and there had been occasions when it had had to close. The Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust and the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group had advised that proposals were being developed to address this and would be presented to the Committee at its meeting in July 2016.
- 12.5 The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee indicated that he also sat on the Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and he echoed the concerns which had been raised about recruitment and retention to the NHS. Given the potential growth within the County he had suggested that the NHS Trust and care providers contact developers in order to come up with a strategy for key workers.
- 12.6 A Member indicated that she had recently visited the Ambulatory Emergency Care department of Gloucestershire Royal Hospital and she had been pleasantly surprised with the efficiency in which she had been dealt with having been assessed and diagnosed on the same day without the need for an overnight stay. This was a fantastic initiative in her opinion as she felt it would take a lot of pressure off the wards.
- 12.7 The Chair thanked the Council's representative for her presentation and indicated that the update would be circulated to Members via email following the meeting. It was

RESOLVED That the feedback from the last meeting of the Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee be **NOTED**.

OS.13 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT 2015/16 - QUARTER 4

- 13.1 The report of the Corporate Services Group Manager, circulated at Pages No. 28-76, attached performance management information for quarter 4 of 2015/16. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to review and scrutinise the performance information and, where appropriate, identify any issues to refer to the Executive Committee for clarification or further action to be taken.
- 13.2 The performance management report comprised the Council Plan Performance Tracker, the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) set, the Revenue Budget Summary Statement, the Capital Monitoring Statement and the Reserves Position Summary. Members were informed that this was the last monitoring report on the Council Plan 2012-16 and, going forward, the Committee would continue to monitor the

accommodation through new ways of working and to increase rental income – A Member questioned whether there was any indication as to when a decision may be made about how the top floor would be used.

expansion was not going ahead and therefore the top floor would no longer be needed for that purpose. It was intended to improve and expand the Public Services Centre and Officers had been working with Gloucestershire County Council on proposed use of the building but unfortunately the figures were not currently adding up for either side. A meeting had been arranged for early July to establish whether the plans could progress or to rule out this option in which case Officers could start to look at other alternatives such as renting to the private sector. It was noted that there were indications of a growing interest in renting office accommodation in Tewkesbury.

P38 – Objective 2 – Action d) Develop a new workforce strategy – A Member noted that this had been delayed due to staff sickness absence and he questioned when it would be delivered.

Members were advised that there was a new implementation date of September 2016. The Corporate Services Group Manager undertook to include revised dates in the Performance Tracker in future where applicable.

Priority: Provide Customer-Focused Community Support

P52 – Objective 3 – Action c) Develop a place programme of area, working across the Councils services – A Member raised concern that he had not received enough information about the place programme for his area.

Members were advised that it was intended to roll-out the place programme approach following a successful pilot in the east area of the borough and meeting dates had now been fixed for the north-west and south areas. The Economic and Community Development Manager reminded Members that the approach was about projects and solutions to make the areas better places to live and work and was based on a two-way relationship between Officers and Members. A workshop was being arranged for 20 September 2016 to provide an update on the success of the pilot and to give Members an opportunity to ask questions about how it had worked. A Member who had participated in the trial expressed his support for the approach and hoped that it would be just as beneficial for other parts of the borough.

- 13.5 Attention was drawn to the KPIs, attached in full at Appendix 2 to the report, and Members were informed that the status of each indicator was set out at Paragraph 3.2 of the report. Key areas of interest included KPI 12, processing of major planning applications, which had shown a significant improvement in quarter 4 leading to 87.5% of all applications being processed within the agreed time, however, targets for KPIs 12-15, all of which related to planning processing times,

were unlikely to be achieved and processing times were down compared to 2014/15; KPI 15-16 which showed that processing times for benefit applications and change of circumstances were the best ever and continued to show improvement; KPI 24 which demonstrated that recycling rates continued to plateau; KPI 26 which indicated that enviro-crimes had increased significantly since 2014/15; and KPI 30 which confirmed that 229 affordable homes had been delivered in the year, the largest number since 2007/08.

13.6 During the debate which ensued, Members raised the following queries in relation to the KPIs:

P65 – KPI No's. 13-14 – Planning processing times – A Member noted that there had previously been issues with recruitment in the Planning department which had impacted on performance and he questioned whether the section was now at full capacity.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Planning department had never been at full complement in the time she had worked for the Council. New initiatives had been introduced as a result of the first phase of the review and some posts had been filled as a result, however, recruitment continued to be a problem at a time when demand for the service was particularly high and the income being generated was significant. It was noted that the Committee would be receiving a presentation on the Planning review at its next meeting where there would be an opportunity to explore the issues further.

A Member queried whether there was any relationship between the difficulties with recruitment and the relatively high level of sickness absence. The Chief Executive clarified the sickness absence statistics had been adversely affected by a number of unfortunate long term absences. He provided assurance that there was no particular problem with sickness absence in the Planning department.

13.7 The Financial Budget Summary for quarter 4 showed a saving of £916,947 against the budgeted profile, although it was noted that this was not the end of year position. Page No. 32, Paragraph 4.2, set out the summary of the Council's position split into the main types of expenditure and it was noted that the majority of savings had been made in relation to employees and services and supplies. Furthermore, almost £1.4M of additional income had been generated; this was predominantly through planning applications but also from trade waste, car parking, garden waste, and licensing which had all performed very strongly over the last quarter. Other reasons for the movement between the reported quarter 3 and quarter 4 positions were the release of New Homes Bonus not spent during the year; a one-off gain from the release of a provision held to cover the potential cost of service charges relating to a leased asset which had not been realised; and income relating to the Large Site Infrastructure Fund (LSIF) not being spent during the year. Whilst the underspend on budget was a positive result it was noted that £490,000 was ring-fenced and would be spent in the following financial year. Members were also advised that the retained income from the Business Rates Scheme was showing a deficit of £365,000 due to a series of revaluations on various properties within the borough and write-off of several debts which had proven to be irrecoverable. The budget projection had been for a surplus above the business rates income target which would have contributed £250,000 to the budget; the Gloucestershire business rates pool would now be providing that

amount to support the Council's position. A summary for each Group Manager showing the current variance against their budget was set out at Appendix 3 to the report.

- 13.8 The capital budget position for quarter 4 was set out at Appendix 4 to the report and was currently showing an underspend against the profiled budget of £1,848,372 which was principally due to the capital asset fund of £1.9M that had not been spent during the year. The new leisure centre was now open which had involved significant expenditure, however, the final bill had come in under budget. Other expenditure included the solar panels which had been installed on the Council Offices building and refurbishment of the Roses Theatre. Based on the major underspend of the capital investment fund, at its meeting on 6 April 2016, the Executive Committee had agreed the purchase of a property for investment purposes and this was currently being programmed for quarter 2 of 2016/17. It was noted that £7.8M of capital funds had been spent on projects during 2015/16. A Member questioned whether the Council maximised potential interest on underspends and was advised that the money was tied into investments via the treasury management function with most in cash deposits in money market funds or institutions such as banks and building societies. The current rate of return was approximately 0.8%, which was considered to be a good return, and the property purchase would make even better use of resources.
- 13.9 Appendix 5 to the report contained a summary of the current usage of available revenue reserves and it was noted that £2.6M had been spent on reserves during quarter 4 of 2015/16, £1.6M of which was used to fund an adjustment relating to business rates. This left a balance of £7.9M which would be added to the financial surplus from the year to form the new reserves for 2016/17 which would be taken to the Executive Committee for approval in July 2016.
- 13.10 Attention was drawn to Page No. 34, Paragraph 4.10, of the report which set out a change to the way in which financial information was reported. The Finance and Asset Management Group Manager explained that the performance management report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis and was then taken to the Executive Committee at its next meeting some three weeks later, as such it was felt that the Executive Committee was not receiving enough timely financial information in line with its responsibilities as set out in the Constitution. In order to rectify this, in future the finance report would be extracted from the performance management report and sent directly to the Executive Committee at the end of each quarter to enable it to properly discharge its duty and make informed decisions based on the current financial position of the Council.
- 13.11 It was
RESOLVED That the performance management information for quarter 4 be
NOTED.

OS.14 REVIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2014-16

- 14.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Corporate Services Group Manager, circulated at Pages No. 77-98, which reviewed the progress made against the actions included in the Communications Strategy 2014-16. Members were asked to consider the report.

- 14.2 The Corporate Services Group Manager advised that, following the restructure of the Chief Executive's Unit in 2015/16, a new operational management post had been created for a Policy and Communications Manager which had been taken up by Clare Evans who was promoted from her previous role as Communications Officer. A new Communications Officer, Lisa Davies, had subsequently been appointed and both had worked closely with the media over the past year to ensure the reputation of the Council was protected. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had assisted with the development of the Communications Strategy, which had been approved by the Executive Committee on 30 April 2014, and it had been agreed that an annual review would take place to ensure that there was effective monitoring of the strategy's actions. The review of actions was attached at Appendix 2 to the report. Some of the key areas of focus during the year had been communications for the new leisure centre; media training for Members; promoting the launch of the new intranet; and implementing the Customer Care Standards. Unfortunately not all of the actions had been completed and some would continue into year three. For example, the Member review of internal and corporate communications would now be completed by September 2016 and the production of a new residents' survey, which had been due to be carried out in 2015, would now be completed by the end of the calendar year.
- 14.3 A Member expressed the view that the Communications Team was doing a great job and she questioned what work was planned to improve the promotion of the work being done by the Council, for instance, were there any plans to link up with the communication departments of other companies in the area. The Corporate Services Group Manager advised that the Council did send stories to national publications but more needed to be done in terms of raising the Council's profile. This was something which Members would be able to assist with at the workshop which was planned to review the internal and corporate communications. A Member raised concern that he often received news second-hand from residents rather than directly from Officers. In response, the Chief Executive indicated that this was something which had been raised before and would be addressed; however, it was not a specific issue for the Communications Team.
- 14.4 It was
- RESOLVED** That the progress made against the actions included within the Communications Strategy 2014-16 be **NOTED**.

OS.15 CORPORATE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

- 15.1 The report of the Corporate Services Group Manager, circulated at Pages No. 99-109, provided a list of corporate policies and strategies. Members were asked to consider the list and identify those for inclusion within the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2016/17.
- 15.2 The Corporate Services Group Manager explained that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had previously requested a list of Council policies and strategies to help inform its Work Programme and to provide support to the Executive Committee. The list was updated on an annual basis and the policies and strategies due for review in 2016/17 were highlighted in bold at Appendix 1 to the report. He indicated that there were potentially three policies/strategies which he felt could be focused upon for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme: Risk Management Strategy; Absence Management Policy; and Housing and Homelessness Strategy. He suggested that the first two could be dealt with through workshops with a Working Group being formed to review the Housing and Homelessness Strategy.
- 15.3 A Member sought clarification as to the progress being made by the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy Review Working Group which had been established by the Committee during 2015 and he questioned whether an update

should have been provided to the Committee. The Community and Economic Development Manager advised that the Working Group had held its fourth meeting the previous day. The review had gone on for longer than anticipated as the Chair had agreed that further information was needed given the importance of the role of economic development within the Council Plan. This had provided an opportunity for consultation with external organisations and Bruton Knowles was also carrying out an employment land assessment and business survey which would be used to inform the new strategy. He indicated that he would be happy to circulate a Member Update outlining the progress made to date.

15.4 A Member queried what the review of the Mobile Homes and Caravan Site Licensing Policy would cover and the Chief Executive clarified that this was not connected to the Joint Core Strategy. There was no particular issue with the policy but it was due for review and Officers would report back if there were any concerns. A Member questioned whether the review of the 'Use of ICT Resources by Elected Members' would include Members' ICT equipment. In response the Democratic Services Group Manager advised that this was not covered by that particular review, or by the ICT Strategy which was also due for review, but there was a need to document the equipment and services being used by Members in order to establish a consistent approach to the supply and funding of such equipment and services for the future.

15.5 Members agreed that the three policies/strategies identified by the Corporate Services Group Manager would be the most appropriate for review and accordingly it was

RESOLVED That the following policies and strategies be included for review in the Committee's 2016/17 Work Programme:

- Risk Management Strategy
- Absence Management Policy
- Housing and Homelessness Strategy

OS.16 HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY MONITORING REPORT

16.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Development Services Group Manager, circulated at Pages No. 110-132, which set out the progress which had been made in relation to the implementation of the actions in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-16. Members were asked to consider the progress made and to agree the framework, outlined at Appendix 2 to the report, as the future priorities for health and wellbeing.

16.2 The Health and Wellbeing Strategy was adopted by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2013, following a review of the Leisure and Culture Strategy which was carried out by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group, and approved by the Executive Committee in September 2013. The strategy focused on three key themes: to support, encourage and enable healthy, active lifestyles; to facilitate opportunities for children and young people; and to provide an infrastructure which made it easier to be healthy. The strategy action plan was set out at Appendix 1 to the report with progress against each action set out in

italics. Three key achievements were highlighted in more detail at Pages No. 111-113 Paragraphs 3-5 of the report, namely, the new leisure centre, Tewkesbury Rugby Club and social prescribing.

- 16.3 In terms of the way forward now that the strategy had come to the end of its life, Members were advised that the Council did not have a specific health and wellbeing service, and there was no statutory obligation to have a strategy in place, although it was recognised that health and wellbeing was something which ran through a number of Council services. Furthermore, the Council currently had a number of policies which strongly influenced the health and wellbeing of residents and it was intended to use the existing priorities which had been identified to create a framework for health and wellbeing. The diagram at Appendix 2 to the report set out the proposed framework which Members were asked to approve. It was noted that progress would be reported via service plans and the performance tracker.
- 16.4 The Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing reiterated that, whilst there was no specific health and wellbeing service, the Council worked closely with a number of partners to improve the health and wellbeing of residents. Officers did become aware of trends in medical practice and other areas which were incorporated into the work which it did, for instance, social prescribing which, if successful, could help to reduce pressure on the health service. Health and wellbeing was something which was important to individuals across the country and everyone had a joint responsibility for helping people to live healthier and happier lives. The Support Member for Health and Wellbeing echoed these sentiments and hoped that the good work which had been done by Officers could continue.
- 16.5 A Member raised concern that there did not appear to be any specific outcomes arising from the strategy and he asked whether any actions still needed to be addressed. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the strategy was more about enabling things to happen and the outcomes from health and wellbeing tended to be difficult to track e.g. heart disease, strokes etc. The Economic and Community Development Manager advised that the Joint Strategic Needs Team at Gloucestershire County Council collated an annual Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which was a high level overview of need in Gloucestershire, this was informed by statistics collected by the Multi-Agency Information Database for Neighbourhoods (MAIDeN) which collected social, economic and service data about the communities within Gloucestershire, including health. Whilst the statistics may not be a direct result of the work being done by the Borough Council, it would be one of the contributing factors and MAIDeN could be invited to give a presentation to Members if they so wished. The Chair expressed the view that such indicators were monitored elsewhere so he did not feel that would be necessary at this point.
- 16.6 Having considered the information provided, it was
- RESOLVED**
1. That the progress which had been made in relation to the implementation of the actions in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-16 be **NOTED**.
 2. That the framework outlined in Appendix 2 to the report be **AGREED** as the future priorities for health and wellbeing and that this be monitored through service plans and the

performance tracker.

OS.17 HOUSING, RENEWAL AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY REVIEW MONITORING REPORT

- 17.1 The report of the Interim Environmental and Housing Services Group Manager, circulated at Pages No. 133-160, set out the achievements to date in respect of the outcomes identified in the Housing, Renewal and Homelessness Strategy 2012-16 Action Plan. Members were asked to consider the report.
- 17.2 The Housing Services Manager explained that the Housing, Renewal and Homelessness Strategy reached the end of its life that year and a new strategy would need to be drafted for 2017-21. The homelessness element of the strategy would need to be progressed initially with a view to adoption by January 2017. The previous strategy had been developed by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group which had worked well and it was suggested that this approach be used for the new strategy.
- 17.3 In terms of performance to date, 229 new build affordable homes had been completed during 2015/16, which exceeded the target of 150 new homes, and 35-40% affordable housing had been secured on qualifying sites over the last three years. There was a mix a property types and tenures across all of the sites which supported the housing need of a range of client groups with different incomes. A breakdown of the tenures was set out at Page No. 135, Paragraph 2.1.2, of the report. The Action Plan set out that homes should be built to lifetime standards and it was noted that this was no longer applicable; however, all homes had met the minimum requirement of Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, which was the Building Regulations standard for all homes, and 31% of the 229 completed affordable homes had been delivered to Level 4. The young persons' supported accommodation within Tewkesbury Borough had been improved by G3/Rooftop this year and the outdated provision at Tolsey House had been replaced with the redevelopment of 41 High Street in Tewkesbury Town to provide high quality self-contained accommodation for young, vulnerable adults.
- 17.4 Homelessness was the area which had changed the most over the last year and would change even further going forward. A greater emphasis on homelessness prevention had been successfully implemented within the Borough in line with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) criteria for 'Gold Standard' to enable those threatened with homelessness to stay in their existing home, where reasonable, or to move to a property of their choice in the private rented sector without the need for costly emergency accommodation if it was not possible to remain in their current home. In order to be eligible for the Gold Standard, the Council was required to have a 'live' Homelessness Strategy which would need to be in place before the DCLG peer review in February 2017. In terms of homelessness prevention, Housing Services worked very closely with Revenues and Benefits to identify people who would be likely to come into difficulty and Officers had identified several cohorts of households likely to be affected by the forthcoming changes associated with the Welfare Reform Bill who would be contacted to offer support. The six District Councils in Gloucestershire and the Police and Crime Commissioner pilot sanctuary scheme, which offered target hardening and sanctuary room measures to residents at risk of domestic violence but wanting to remain in their homes, had been extended to March 2017 and 13 households from Tewkesbury Borough had accessed assistance through the scheme during 2015/16. A joint bid for funding to provide safe, self-contained emergency accommodation for those fleeing domestic abuse made by the six Gloucestershire authorities had successfully secured £50,000 and 12 properties would be made available across the County for this purpose in partnership with Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Services and local housing associations. The properties would be split across each District and Severn Vale Housing

Society was currently identifying two properties in Tewkesbury Borough which would be available by July. The Council had also provided six households with a deposit to move to private rented accommodation within the Borough; a further 20 households had used the advice to move to private rented accommodation without the need for the Council to provide a deposit. In addition, the Council's Anti-social Behaviour Youth Diversion Worker had continued to engage with young and vulnerable members of the community, aged 11-19, working with 37 young people and their families over the course of the year; 17 of those cases had been successfully resolved with the remaining 20 ongoing.

17.5 Members were advised that sourcing emergency accommodation for homeless households within the Borough continued to be problematic; however, discussions were ongoing with a new housing provider to source and lease emergency accommodation within the area. St Mungo's Broadway had been awarded the contract to provide a Countywide Assertive Outreach Service for rough sleepers in May 2015 but DCLG funding was due to end in August and Officers were keen for the service to continue. Whilst the rough sleepers estimate for Tewkesbury Borough was zero in 2015, rough sleeping did continue to occur with 46 referrals made to St Mungo's, via the Council, from members of the public or Parish Councils during the year. The Deputy Chief Executive had been exploring alternative funding options and it was hoped that this could move forward with joint funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner, Gloucestershire County Council and the other District Councils.

17.6 In terms of Choice Based Lettings, 409 social housing properties had been let in the Borough during the financial year; 79% of lettings were to households in emergency need. The current software contract was due to expire in September and the new contract had been awarded to Locata which it was felt would offer a better service to applicants, as well as being cheaper and easier for staff to use. The 'Safe at Home' Home Improvement Agency continued to provide advice, information and help to the most vulnerable households in the Borough and provided assistance in finding builders and contractors for those who had qualified for a Disabled Facilities Grant. A popular aspect of 'Safe at Home' was the handyman service which could be used to install minor adaptations and also provided a private service to a defined client group who may need help with small jobs around the home. In the previous year, 254 private small repair jobs had been completed through this service. The 'Central Heating Fund Scheme', run by Warm and Well, was aimed predominantly at properties that were heated by 'on peak' electricity systems, or solid fuel, and replaced them with modern, energy-efficient condensing boilers which could save a household £250 a year on average. It was estimated that up to 1,000 homes could be installed with new heating systems across Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire through Government funding. Householders may also be entitled to grants for cavity wall and loft insulation through the Warm and Well scheme and the advice line had dealt with 74 enquiries from households in the Borough during the previous year.

17.7 Having considered the information provided, it was

RESOLVED

1. That the progress in respect of the outcomes identified in the Housing, Renewal and Homelessness Strategy 2012-16 Action Plan be **NOTED**.
2. That an Overview and Scrutiny Committee Workshop be arranged in respect of the Gold Standard and Homelessness element of the strategy.
3. That a report be brought to a future meeting of the Overview

and Scrutiny Committee setting out the Terms of Reference for the review of the overall Housing Strategy and to establish an Overview and Scrutiny Working Group to conduct the review.

The meeting closed at 7:05 pm