

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the
Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Tuesday, 18 October 2016
commencing at 4:30 pm**

Present:

Chair	Councillor P W Awford
Vice Chair	Councillor Mrs G F Blackwell

and Councillors:

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

also present:

Councillors R E Garnham and Mrs E J MacTiernan

OS.39 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 39.1 The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was taken as read.
- 39.2 The Chair welcomed Rachel Capon, Contracts Manager for the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Team, and Julie Davies, Environment and Waste Policy Officer for the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Team, to the meeting and indicated that they would be presenting the report at Agenda Item 9 – Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee 2016/17 Action Plan Update and 2017/18 Business and Action Plan Outline. He also welcomed Nick Firkins from Ubico who was present to answer questions in relation to Agenda Item 10 – Grounds Maintenance Update. Councillor R E Garnham, the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel, would be providing an update on the last two meetings of the Panel at Agenda Item 7 and Councillor Mrs E J MacTiernan was present as an observer.

OS.40 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

- 40.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P D Surman. There were no substitutions for the meeting.

OS.41 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 41.1 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.
- 41.2 There were no declarations made on this occasion.

OS.42 MINUTES

- 42.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2016, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

OS.43 CONSIDERATION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

- 43.1 Attention was drawn to the Executive Committee Forward Plan, circulated at Pages No. 14-19. 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.
- 43.2 A Member noted that the report on the recruitment of an Environmental Warden had been deferred from the October meeting and he questioned when this would actually happen. The Environmental Health Manager confirmed that the report would be taken to the Executive Committee meeting on 23 November 2016 with a view to recruiting in the current financial year. In response to a query as to the level of interest from Parish Councils, Members were advised that the consultation process was still underway but this information would be included within the report. Another Member sought clarification as to what the Fee Charging Strategy, which was also due to be considered at the Executive Committee meeting on 23 November 2016, would cover. She was advised that this related to the Council taking a more commercial approach to setting and reviewing fees and was about bringing formalisation to that process.
- 43.3 It was
RESOLVED That the Executive Committee Forward Plan be **NOTED**.

OS.44 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

- 44.1 Attention was drawn to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2016/17, circulated at Pages No. 20-25, which Members were asked to consider.
- 44.2 The Head of Corporate Services indicated that a review of the Council's Car Parking Strategy had been undertaken by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group in 2014 and Officers would be bringing a report to the next meeting of the Committee to update Members on how the strategy had been rolled out. In addition, it was noted that the presentation from Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service had now been confirmed for the meeting on 10 January 2017. The Chair reminded Members that this item had been requested by the Committee and he urged them to think about the type of questions which they wanted to ask in order to get the most out of the presentation. The Chief Executive advised that the Fire Service had undergone significant change over the last 12-18 months and the new Chief Executive had been working on changing the whole strategy of the Fire Service from one which emphasised responding to fires and emergencies towards a more preventative approach. As such, it was vital for the Fire Service to work with communities and voluntary organisations, as well as Tewkesbury Borough Council and the other District Councils within Gloucestershire, to identify people who needed support and to put preventative measures in place. On that basis, he suggested that it may be useful to ask questions about the success of the new strategy, how it was being delivered and whether any support could be offered by the Council or other organisations.
- 44.3 A Member noted that the Committee was due to receive an update on enviro-crimes at its meeting in February 2017, however, he was aware that abandoned vehicles had become a particular problem recently and he questioned how this was being addressed. The Environmental Health Manager explained that, if there was an immediate risk of danger, Officers had the power to remove the vehicle to a compound straight away, otherwise action would be taken to identify the owner and ask them to remove it. If nobody came forward, the vehicle would be scrapped.

There had recently been an increase in the number of abandoned vehicles and, although there was no clear reason for this, it had been suggested that it could be

linked to a reduction in scrap metal prices.

44.4 It was

RESOLVED That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme be **NOTED**.

OS.45 GLOUCESTERSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL UPDATE

45.1 Members received an update from Councillor Rob Garnham, the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel, on matters discussed at the last two meetings of the Panel held on 9 and 20 September 2016.

45.2 Councillor Garnham firstly wished to respond to a question about the replacement of the military police officer which had been raised at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in July. He advised that the response had been received from Inspector Lee Solly who was covering the Tewkesbury area following Inspector Dave Goga's move to the position of Staff Officer to the Chief Constable. Members were informed that PC David Jones managed the area under the command of PS Ian Morrison and they had secured an agreement with the base commander to access the Ministry of Defence police building. It was intended to provide a more regular presence to the personnel, families and local residents of the Innsworth area, however, PC Jones had been temporarily seconded to the response team to provide cover for injured Officers. It was anticipated that PC Jones would return to the neighbourhood team in January; it was still intended to have a Police Community Support Officer presence which was being worked towards.

45.3 Councillor Garnham went on to advise that the meeting on 6 September had been an additional meeting to confirm the Police and Crime Commissioner's appointment of a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner and a Chief Finance Officer; the latter had been a straightforward confirmation with Dave Skelton, who had many years' experience as a Finance Officer, being appointed to the role but there had been more discussion relating to the appointment of the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner. It had been explained that, over the previous four years, the Police and Crime Commissioner had thought that a deputy might be required but had not appointed one. Since his re-election earlier in the year, he had considered the pros and cons of such an appointment and approached Mr Chris Brierley to see if he would be interested in the post. Mr Brierley had subsequently been offered the post and had attended the meeting to address the Panel. The outcome of the meeting was that Mr Brierley had been confirmed by the Panel but reservations had been highlighted regarding the nature in which Police and Crime Commissioners in general were allowed to make such appointments without recourse to job adverts, selection processes etc. Notwithstanding this, it was clear that the Police and Crime Commissioner had followed the procedure as set down by the Police and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and it was noted that the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner was only in post whilst the Police and Crime Commissioner was in office so there was no security of tenure or employment rights in that regard.

45.4 In respect of the meeting on 20 September, Members were informed that the Police and Crime Commissioner had presented his annual report and an update on the draft Police and Crime Plan which was due to be adopted later in the year. It was the fourth annual report and covered aspects of the work the Commissioner had undertaken in the past year including the changing landscape; estates; work on bringing offenders and victims together; cybercrime; hate crime; and the Police and Crime Plan priorities. The Police and Crime Commissioner also spoke of the 1.2% Council Tax policing precept increase and advised that 40 more officers and 200 special constables were to be recruited over the next four years. The number of police officers for March 2017 was expected to be around 1,060. The Panel had

been advised that a review of community safety in Gloucestershire, and the work of the six Community Safety Partnerships for each District, had been carried out by John Bensted who was formerly the Chief Officer at the Gloucestershire Probation Board. It was noted that each of the six Community Safety Partnerships worked differently, and not always as well as they should, and there was now an opportunity to bring their work together along with that of the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office and the Safeguarding Boards. Leadership Gloucestershire would now look at three options for new ways of working: minor changes to the existing system; having one overarching Community Safety Partnership; or the rationalisation of partnerships at Countywide and District level. The latter was the preferred option and would work both under the current democratic arrangements and under a combined authority if further devolution were to take place. The aim would be for a Countywide Community Safety Partnership but with locally placed multi-agency forums covering community safety, health and wellbeing and social inclusion. Consultation on the proposals had ended on 3 October 2016 and Leadership Gloucestershire would make its decision in due course.

- 45.5 Members were informed that it was a statutory duty of the Police and Crime Panel to receive the Police and Crime Commissioner's Crime Plan and make comment or recommendation. A further draft of the 2017-21 Plan was presented and the Commissioner explained that his priorities remained unchanged from his first term of office: accessibility and accountability; older but not overlooked; young people becoming good adults; safer days and nights; safe and social driving; and safer cyber. The draft plan would be considered again at the November Police and Crime Panel meeting.
- 45.6 Councillor Garnham advised that the Chief Executive's report continued to be much improved and included statistics which enabled comparisons with other similar force areas; for the year ending March 2016, the crime rate in Tewkesbury was lower than the average crime rate across similar force areas. There were significant areas where procurement costs in the Constabulary were lower than other areas e.g. in Gloucestershire, computer monitors cost an average of £91.48 per monitor compared to the England and Wales average of £165.21. It was noted that a Police and Crime Panel Task Group had been established to look at further "blue light collaboration" between the Fire Service and the Police; this was particularly relevant given the Home Office agenda for greater working between the services. Councillor Garnham indicated that he would report back on the work of the group in early 2017. It was noted that the next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel was due to be held on 7 November 2016.
- 45.7 A Member questioned how the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner role would be paid for and was advised that it would be taken from the Police and Crime Commissioner's budget. In response to a query regarding the special constables, Councillor Garnham explained that they differed from the Police Community Support Officers as they had powers of arrest.
- 45.8 The Chair thanked the Council's representative for his 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 two meetings of the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel be **NOTED**.

OS.46 GLOUCESTERSHIRE HEALTH AND CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE UPDATE

- 46.1 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 13 September 2016.

- 46.2 Members were advised that the Committee had been pleased to welcome the Chief Executive, and Director of Operations, of the South Western Ambulance Service Foundation Trust (SWASFT) to the meeting. The Committee monitored SWASFT performance on an annual basis and, being mindful of its decision to withdraw from the Out of Hours service contract in Gloucestershire and NHS 111 in the south of the region, it also wanted to understand the direction of travel for the service. The discussion of response times had focused primarily on the Ambulance Response Programme and SWASFT had informed Members that it felt this was moving in the right direction. Paramedics and vehicles were being used more effectively as the recording of calls was enabling better identification of RED1 calls. The Committee had been pleased to note that SWASFT was monitoring, on a daily basis, whether the Ambulance Response Programme was having a negative impact on calls and no serious incidents had been reported to date. Councillor Day indicated that ambulance drivers often had difficulty identifying properties when they responded to calls and asked that people ensure that house numbers were prominently displayed and well lit.
- 46.3 With regard to the review of Minor Illness and Injury Units (MIUs) in Gloucestershire, the Chief Executive of Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust had informed the Committee of the outcome of the engagement exercise and the option that was being taken forward for decision by the Gloucestershire Care Services Board at its meeting on 20 September 2016. This related to the opening hours of the MIUs at Stroud and Cirencester changing to 8.00am-11.00pm. Concern had been raised from Stroud representatives on the Committee that this would mean the closure of the MIU overnight, however, the Board was clear that it was required to address the actions identified from the Care Quality Commission inspection and emphasised that this was not about saving money. The Committee agreed that it would be important to understand the outcome of the urgent care review as this would identify where urgent care centres would be located in the County and would give a broader understanding of where members of the public could access such care.
- 46.4 In terms of the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group performance report, it was noted that the Committee had been concerned for some time about the situation with regard to the accident and emergency four hour target and the recent intervention by NHS Improvement had reinforced those concerns. The Committee had therefore been pleased to welcome the new Chief Executive of the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to the meeting to discuss the matter. The Committee was informed that, although people were waiting, they were safe and the service was safe; the Trust had already improved performance from 77% of people being seen within four hours in February 2016 to 91.9% currently. There was a concern that demand pressures meant that there were medical patients on surgical wards, however, the Chief Executive provided assurance that these patients were safe and that there was good oversight of their care.
- 46.5 The Chair indicated that the update would be circulated to Members via email following the meeting and it was

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

OS.47 GLOUCESTERSHIRE JOINT WASTE COMMITTEE 2016/17 ACTION PLAN UPDATE AND 2017-20 BUSINESS AND ACTION PLAN OUTLINE

- 47.1 The report of the Interim Head of Community Services, circulated at Pages No. 26-40, provided an update on the progress against the Gloucestershire Joint Waste

Committee Action Plan for 2016/17 and detailed the outline Business Plan for 2017-20. Members were asked to consider the report.

- 47.2 The Contracts Manager for the Joint Waste Team advised that Tewkesbury Borough Council was represented on the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee by Councillors Jim Mason and Mark Williams and the Interim Head of Community Services was a representative on the Senior Management Group. The Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee Action Plan 2016/17 was set out in the table at Appendix 1 to the report and it was noted that there were three priority areas: broadening the partnership – Gloucester City and Stroud District Councils were not currently part of the Joint Waste Committee; integration e.g. avoiding duplication of effort and resources; and diversion i.e. reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill through waste avoidance. It was recognised that the information in the table was not terribly clear and Members were advised that a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) traffic light rating system would be applied in future.
- 47.3 The Environment and Waste Policy Officer for the Joint Waste Team drew attention to Paragraph 3.1 of the report which set out the key achievements for Tewkesbury Borough to date. Members were informed that a developers guide had been produced setting out requirements for refuse recycling provision at new developments and this had been published on the Council's website. In addition, considerable progress had been made to address needle contamination which, although confined to a small number of properties, had been causing a significant problem. This had involved a lot of work across a number of organisations but she was pleased to report that there had only been one incident in quarter 2 compared with several per month previously. It was noted that a service level agreement between the Council and the European Recycling Company, a textile recycling contractor, had now been signed and more recycling banks were being rolled out across the County. There was currently a good market price for textiles and income would also be received from the Salvation Army where it had recycling banks on Tewkesbury Borough Council land; promotional work would be undertaken once these arrangements had been finalised. The Council's service review, which had been a significant project over the last 18 months, had been approved by the Council in February 2016 and a procurement exercise was underway in respect of the new vehicle fleet; a vehicle provider was ready to be appointed and tenders for the vehicles were due to be submitted the following day. The Environment and Waste Policy Officer for the Joint Waste Team explained that the Council currently sent its recycling to the Grundon Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in Bishop's Cleeve, however, that contract was due to expire in April. The new contract was currently out to tender and there had been a number of expressions of interest; it was anticipated that the new contractor would be appointed in January 2017. Members were advised that the increase in the number of homes in the Borough had put pressure on the current collection rounds and the new refuse and recycling fleet would require different route mapping as the types of vehicles would change. As such it was anticipated that there would be different collection days for approximately 50% of properties within the Borough from April 2017. New waste and recycling collection calendars would be issued to all properties at the beginning of November outlining their collection days, an article was also being included in the Borough News and residents would receive a follow-up letter in February/March 2017. It was worth noting that, due to the changes in the vehicle fleet, food waste would be collected separately from bins (green or blue) and so what may appear to be a missed bin or caddy could just be a delay between the different collections. A Member suggested that a sticker system might be helpful to inform people of changes to their collection days, however, the Environment and Waste Policy Officer for the Joint Waste Team explained that, when the new rounds were introduced in April, it was possible that the bin crew carrying out the stickering would not be the same crew who collected the bins which increased the margin for error. On that basis, it was considered that

it would be cheaper in the long run to post out the collection information initially and to look at other options in future.

- 47.4 The Contracts Manager for the Joint Waste Team went on to advise that another project which had been ongoing for the past year related to the Forest of Dean's collection service. The new service had added cardboard, plastic bottles, textiles and small electricals to the items collected from the kerbside and had changed the frequency of collections from fortnightly to weekly which had seen recycling increase by 50% in its second month. Members were informed that this would be publicised once the three month performance figures had been collated. The Household Recycling Centre contract with Kier had ended in July and Ubico had taken over the contract in August with the Joint Waste Team responsible for the management and sales of materials collected at the site. It was pleasing to note that the transition had been relatively seamless despite the short notice. Members were advised that Cotswold District Council had undergone an optimisation exercise which had resulted in changes to collection days for 70% of households. This had increased resilience and addressed the demands on the service arising from property growth. Cheltenham Borough Council was also going through a service options review and consideration was being given to a co-mingled service similar to Tewkesbury Borough Council's but with separate glass collection and an option for three weekly refuse collection. Whilst Stroud District Council was not part of the Joint Waste Team, it was linked with the Joint Waste Strategy, which all of the Gloucestershire Districts were signed up to, and was moving towards weekly food waste collections and fortnightly waste collections in a 140 litre wheeled bin; this was a comparatively small bin so it would be interesting to monitor the impact of the changes.
- 47.5 Attention was drawn to Paragraph 4.1 of the report which detailed the key communication activities being undertaken or supported by the Joint Waste Team during 2016/17. Members were informed that "The Unusual Suspects" was the theme of the national Recycle Week campaign, aimed at raising awareness of recycling including items from areas of the home which were often overlooked, e.g. aerosols and shampoo bottles in the bathroom. The "Right Waste Right Place" campaign was currently underway and aimed to reduce fly-tipping and trade waste abuse at Household Recycling Centres; one of the key messages was ensuring that people were aware who they were giving their waste to and that they had the appropriate licence to carry the waste. Traders were being provided with information about their duty of care and their options for recycling and disposal of waste. A Member questioned how successful the campaign had been and whether any prosecutions had been made as a result. Members were advised that enforcement was different for each authority within the Joint Waste Team; in Tewkesbury Borough, responsibility had remained with the Council's Environmental Health Manager whereas the Joint Waste Team had responsibility for enforcement within the Forest of Dean. It was noted that, although there had been quite a few prosecutions in the Forest of Dean as a result of a recent project, generally there were around 80 fly-tips per month which resulted in approximately four prosecutions. Unfortunately it was very difficult to collect the evidence which was required to carry out prosecutions. The Council's Environmental Health Manager advised that the "Right Waste Right Place" campaign had focused on ensuring that waste was only given to licensed carriers and there had been no prosecutions in relation to that specific issue. The Contracts Manager for the Joint Waste Team explained that an advertisement had been used in the Forest of Dean to raise awareness and a successful stop and search exercise had also been carried out; she would be happy to share the results and feedback with the Council's Environmental Health Manager. In response to a query regarding the number of applications for trade waste carrier licences, Members were advised that this was an Environment Agency function as opposed to a Tewkesbury Borough Council one. Whilst the Council was responsible for issuing licences to scrap

metal dealers, their numbers were very low in comparison to trade waste carriers and the Environmental Health Manager undertook to provide an update on the figures in respect of both licences following the meeting.

47.6 Members were informed that the outline Business Plan for 2017-20 had been presented to the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee at the Board meeting on 4 October 2016 and a copy was attached at Appendix 2 to the report. Going forward there would be a route mapping meeting in November and the draft Business Plan 2017-20 would then be considered by the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee at its meeting in December with sign-off in February 2017. It was noted that there were some items specifically related to Tewkesbury Borough and these were set out at Pages No. 38-39 of the outline plan. One action was to review and establish how cross-boundary developments would be served to see if there was a solution which fitted all three of the Joint Core Strategy authorities; another action was to undertake a review of the trade waste service to ensure it was operating on a viable commercial level; and a third action was to review the garden waste charging process to consider annual renewal and a licence/tag system. A Member noted that the outline Business Plan spanned a three year period and he felt that it would be beneficial for dates to be included so Members could see when actions were being delivered. The Contracts Manager for the Joint Waste Team advised that, whilst the Business Plan itself covered a period of three years, an action plan would be produced for each year and would be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration on an annual basis. She reiterated that the next action plan would incorporate a RAG system. Whilst he welcomed the level of detail included in the report, the Member felt that, once the RAG system was in place, it would be beneficial if Officers could focus on the actions which were really important to Tewkesbury Borough Council. The Chief Executive agreed that the background information was useful, and should be included within the report, but it did not need to be presented extensively at the meeting. Another Member noted that the 2016/17 Action Plan included several actions with no comments and he was advised that this was because work had not yet started, however, it was accepted that this should have been stated within the report. A Member drew attention to Action 5.1 – Actively seek out and continue to draw on good practice and trial schemes promoted by WRAP and other local authorities, and the projected outcome which was ‘to report to the Committee on such ideas, with external speakers as appropriate’ and she questioned whether those speakers were received on an ad hoc basis as opposed to being scheduled in. The Contracts Manager for the Joint Waste Team advised that the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee met four times a year and had welcomed speakers on various issues, as such, she undertook to ensure that the Action Plan was updated accordingly.

47.7 A Member indicated that he had noticed that many other areas seemed to provide bins with separate compartments for waste and recyclables within their town centres and he questioned if there was any intention of introducing something similar within the County. The Contracts Manager for the Joint Waste Team explained that a piece of work was currently being carried out for the Forest of Dean District Council and the main issue being identified was the cost. Currently all waste from litter bins was taken to landfill but if new bins were introduced the material from each compartment would go to different destinations and other areas had reported that there was a lot of contamination. Whilst it may be something which was easier to implement in larger towns, Tewkesbury Borough and the Forest of Dean District were not dissimilar so it was likely there would be a significant cost implication associated with its introduction in those areas and, based on the tonnages, it was not a high priority. The Member felt that it could be a missed opportunity to promote a culture change within the area; people were increasingly looking to recycle and not having the appropriate facilities available to allow them to do so was sending out the wrong message. The Contracts Manager

for the Joint Waste Team indicated that she would take this forward at the next route mapping meeting. The Environment and Waste Policy Officer for the Joint Waste Team advised that this was something which had been considered previously by the Borough Council; at the time another authority had indicated that it would be happy to pass on its street recycling bins as it was finding that it was not able to separate what went into the bins. If street recycling proved to be unviable, an alternative might be a campaign encouraging people to take their litter home to recycle.

47.8 A Member felt that there may be earning potential in offering a trade waste service and this was something which he suggested Tewkesbury Borough Council should look at in more detail. In response, clarification was provided that, although Ubico delivered the service, trade waste was not something which had been taken over by the Joint Waste Team and the charging mechanism sat with Tewkesbury Borough Council. Notwithstanding this, a review of trade waste was included in the Council Plan and the Joint Waste Team was able to provide support in terms of best practice etc. therefore it had also been included in the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee's outline Business Plan 2017-20 to ensure that appropriate resources were available. The Chief Executive explained that consideration was being given to maximising income for a variety of services, including commercial waste, and this was an action in both the Council Plan and the Transform Plan; whilst the Joint Waste Team could help with this, responsibility lay with the Council. Another Member questioned whether something could be included within the Borough News to draw attention to the cost of sending waste to landfill and she was advised that, whilst it would not be possible to include exact costs, an article could certainly be included. The Environment and Waste Policy Officer for the Joint Waste Team indicated that Cheltenham Borough Council had advertised the £1M savings from diverting waste from landfill on the side of their vehicles using the slogan 'Thanks a Million' and Members felt that this was a good promotional tool.

47.9 The Chair thanked the Joint Waste Team representatives for their report and, having considered the information provided, it was

- RESOLVED**
1. That the progress made to date in relation to the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee Action Plan 2016/17 be **NOTED**.
 2. That the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee Outline Business Plan 2017-20 be **NOTED**.

OS.48 GROUND MAINTENANCE UPDATE

48.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Interim Head of Community Services, circulated at Pages No. 41-45, which provided an update in respect of the performance of the grounds maintenance service. Members were asked to consider the report.

48.2 The Environmental Health Manager advised that, in future, it was intended for a performance report for grounds maintenance to be brought to the Committee at the same time as the annual report on waste and recycling so that Members could consider all of the services carried out by Ubico on behalf of the Council. Members were informed that Ubico currently maintained a total of 299 sites on behalf of the Council as well as eight private contracts which generated an income of

approximately £10,000 for the Council. All sites were maintained either once every two weeks or once every three weeks.

- 48.3 In terms of tree maintenance, the legacy tree database system had been found to be very inefficient and, in December 2015, the Council and Ubico had implemented a new system using handheld GPS devices which pinpointed the location of trees and helped to speed up identification and assessment. Between December 2015 and March 2016, 570 tree inspections had been carried out and six high risk trees had been identified, four of which had been removed completely and the other two had been pollarded. Members were reminded that the Executive Committee had previously approved capital expenditure to replace equipment for delivery of the grounds maintenance service and, following a procurement exercise, new equipment had been purchased in March 2016 at a cost of £56,289. The grounds maintenance budget for 2016/17, including overheads, was £426,705 and there had been a slight underspend of £9,160 during the first quarter. Paragraph 4.2 of the report detailed the outcomes of the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) review into grounds maintenance and how the service compared to other local authorities in terms of value for money. It was noted that an independent audit of Ubico was currently being carried out by Go Shared Services and was covering various aspects of the delivery of the service, particularly in relation to health and safety. The outcome of the review would be shared with Members once it was available.
- 48.4 The Environmental Health Manager explained that members of the public were encouraged to use the electronic reporting system 'Report It' which was on the Council's website. This system linked directly to Ubico and it had led to a significant reduction in telephone calls to Customer Services; any calls which the Customer Services team did receive were logged using the same system. During the first quarter of 2016/17, Ubico had dealt with 275 'Report It' issues on grounds maintenance; it was noted that these were not complaints but reported issues on general grass cutting and grounds maintenance, requests for information etc. Since February 2016, the Licensing and Systems Officer, Bhavdip Nakum, had been responsible for the grounds maintenance aspect of the contract between the Council and Ubico. Work was currently underway to establish clear and measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the service and it was intended that a report be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in March to feedback on the progress which had been made.
- 48.5 A Member indicated that he often heard remarks about grass cutting and there had seemed to be a particular issue with picking up the cuttings over the summer months. The representative from Ubico indicated that there was one piece of equipment which carried out box cutting but it was only used in the cemeteries, otherwise grass cuttings were not collected and there were no plans to introduce that. The Environmental Health Manager explained that there had been an issue at the start of the season when some of the mows had been quite messy and that had taken some time to resolve. A Member queried whether the machines had a mulching system and was advised that the majority did not, however, this would be addressed going forward as part of the replacement programme. A Member noted that sites were maintained on a two or three weekly basis and he sought clarification as to whether this was in line with aspirations for the service. The Ubico representative advised that two and three weekly maintenance was the target and was based on equipment. Vehicles were assigned depending on the type of area; tractors took two weeks to complete their cycles whereas the ride-on mower took three weeks. Going forward, performance in this area would be monitored through the KPIs. The Member went on to question how quickly sites were revisited if they were missed, for example, if there was bad weather. The Ubico representative confirmed that all sites were treated in the same way and, if one was missed, they would not carry on with the cycle until that site had been maintained unless there was an access or machinery problem affecting one

particular round. In terms of the quality of the cuts, he indicated that he would be happy to look at specific sites to see which round they were on and how often it was happening.

48.6 A Member went on to indicate that he was particularly concerned about the islands at roundabouts where visibility could be restricted if grass was allowed to grow too long. In response, the Ubico representative explained that grass cutting was carried out by several different contractors besides Ubico including Gloucestershire County Council, Parish Councils, private landlords etc. The Licensing and Systems Officer had a set of plans which identified the land within the remit of Tewkesbury Borough Council so Members were encouraged to contact him if they had concerns about particular sites. The Chief Executive recognised that grass cutting was a problem and it was very difficult to know who was responsible. This had been noted during Ward visits in Bishop's Cleeve where a number of Members had raised issues regarding co-ordination. As a result, a meeting had been organised for all of the bodies with responsibility for maintaining land in the area in order to understand who did what and attempt to improve the situation. The main issue seemed to be that each organisation used its own maps and, in order to address this, the Council's Community Development Officer had offered to transpose the information onto a single map which could be used by everyone. It was early days but he had been encouraged by the simple approach being taken to resolving what was a complex problem and, if it proved to be successful, it would be rolled out across the Borough. The Environmental Health Manager advised that he had been approached by Severn Vale Housing Society which was keen to rationalise its rounds and he hoped that there may be some flexibility amongst the various organisations to make small changes in order to improve the service. For example, as it stood there could potentially be a situation where two people from different organisations were mowing grass on opposite sides of the road and it may be easier for one organisation to do both areas in order to make the rounds more efficient and effective.

48.7 A Member indicated that, when Northway Parish Council cut the grass on its two football pitches, there was usually someone mowing the grass and someone using a strimmer at the same time and she questioned why this was not done by Tewkesbury Borough Council. In response, the representative from Ubico advised that this was due to a lack of resources; whilst it could be looked at in the future, it would be dependent on cost. Clarification was provided that no changes had been made to the service since it had been transferred to Ubico; there had been no increase in prices, the service was provided by the same staff and the same equipment was used. A Member questioned why strimming had previously been carried out but was not done anymore and the representative from Ubico advised that spraying and strimming were both undertaken as there were disadvantages to both; there was a cost resource associated with strimming but spraying left muddy circles around street furniture. He reiterated that there had been no changes to equipment or service quality; however, he indicated that he would investigate strimming further with his team on the ground. The Chief Executive explained that Tewkesbury Borough Council had a history of providing a good value service and, clearly if more resources were invested then it would be expected that the service would be further improved, however, the Council was facing a £2.5M deficit and

the grounds maintenance service must be considered against the budget demands. It may be possible to provide the service on a commercial basis, and reduce costs by increasing income, and this was something which could be worked through with Ubico.

48.8 In response to a query regarding contract monitoring, Members were informed that

the Licensing and Systems Officer met with Ubico on a weekly basis so that he was able to deal with any issues which may arise. He had started to look at how KPIs could best be presented, especially to Parish Councils which were keen to see how the service was performing in their areas. A Member noted that the number of issues being reported through the 'Report It' system seemed very low in comparison to the number of complaints made to Councillors and he questioned whether this was because the system was not being advertised well enough. The Environmental Health Manager indicated that there would be an opportunity to advertise the system via the new website; it was noted that the Environmental Health team had reduced the amount of information on its webpages by transferring it to the 'Report It' system and encouraging everyone to use that mechanism. The Environmental Health Manager clarified that he used the 'Report It' system for any issues which he was aware of as this was the quickest way to get action and it was the only mechanism used by Customer Services and other Environmental Health Officers. In response to a query, clarification was provided that the Report It system was intended for service issues and any complaints against the Council would be made through the formal complaints system. The Environmental Health Manager indicated that he would be happy to provide a breakdown of 'Report It' issues if Members so wished.

48.9 Having considered the information provided, it was

RESOLVED That the update in respect of the performance of the Grounds Maintenance Service be **NOTED** and a further report brought back to meeting on 21 March 2017 focusing on the implementation of Key Performance Indicators.

The meeting closed at 6:15 pm