

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Tuesday, 5 September 2017 commencing at 4:30 pm

Present:

Chair
Vice Chair

Councillor P W Awford
Councillor R E Allen

and Councillors:

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

also present:

Councillors Mrs S E Hillier-Richardson

OS.25 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 25.1 The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was advised to those present.
- 25.2 The Chair welcomed Gareth Edmundson, Managing Director of Ubico, and Rachel Capon and Julie Davies from the Joint Waste Team to the meeting and indicated that they were in attendance for Agenda Item 7 – Ubico Update Report. Councillor Mrs S E Hillier-Richardson was also in attendance for Agenda Item 9 – Tewkesbury Borough News Review Report as a Member of the Working Group that had undertaken the review.

OS.26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

- 26.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs J E Day and T A Spencer. There were no substitutions for the meeting.

OS.27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 27.1 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.
- 27.2 There were no declarations made on this occasion.

OS.28 MINUTES

28.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2017, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

28.2 It was noted that the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee was unable to attend the next meeting on 12 September 2017. No reserve had been nominated at the Annual Council meeting in May and, as such, there was currently nobody to represent the Council at that meeting. Councillor R E Allen indicated that he would like to be the reserve on that Committee. This was duly proposed and seconded and, upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED That Councillor R E Allen be appointed as the Council's reserve representative on the Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

OS.29 CONSIDERATION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

29.1 Attention was drawn to the Executive Committee Forward Plan, circulated at Pages No. 10-15. 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.

29.2 The Head of Community Services anticipated that he would be taking two additional items to the Executive Committee meeting on 11 October 2017; Waste Policy and Environmental Health Fixed Penalty Notice Policy.

29.3 It was

RESOLVED That the Executive Committee Forward Plan be **NOTED**.

OS.30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

30.1 Attention was drawn to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2017/18, circulated at Pages No. 16-21, which Members were asked to consider.

30.2 The Head of Corporate Services drew attention to the Public Health Annual Report 2016/17 which was a pending item in the Work Programme following the presentation of the report covering the period 2014/15-2015/16 at the last meeting of the Committee. Rather than bringing it to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it was proposed that the 2016/17 report be taken to Council on the basis that it would be of interest to the wider membership and that it was for information as opposed to scrutiny. It was subsequently

RESOLVED

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2017/18 be **NOTED**.
2. That the Public Health Annual Report 2016/17 be removed from the pending items and included on the Agenda for a future meeting of the Council.

OS.31 UBICO UPDATE REPORT

- 31.1 The report of the Head of Community Services, circulated at Pages No. 22-31, provided Members with an interim update on the Ubico contract for waste and recycling, street cleaning and grounds maintenance services. Members were asked to consider the 2016/17 outturn and the 2017/18 Quarter 1 performance update.
- 31.2 The Head of Community Services explained that the 2016/17 annual Ubico report provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in May 2017 had not included Quarter 4 figures due to the timings of the report. It had been agreed that, going forward, reports would be prepared for the July Committee meetings to enable full year performance figures to be included and to allow for comparison year on year. Members had requested that an interim report on the performance of Ubico be provided to the September meeting of the Committee, given that the next annual report was not due until July 2018. The high level figures were set out at Page No. 24 of the report and Members who had attended the seminar following the roll-out of the new waste collection service in April would be aware that there had been some issues. Table 2 at Paragraph 3.3.4 of the report showed 2,034 missed bins in Quarter 1 of 2017/18 which surpassed the figure for the previous year; it was noted that there had been 2,240 missed collections for the whole of 2016/17 so this was a significant reduction in performance. Whilst this was common after a service change, any issues were expected to be resolved, and performance to return to normal, within a two month period which had not been the case. At the end of Quarter 1, Officers had met with Ubico to agree an improvement plan which was outlined at Page No. 25, Paragraph 3.3.8 of the report and there had been a considerable improvement in recent weeks. Whilst 150 missed collections per week was a very small percentage of the 86,000 collections across the Borough, for the residents affected by repeated missed collections, this was an unacceptable level of service. Ubico had put considerable resource into the Tewkesbury Borough contract to ensure that the issue was addressed and he was pleased to report there had been 78 missed bins in the last week so it was a steady decline. With regard to grounds maintenance, the Head of Community Services recognised this as an area of concern as there seemed to be no consistency in the work being undertaken or the monitoring of the contract. He was in the process of advertising for a dedicated resource to work with the grounds maintenance supervisors at Ubico to come up with an action plan to address the situation. It was noted that there were currently no meaningful Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for grounds maintenance which made it difficult for the Council to hold the contractor to account. He hoped to see a considerable improvement in this area over the next six to 12 months, in time for the next growing season. Whilst these were the two areas of concern, it was not all bad news and Page No. 24 of the report showed that recycling had improved for Quarter 1 of 2017/18 with levels above average for the county.
- 31.3 The Environment and Waste Policy Officer explained that Ubico had been carrying

out frontline refuse and recycling collections for the Council for the past three years and there had been a significant operational change in April 2017. As the KPIs were currently being reviewed as part of the audit work on client monitoring, the Ubico Commissioner report, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, was in the old format and the collection tonnages had been updated since it had been produced with the most recent figures included at Page No. 24, Paragraph 3.2.3 of the report. Whilst she acknowledged the problems with missed bins collections, the report showed that people were recycling more and sending less to landfill; for Quarter 1 of 2017/18, the residual waste per household for Tewkesbury Borough was 93kg compared to a county average of 113kg and the percentage household waste reused, recycled and composted was 58.44% for Tewkesbury Borough with a county average of 57.92%.

- 31.4 The Contracts Manager (Collection and Street Scene West) from the Joint Waste Team drew attention to Page No. 24, Paragraph 3.3.4 of the report, which set out the type of missed bins and it was noted that the most common was food waste. Whilst there had been no change to the way that service was delivered from a residents' perspective, there was now a separate food waste vehicle for those collections with new crews, rounds and drivers who were not always fully familiar with the areas. As food waste was no longer collected at the same time as refuse, some bins were being reported as missed when the crew had not actually been to collect them. Residents had been reminded via social media to ensure their bins were out by 0700 hours for the different crew collections. A large number of garden waste collections had also been missed; this was a paid service which had led to frustration for residents and 50 people had been issued with refunds since April at a cost of £430. In terms of other factors leading to the missed collections, whilst some were as a result of the changes to rounds, in other cases people had not been included on the Ubico collection list; this was being resolved by Customer Services and Ubico and would be further eradicated when the sticker system was introduced next year. Members were informed that, although there were three garden waste vehicles, the rounds were dedicated to two, with the third being split when needed; round design was being addressed by Ubico. In response to garden crews not always finishing the rounds, she explained that there had been occasions when only two vehicles were being used due to driver shortages; however, Ubico was maintaining three garden waste crews to cope with elevated levels of garden waste and to ensure rounds were completed through the summer and into autumn. The Managing Director of Ubico recognised that there was a national driver shortage but any crew shortages would be due to sickness or a 'no-show' agency driver. This was more of a problem in August when people were on holiday and, as such, there was a greater reliance on agency drivers. Whilst operational decisions may need to be taken on the day to try to complete the rounds, Ubico always ensured rounds were crewed. The Contracts Manager confirmed that an improvement plan was in place and Ubico had provided extra supervision in areas where there had been difficulties. The Head of Community Services pointed out that the driver issue may present a budget pressure for the Council in due course. Some local authorities were offering an enhancement to drivers and, whilst Tewkesbury Borough Council offered competitive rates of pay, it was important that experienced drivers were retained. This would be kept under close review going forward.

- 31.5 With regard to bin deliveries it was noted that Ubico had run out of bins on more than one occasion, impacting on lead times and resources. In accordance with the

improvement plan, a person had been appointed to be responsible for maintaining stock levels and extra space had been identified at the depot for storage. Changes had also been made to the bulky waste service which had resulted in a reduction in waiting times from three months to between two and four weeks. This was not directly related to Ubico and was more about working with resources and managing demand. Moving on to street cleaning, the Joint Waste Team would be carrying out a review later in the month which would look at the type of request being received by the Council and forwarded to Ubico to see if they could be dealt with more efficiently. Not everything reported was the responsibility of the Council and therefore they were not all jobs for Ubico, for instance, some may be issues for highways or private landlords. It was hoped that the work would be completed by the end of Quarter 3. It was noted that the figures at Appendix 1 showed 151 reports in respect of street cleaning/litter in Quarter 1 of 2017/18, an increase from 141 in 2016/17, but a lot were duplicate reports, or required no action, so the information was not a true reflection. In terms of fly-tipping, there had been a reduction in the number of reports sent to Ubico for investigation which could be due to the proactive work being carried out by the enforcement team. Whilst Tewkesbury Borough Council was only responsible for removing fly-tips from public highways and Council land, other reports still needed to be processed and referred on; of the 234 reports in Quarter 1 of 2017/18 only 106 were the Council's responsibility which was the same as the previous year. Members were advised that there had been 21 formal complaints in Quarter 1 of 2017/18, which was quite low in all areas with the exception of failure to provide service e.g. repeat missed bins. There had been two reports of damage to property but these had been investigated using the new CCTV equipment on the vehicles and, whilst one had been upheld, the other had demonstrated that the crew had not been there at the time the damage had occurred.

- 31.6 At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in May, Members had requested more information on financial performance and attention was drawn to the report at Appendix 2 which gave an overview of the waste, recycling and streetscene budgets and the current position to date. This report was also taken to the Joint Waste Committee. The Quarter 3 of 2016/17 forecast was an overspend of £28,000, however, the year-end outturn was more positive with an actual outturn of £7,801 overspend due to staff costs in refuse and recycling. The Quarter 1 of 2017/18 outturn was an overall £8,000 overspend which was leading to a projection of £40,000 by year-end; however, Ubico had indicated that it was managing this and would reduce the overspend during the year as it had done previously.
- 31.7 In terms of upcoming work, the Environment and Waste Policy Officer indicated that improved communications had been identified as a key area in both the Member Seminar and the work done with Ubico to date. She was currently involved in a project with the Asset Manager to develop a bin procurement strategy to ensure there was a framework in place as opposed to making one-off purchases. Work was also underway on an online forms project in order to make them simpler and clearer and the back office systems were being amended to improve communication between the Council and Ubico operational staff, and between the Council and residents. The first stage of this project would go live in September. Ubico was also working with the Council to support the introduction of a garden waste licence system in April 2018 which would provide customers with stickers to place on their bins to identify who had paid for the service. The joint review of the commercial waste service was also in progress. She recognised that there had been some problems but everyone was working together to get them resolved and the reduction in the number of missed bin collections to below 100 per week demonstrated the improvements being made.
- 31.8 The Managing Director of Ubico reiterated that one of the actions in the improvement plan agreed with Ubico was to reduce the number of missed bin

collections to less than 100 per week by the end of August with a further 50% reduction by the end of October; with 78 missed bin collections in the previous week, these targets were being achieved and the next challenge would be to maintain this performance. In terms of the resources deployed by Ubico to address the issues, he indicated that he had gone out with a crew to undertake a day of supervision which had been beneficial in terms of identifying why bins might be missed. As part of this, he had sent individuals to areas where more than one bin collection had been missed since April to look at the property and talk to residents to establish why. He had insisted that the managers and supervisors knock on doors and apologise to residents where there had been an unacceptable amount of missed collections. He was pleased the action taken so far was having an effect but accepted there was more to be done and he provided assurance that he would keep pressure on the service to maintain the current level of performance and to make further improvements.

- 31.9 A Member accepted that the change to rounds had been significant and some level of disruption was to be expected; however, repeat missed bins were a concern and he questioned if this was still an issue five months on. The Contracts Manager explained that, whilst the number of missed bins had reduced, it was still occurring. The Customer Services team had been asked to email the depot directly when they were reported, as well as logging them on the system in order for the problem to be addressed straight away. The Managing Director of Ubico advised that there were a number of different scenarios; it could be that a bin was missed for one or two weeks, then collected as normal for another couple of weeks, before being missed again and this could be attributed to an agency driver who was not familiar with the round and particular properties. More stringent measures had been put in place with drivers being briefed when they returned from their rounds. Assisted collections could cause a particular problem as the crews had to go and collect the bins from a particular place and they needed to know where these properties were. There had been a bigger reduction in the number of missed assisted collections which was positive. The Member expressed the view that this situation needed to be monitored closely and he did not feel that it would be acceptable to wait until July 2018 for the next report. This was particularly true in the case of grounds maintenance and he felt that a report was needed when the review had been completed setting out how this frontline service would be monitored. The Head of Community Services recognised that grounds maintenance was a concern and he provided assurance that it was being addressed. The Officer responsible for monitoring the contract had been absent due to sickness for some months and was now leaving the authority so grounds maintenance was being managed between a number of Officers across the Community department. This was a considerable piece of work but he would be happy to bring a report back to the Committee before the growing season in the spring. Another Member questioned whether it was possible to bring in additional resources to clear the backlog. The Head of Community Services advised that he had met with the new supervisor that morning to discuss a contract for clearing the backlog and he hoped he would have the timescales for that within the next day or two. He explained that a key member of staff had recently retired from Ubico and unfortunately had taken with him a lot of knowledge about the grounds maintenance service which had not been recorded; this was a completely unacceptable situation and effectively meant that the service had to be rebuilt which was a fairly significant project and Ubico had brought in additional resources to do that. The Managing Director of Ubico recognised that this was not an excuse but the most important thing was building resilience going forward and putting mechanisms in place to maintain the service. He had tasked the Senior Operations Manager with tackling this and Ubico would be engaging with the Council in order to come up with a clear framework for both parties.

- 31.10 In terms of missed bin collections, a Member expressed the view that some

members of the public had not realised the food waste was now being collected separately and therefore they were reporting missed bins when in reality they had not actually been collected yet. The Environment and Waste Policy Officer explained that the online form project would mean that data could be captured at the point of someone reporting a missed bin so Customer Services would be able to ask more questions to establish whether it was a genuine missed collection before it was reported. The Managing Director of Ubico went on to indicate that a lot of missed collections were straightforward and to do with placement of bins e.g. a food waste caddy behind another bin or five or six bins being located in a particular area. Notwithstanding this, one or two missed bins had been reported in areas he had visited with the crews when he knew this was not the case and had taken photographs of the bins that had been presented so he recognised that some of the reports could be down to residents being unfamiliar with the new system. A Member recognised that these were valid reasons but he pointed out that there was more than one crew member and he questioned why they did not tell the driver when a bin had been missed. The Managing Director of Ubico accepted this point and confirmed that every effort was made to put agency drivers with experienced loaders.

- 31.11 A Member questioned whether the improvement in recycling rates was sustainable and was advised that the figures did tend to be higher during spring/summer due to increased garden waste and it was likely that there would be reduction from the 58.44% in Quarter 1 of 2017/18 by the end of the year, although it was hoped that 55% could be achieved. A Member queried whether certain areas tended to be better at recycling than others and was informed that there could be difficulties in places with bin stores and communal recycling areas, however, there were more likely to be problem people than particular places. The main way of tackling this was through the provision of consistent information and encouragement.
- 31.12 A Member went on to draw attention to Page No. 25, Paragraph 3.3.10 of the report, which seemed to suggest that garden crews did not always finish their rounds and he sought an explanation as to why this was the case. The Contracts Manager explained that there were two garden waste rounds which took place all year, however, a third vehicle had been procured to cope with seasonal demand and potential future growth through new housing developments. This vehicle had not been used consistently so far but, as part of the improvement plan, Ubico was committed to using the third vehicle throughout the year. It was noted that drivers were only able to work a set number of hours per day; whilst the rounds were achievable within these hours, there may be occasions where they could not be completed, for example, if there was an agency driver, or if a large number of bins were presented on that particular day. Furthermore, the tipping facility for garden waste closed at a certain time and drivers were not permitted to tip the following day as garden waste could not be stored on vehicles overnight.
- 31.13 A Member expressed concern that the reporting system did not currently provide an update on what was being done to address the issue; this was particularly difficult for Members reporting incidents on behalf of local residents. The Contracts Manager explained that, during Quarter 1 of 2017/18, a paint spillage had been reported 16 times; at the point of reporting, it was unclear whether this was a job for Ubico. In this instance, the ability to self-serve was not particularly helpful. As such, it was planned to start from the beginning and reassess the service which would be linked to the online forms project.
- 31.14 With regard to the improvement plan agreed with Ubico, a Member was of the view that the aim to reduce missed bin collections did not go far enough; the average for

2016/17 was 43 and it was important to improve on that. In terms of KPIs, the current target for bin collections was 99%; a reduction to below 50 per week would equate to 0.09% missed bins and therefore a more realistic target would be for 99.9% bin collections. The Head of Community Services agreed that the KPIs needed to be reviewed; however, he felt that improving upon the 2016/17 performance may be unachievable. He stressed that 65% of the borough had experienced changes to the waste collection service and, therefore, parity with the previous year would make more sense, although he took the point that Members were looking for improvement. The Managing Director of Ubico provided assurance that he was looking for continuous improvement; however, it was important that the targets in the improvement plan were set at an achievable level and that Ubico did not commit to something it could not deliver. After the October target to reduce the number of missed bin collections by a further 50% had been achieved, this would need to be maintained and improved further.

31.15 A Member queried what the reason was behind the reduction in fly-tipping and was advised that a lot of enforcement work had been carried out by Tewkesbury Borough Council. There had generally been an increase in fly-tipping, both on a county and national level, so this was a positive result. In response to a query, the Contracts Manager explained that large scale, skip-size fly-tips were common which suggested waste operators, who may be acting illegally, and this information was fed back to the Environment Agency.

31.16 The Chief Executive thanked the representatives from Ubico and the Joint Waste Team for attending the meeting and felt that it had been particularly helpful to have a discussion about the issues that had been faced over the past six months. He stressed that everyone was striving for improvement, and wanted the waste service to be the best it could possibly be, and he hoped that impression had come across to Members. He reiterated the enormous amount of change that had taken place over the last year in terms of round changes and vehicle procurement as well as changes to several significant Officers within the Council, Ubico and Joint Waste Team. He thanked Members for their involvement and felt that it would make sense to bring an update report to the March meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, prior to the annual update in July 2018. It was subsequently

RESOLVED

1. That the Ubico update report be **NOTED**.
2. That an update report in respect of bin collections and grounds maintenance to be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 March 2018.

OS.32 PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 1 2017/18

32.1 The report of the Head of Corporate Services, circulated at Pages No. 32-69, attached performance management information for Quarter 1 of 2017/18. 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.

32.2 Members were advised that this was the first quarterly monitoring report for 2017/18 and progress against delivering the objectives and actions for each of the Council Plan priorities was reported through the Performance Tracker, attached at Appendix 1 to the report. Key actions for the quarter were highlighted at Paragraph 2.3 of the report and included: installation of signage for three walks in Tewkesbury; introduction of a new business grants scheme; appointment of Thinking Places to create a vision for the Junction 9 area and BDP to produce a masterplan; successful business event held at Porsche at Junction 9, including the launch of a new business video; 59 affordable homes built across the borough; four successful fly-tipping prosecutions; and securing a tenant for a third of the Public Service Centre top floor. Due to the complex nature of the actions being

delivered, it was inevitable that some would not progress as smoothly or quickly as envisaged and Paragraph 2.4 of the report highlighted a delay with the review of the discretionary trade waste service. Members were informed that the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) review, commissioned by Ubico, was in the final stages and should be with the Council by the end of August. In terms of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Members were informed that the status of each indicator was set out at Paragraph 3.2 of the report. Of the 16 indicators with targets, 13 indicators were performing better than the previous year with only three performing worse than the previous year. Areas of interest included: KPIs 13 and 15 relating to the determination of major and 'other' planning applications which were exceeding target; KPI 22 in relation to the processing of new benefit claims which was at 13.22 days compared to the national average of 21 days; and KPI 28 in respect of sickness absence which had fallen, reducing the number of working days lost by 75.5%. With regard to KPI 27, number of overall crime incidents, it was noted that there had been a 15% increase in overall crime compared to Quarter 1 of 2016/17; however, crime levels in the borough were not significantly high generally.

32.3 During the debate which ensued, the following queries and comments were made in relation to the Performance Tracker:

Priority: Finance and Resources

P42 – Objective 4 – Action a) Put in place a plan to regenerate Spring Gardens – A Member queried whether this was on track. Members were informed that a report would be taken to the Executive Committee in October/November setting out the proposed steps forward including the potential appointment of a development partner to move this forward in the New Year. It was currently on track in terms of timescales.

P42 – Objective 4 – Action b) Deliver the Council's asset plan – A Member raised concern that it had come to light at an East Area Place Programme Meeting that Officers were unclear as to who owned the assets in certain areas. The Head of Finance and Asset Management provided assurance that the Asset Management Team had identified everything owned by the Council at every location across the borough and work was being done to make this available to assist with grounds maintenance going forward. Notwithstanding this, Officers did not necessarily know what was owned by others and work was ongoing with the County Council and NHS to plot this information on one system

P42 – Objective 4 – Action b) Deliver the Council's asset plan – A Member sought an The Head of Finance and Asset Management confirmed that work on the Vineyards had now started in earnest and the old signage

update on disposal of the garage sites and questioned when work would be started on the Vineyards play area. He also raised concern that the installation of the three walks signage was incomplete as the old signage had not been removed.

had been removed in relation to the three walks. In terms of the disposal of the garage sites, this was dependent upon the capacity within the Asset Management Team; unfortunately it had not happened as quickly as hoped but a plan was in place to go to the market in the New Year.

Key Performance Indicators for Priority: Finance and Resources

P42 – KPIs 1 and 2 – Percentage of creditor payments paid within 30 days of receipt and outstanding sundry debt in excess of 12 months old – A Member questioned whether the arrow was showing a positive or negative performance and whether the debt for £10,973 was likely to be recovered.

The Head of Finance and Asset Management confirmed that performance was very positive with 95.18% of payments within 30 days during Quarter 1 of 2017/18 compared to a target of 94%. In terms of the sundry debt outstanding, the debt for £10,973 was close to resolution and he was confident of receiving the sum in due course. The total for the quarter was £38,317 and it was noted that this was a low figure having been reduced from approximately £120,000 a few years earlier.

P43 – Objective 1 – Action a) Seek approval and implement year one of the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy – A Member questioned whether Officers were aware of the Gwinnett family tomb in Down Hatherley which had been used to launch the Gloucestershire History Festival.

The Head of Development Services indicated that she had been looking at a number of tourism assets across the borough and, whilst she was not aware of that particular asset, she would include it in her work to see what could be done on a wider scale.

Priority: Customer Focused Services

P56 – Objective 3 – Action a) Deliver the Public Services Centre refurbishment project – A Member raised concern regarding parking at the site and sought assurance this was being addressed.

Members were advised that parking was being considered and a final scheme design for the depot was currently being considered to establish how many spaces could be provided. If there was a need for additional parking, there were some areas around the Council Offices site which could be appropriate if necessary. Assurance was provided that Officers were well aware of the issue and would be taking it forward.

32.4

At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's request, financial information had now been reintroduced into the report based on a recommendation arising from the review of the Committee's effectiveness. The Head of Finance and Asset

Management advised that the detailed papers had been taken to the Executive Committee on 30 August 2017. The financial budget summary for Quarter 1 showed a £225,836 surplus against the profiled budget and a summary of the expenditure position for the Council split between the main expenditure types was set out at Paragraph 4.1 of the report. The budget position in relation to Heads of Service responsibility showed an underspend of £157,537 as at the end of June with three main areas of savings: £67,150 in respect of employees, £17,809 in relation to contractor payments, and income of £47,582. Employee costs savings were mainly through staff vacancies and maternity leave which were managed in the short term by limited use of agency staff and help from current staff to cover work. The underspend on payments to contractors was generated from small savings across all services, the most significant being in relation to the Materials Recovery Facility recycling contract due to a lower than anticipated gate fee. Planning income continued to be significant for the Council in line with budget, and car parking and licensing were both performing well so far; however, garden waste was not achieving budget as a result of the changes to the charging structure whereby customers had to make pro-rata payments for the current financial year and this would be monitored over the next quarter. Appendix 2 to the report included a summary position for each Head of Service which showed current variance against their budget. He was particularly pleased to report that the retained income for business rates was showing a surplus of £97,000, which had been removed from the budget targets due to the significant deficit the previous year. Whilst this was a very good position, it should be noted that there had so far been very little activity with regard to processing appeals, either from past listings or against the new 2017 list. Appendix 3 to the report showed the capital budget as at Quarter 1 and Appendix 4 to the report provided a summary of the current usage of available reserves.

32.5 In response to a query regarding income from the leisure centre, the Head of Finance and Asset Management confirmed that a sum was payable at the end of the year, this was £151,000 for 2016/17 and increased annually with inflation. There was also a profit share element which meant that any profit made at the end of the three year period would be shared between the Council and Places for People to reinvest within the service area. In terms of business rates, a Member understood that the government had made a change for companies occupying multiple floors and that this would be back-dated to 2010. He questioned whether this would impact on the Council and if it was being taken into account. The Head of Finance and Asset Management indicated that he did not have any specific details but he was aware of this. He provided assurance that the Council had set aside significant provision for every eventuality so it was hoped that sufficient funds would be available to cover any potential loss resulting from that particular issue.

32.6 Having considered the information provided, it was

RESOLVED That the performance management information for quarter 1 of 2017/18 be **NOTED**.

OS.33 TEWKESBURY BOROUGH NEWS REVIEW REPORT

33.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Tewkesbury Borough News Review Working Group, circulated at Pages No, 70-81. Members were asked to endorse the review report, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, and to recommend to the Executive Committee that it be adopted.

33.2 The Chair indicated that the Tewkesbury Borough News Review Working Group had been chaired by Councillor M Dean who was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting. He had prepared a short briefing note to accompany the main report and this had been circulated around the table. A Member of the Working Group

wished to endorse the points raised by the Chair of the Working Group. He made particular reference to the fact that the proposal to move from three to two editions per year, and a magazine format, would make annual savings of £4,066 and would result in a publication which residents were more likely to keep for reference than a newspaper which could be seen as more disposable. It was also considered that a magazine format had greater potential to attract income from advertising.

33.3 Another Member of the Working Group drew attention to the final recommendations set out at Page No. 81 of the report. These included seeking views of the Citizens' Panel following circulation of the first edition - it was noted that the Panel had been asked for feedback on three editions of the current publication during the course of the review - and a report was being taken to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the implementation of the recommendations and how the arrangements had worked over the initial 12 month period. One particularly important element of the review which had contributed significantly to the Working Group's decision to retain the Tewkesbury Borough News, despite it being a discretionary service, was cost avoidance. As it was delivered to every household in the borough, the Tewkesbury Borough News was an ideal way to communicate key messages, for example, changes to waste collection rounds and consultation on the Joint Core Strategy. If the Council stopped producing Tewkesbury Borough News, it would still have a duty to communicate certain information to residents which would involve a significant cost.

33.4 A Member noted that the briefing note circulated by the Chair of the Working Group referred to the 'Tewkesbury News' and clarification was provided that this was a typographical error on his part and the published report referred to the Tewkesbury **Borough** News. Another Member highlighted the need to ensure that the publication was checked for any errors prior to circulation to residents and assurance was given that it would be subject to thorough proof-reading. It was

RESOLVED That the Tewkesbury Borough News Review Report be **ENDORSED** and that it be **RECOMMENDED TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** that the report be **ADOPTED**.

OS.34 COMPLAINTS REPORT

34.1 The report of the Head of Corporate Services, circulated at Pages No. 82-93, provided a summary of complaints received during 2016/17 and included the annual letter received from the Local Government Ombudsman. Members were asked to consider the information provided and any further action required.

34.2 Members were reminded that a new formal complaints framework had been introduced in April 2016 which included a new policy and reporting and monitoring system to ensure that complaints were effectively managed. 111 formal complaints had been received within the period April 2016 and March 2017 of which 106 related to Council services; 92% had been responded to within the approved 20 day timeframe which was positive. 77 of the complaints had been found to be justified or partially justified and 11 had been subject to a stage 2 review – this happened when a complainant was unhappy with the original response and the complaint was assigned to another Head of Service for independent review. A breakdown of the complaints by service area, nature and remedy was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. In terms of the Council's performance compared to other local authorities, Tewkesbury Borough Council was consistently within the top ten for the lowest number of complaints. The Local Government Ombudsman's annual review letter detailing the number of complaints and enquiries received, and decisions made, was attached at Appendix 2 to the report. It was pleasing to note that none of the complaints had been upheld.

34.3

It was

RESOLVED That the annual complaints report be **NOTED**.

The meeting closed at 6:45 pm