

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Tuesday, 16 June 2015 commencing at 4:30 pm

Present:

Chairman
Vice Chairman

Councillor P W Awford
Councillor Mrs G F Blackwell

and Councillors:

G J Bocking, K J Cromwell, Mrs J E Day, R D East, 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

OS.5 ANNOUNCEMENTS

5.1 The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was taken as read.

OS.6 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

6.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D T Foyle. There were no substitutes 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 meetings held on 7 April and 26 May 2015, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

OS.9 CONSIDERATION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

9.1 Attention was drawn to the Executive Committee Forward Plan, circulated at Pages No. 11-15. 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.

9.2 A Member raised concern that the Climate Change Strategy had been removed from the Agenda for the meeting on 25 November 2015. He stressed that this was

a very important issue, which was high on the agenda for all political groups, and it was crucial that the Council had a clear approach to tackling climate change. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that it was a question of finding the capacity to undertake this work given that there had been changes in personnel within the department as a result of the transfer to Ubico. Climate change was not currently a priority within the Council Plan and Members may wish to give consideration to its inclusion when the Plan was reviewed over the coming year.

- 9.3 A Member noted that the Corporate Enforcement Policy was due to be considered at the Executive Committee meeting on 15 July 2015, and would set out the guiding principles by which legislation would be enforced by the Council to protect public health, safety, amenity and the environment within the Borough. He recognised the importance of enforcement but indicated that it had been stressed to Members who had attended the Planning training as part of the Members' Induction Programme that enforcement action should only be taken when expedient to do so. The Deputy Chief Executive agreed that any enforcement policy would need to balance different priorities and judgements would need to be made to ensure that enforcement was effective. She clarified that this would be a corporate policy which would set out how the Council would collectively deal with problems in the community, for example, there had recently been an issue around caravan licences. A Member indicated that he had been experiencing problems with caravans within his Ward and he raised concern that he had found out about action being taken by Tewkesbury Borough Council via local radio rather than from Officers directly. The Communications Team Leader indicated that, unfortunately there was not always time to update Members on an individual basis on every media enquiry and she relied on Officers to keep Members informed in relation to issues across the Borough which may attract media attention. If she had known about this particular situation she would have ensured that the relevant Members were fully briefed and she undertook to send them a copy of the full statement which had been issued.

- 9.4 It was

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

OS.10 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16

- 10.1 Attention was drawn to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2015/16, circulated at Pages No. 16-18, which Members were asked to consider.

- 10.2 A Member was of the opinion that it would be beneficial for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to undertake a review of Ubico, following the transfer of waste services in April, given that this was a frontline service which also provided street cleansing and grounds maintenance for the Borough. He felt that it would be appropriate to have an interim update in October with a 12 month update in April and Officers undertook to include this in the Work Programme. A Member queried who was responsible for grass cutting and the Environmental and Housing Services Group Manager explained that this was dependent on who owned the land. The Grounds Maintenance team cut the grass on land owned by Tewkesbury Borough Council and, whilst the Council did not contract out any work of this nature, there were other contractors who carried out grass cutting on behalf of Parish Councils and other agencies such as Severn Vale. In terms of the recent complaints about grass cutting, she advised that the large gang mower had broken down and, due to its age, it had taken some time to obtain the parts which were required to fix it. Unfortunately, this had meant that the grass cutting regime had fallen behind and it had not been possible to borrow a machine from Ubico due to the length of the grass. The mower had been repaired and the grass had now been cut. Officers were working hard to carry out missed cuts and to undertake second cuts where necessary. In response to a query about carrying out grass

cutting on behalf of Parish Councils, confirmation was provided that they were required to pay for this work. A Member noted that the grass along the A38 had been cut earlier that day which had exposed a significant amount of litter and he felt that this would need to be addressed swiftly in order to avoid complaints. The Environmental and Housing Services Group Manager undertook to contact the supervisor responsible.

10.3 The Corporate Services Group Manager drew attention to two new areas of work for the Committee: the Review of Disabled Facilities Grants which was due to be considered in July and would involve the formation of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group; and the monitoring of the Peer Review Action Plan in December. The Democratic Services Group Manager went on to advise that, at its meeting on 26 May 2015, the Council had appointed Councillor Rob Garnham as its representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel. Whilst he was not a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Garnham had indicated that he intended to report verbally to the Committee following each meeting of the Panel, and confirmation was provided that he would attend the next meeting on 21 July 2015. On that basis it was felt that it would be appropriate to move this item to the start of the Agenda where relevant.

10.4 Having considered the information provided, it was

RESOLVED That the following amendments be made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2015/16:

- i. Review of Ubico to be added to the Agenda for meetings on 20 October 2015 (six month update) and 12 April 2016 (12 month update); and
- ii. Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel Updates to be moved to the start of the Agenda for future meetings.

OS.11 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT - QUARTER 4

11.1 The report of the Corporate Services Group Manager, circulated at Pages No. 19-72, attached performance management information for quarter 4 of 2014/15. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to review and scrutinise performance information and, where appropriate, identify any issues to refer to the Executive Committee for clarification or further action to be taken.

11.2 The performance management report comprised the Council Plan Performance Tracker, the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) set, the Financial Budget Summary Statement and the Capital Monitoring Statement. The performance tracker, attached at Appendix 1, confirmed the completion of a number of key actions and ongoing progress of longer term actions. Paragraph 2.3 of the report highlighted a number of achievements since the last update. Members were informed that good progress was being made on the build of the new leisure centre and it was intended that a report would be taken to the Executive Committee in September regarding the naming of the facility. Operational services had now transferred to Ubico and a client monitoring framework was in place to set out how they would be delivered. The Revenues and Benefits improvement programme was now complete and had resulted in the identification of significant savings, furthermore, processing performance was now in the top quartile nationally. The review methodology was being replicated across other services with a review of Customer Services already underway and the scope for a review of Environmental Health agreed. In addition, Members were advised that the governance arrangements to support the £1.4M LEADER European rural funding were now being implemented; almost £400,000 of repair and renew grant funding had been delivered to provide flood protection to properties; the successful delivery of the Families First Programme, in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council, had resulted in

the County being chosen as an early adopter of the new programme; there had been improvement within ICT such as a new test environment and hardware; a new Community Funding Officer post had been established; and the JCS examination was currently underway.

11.3 Members raised the following queries in respect of the Performance Tracker:

Priority: Use Resources Effectively and Efficiently

P26 – Objective 2 – Action a) Rationalise office accommodation through new ways of working and to increase rental income – A Member queried whether any progress had been made in respect of the third floor office accommodation.

The Finance and Asset Management Group Manager explained that the top floor of the Council Offices building had been vacant since last autumn and a decision had been taken to hold the election count in that space in May 2015. Discussions were ongoing with a number of partners including Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucestershire Care Services and Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue about their requirements in respect of office space and potential future use of the Council Offices building. Members would be kept informed of progress as and when there was something to report.

P27 – Objective 2 – Action c) To review the asset portfolio and develop a strategy to maximise potential from the portfolio – A Member indicated that the Hat Shop had been omitted from the asset portfolio.

The Finance and Asset Management Group Manager confirmed that not all of the Council's assets were listed under this action. Nothing had been done in respect of the Hat Shop during 2014/15 due to a review of services and therefore there was nothing to report at this stage.

Priority: Promote Economic Development

P31 – Objective 1 – Action a) Create a property search database on the Council website for external users – A Member queried whether this had now gone live.

The Economic and Community Development Manager advised that the commercial property search database would be live by the end of June.

P32 – Objective 2 – Action b) Organise events to strengthen relationships with

The Economic and Community Development Manager advised that this was a Defra funded scheme focusing on encouraging

key employers in the Borough – A Member sought more information in respect of the LEADER funding bid.

growth in rural areas. Tewkesbury Borough Council was working with the Forest of Dean District Council to look at how best this could be achieved. A local action group had been created to identify potential projects that would deliver growth and provide more jobs. £1.4M had been awarded over five years and a Programme Manager, Neil Batt, had been appointed to work across the Tewkesbury Borough and Forest of Dean areas. He encouraged Members to contact the Programme Manager if they were aware of any businesses or organisations that might benefit from the funding.

Priority: Provide Customer Focused Community Support

P46 – Objective 3 – Action a)
Agree approach and programme of work for Community Infrastructure Levy – A Member noted that the governance arrangements with JCS partners were being reviewed and questioned when this would be brought to Members.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) process was a long one and the preliminary draft charging schedule was currently being consulted upon. Whilst the Borough Council would adopt its own charging schedule, Officers had been working with Cheltenham Borough and Gloucester City Councils to ensure that the schedules aligned as there would be a need to ensure that money was available to deliver the infrastructure for sites within the Joint Core Strategy (JCS). Information would initially be provided to the Community Infrastructure Levy Member Working Group with recommendations being taken to the Executive Committee where appropriate.

P46 – Objective 3 – Action c)
Provide appropriate support for neighbourhood planning and community led planning – A Member noted that 11 Neighbourhood Plans had been designated across 15 Parishes and he questioned whether the Neighbourhood Plans would carry any weight in planning terms.

The Chief Executive explained that, once formally approved and adopted via a referendum, Neighbourhood Plans would form part of the Tewkesbury Borough Local Plan and therefore would hold considerable weight in the planning process. The 11 designated Neighbourhood Plans were all at different stages and, in his experience, one of the main issues was the amount of time it took to compile the Plans given that the work was carried out by volunteers within the Parishes. It was extremely frustrating for Parishes as, if they did not have an adopted Neighbourhood Plan in place, they could be vulnerable to speculative planning applications. Officers were supporting Parishes through the process as much as possible and help was also being provided via the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC). A Member queried who paid for the referendums and the Democratic Services Group Manager advised that the

Government provided grants towards the costs but they would be administered by the Council.

P48 – Objective 4 – Action a) Support the delivery of projects agreed by the Community Safety Partnership – A Member questioned whether signs were being displayed in relation to fly-tipping and dog fouling.

The Environmental and Housing Services Group Manager explained that Environmental Health had recently gone through a service review and it had been necessary to recruit to some posts. The service would soon be fully staffed which would allow more community work to be undertaken in respect of enviro-crimes. The Council had recently bought some surveillance cameras which would be used to try to catch people committing such crimes and Officers were working with Parish Councils and landowners to see what else could be done. Brockworth Parish Council had purchased glow in the dark signs which were intended to remind dog owners that they were being watched. Representatives from the Parish Council would be invited to share this practice with others at a future Town and Parish Council Seminar. The Communications Team Leader advised that her team had produced posters highlighting the dangers of dog fouling, which had been displayed in Shurdington, and a Member had requested that similar signs be displayed around the Vineyards in Tewkesbury.

P49 – Objective 4 – b) Work with statutory and voluntary agencies to address the issues of anti-social behaviour and environmental crime in our communities – A Member noted that 26 young people had been helped with the assistance of the ASB Youth Diversion Worker and he queried whether this provided value for money in terms of the anti-social behaviour incidents which had been prevented.

The Environmental and Housing Services Group Manager advised that the ASB Youth Diversion Worker worked with a range of young people and their families and 26 young people had been deterred from committing anti-social behaviour during the year. She had worked with the Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue service in relation to an arson case involving a group of young people and it was noted that the cost of an arson incident would far outweigh the cost of employing the ASB Youth Diversion Worker for the year. On that basis it was considered that the post provided considerable value for money.

11.4 Attention was drawn to the KPIs, attached at Appendix 2 to the report, and Members were informed that, of the 20 indicators with targets, eight had not been achieved. The KPIs which had not been achieved related to average number of sick days (KPI 11) which had an outturn of 8.67 days against a target of 7 days; three KPIs in relation to determination of planning applications (KPIs 14, 15 and 16); the number of visitors to Winchcombe Tourist Information Centre (KPI 26) which had an outturn of 9,131 against a target of 11,200; percentage of waste recycled which had an outturn of 51.08% against a target of 52%; the number of reported enviro-crimes which had an outturn of 1,012 against a target of 850; and broadly compliant food establishments which had an outturn of 90.44% against a target of 94%. Of the indicators showing improved performance, or above target,

particular reference was made to KPIs 12-17, which related to planning processing times as all six indicators were reporting improved performance on the previous year, although three were not currently achieving target. New benefit claims (KPI 18) were now being processed within an average of 13.02 days compared to 27.17 days in the previous year, and change of circumstances (KPI 19) processed within an average of 4.36 days compared to 13.41 days previously. It was also noted that 159 affordable houses had been delivered within the year which meant that the target of 100 new homes had been achieved for the third year running.

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

P58 – KPI No. 6 – Total number of homeless applications presented – A Member questioned whether applications were from local people or from people wanting to move into the area.

The Environmental and Housing Services Group Manager explained that there were several points which needed to be taken into account when dealing with homeless applications: whether the person was actually homeless i.e. if they had nowhere to stay that night; whether the person was eligible for assistance in terms of immigration status; whether they had a priority need e.g. pregnant women, people made homeless by fire, flood or other emergency; whether the person was intentionally homeless; and whether they had a local connection i.e. if they had lived in the Borough for six of the last 12 months or three of the last five years, or if they had a family connection with someone who had lived in the Borough for five years. Applications would not be accepted from anyone who could not demonstrate a local connection unless they were fleeing violence and it was not safe for them to be in their own area. She confirmed that the 31 applications which had been received in quarter 4 were new applications. The Chief Executive understood that it was tempting to view Tewkesbury Borough as an affluent area which was unaffected by problems such as homelessness; however, that was clearly not the case as the homeless figures had remained consistent at approximately 30 applications per quarter throughout 2014/15. Officers always looked to take preventative action to see if there was another way to deal with issues before accepting a duty to rehouse. The Environmental and Housing Services Group Manager reminded Members that, whilst still a significant number, only 20 of the 31 applications had been accepted during quarter 4.

P60 – KPI No. 11 – Average number of sick days per full time equivalent – A Member

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that Tewkesbury Borough Council was quite a small organisation and it was unfortunate that

noted that there was a problem in relation to sickness absence which linked to the increased use of agency staff. He questioned how this related to the closing of vacant posts as he felt it might be better to fill those posts in order to relieve pressure on other members of staff.

there had been a number of long term sickness absences due to serious health problems. Some posts did need to be covered on a short term basis using agency staff, however, she provided assurance that the recruitment to posts had to be signed off by the Corporate Leadership Team which gave careful consideration as to whether there was a need for that position to be filled or whether things could be done differently within the service. She reiterated that it had been an unusual year in respect of long term sickness and this had impacted on the budget.

P61 – KPI No. 12 – Percentage of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks; KPI No. 14 – Percentage of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks - A Member noted that the quarter 4 outturns for these KPIs were 53.85% and 59.19% respectively, which was below target, and yet income targets were being exceeded in planning. He questioned how the two collated.

The Deputy Chief Executive clarified that the KPIs related to the time it took to determine the planning applications which were received whereas the information contained within the financial position statement related to the income received from planning applications. She acknowledged that the performance of the Planning Team had been of concern for some time but it was pleasing to note that there was now a trajectory of improvement alongside a considerable increase in the number of applications being received. A Member welcomed this ongoing look at planning performance as he felt that this was an area where public perception could be improved. The Deputy Chief Executive agreed that there was mixed customer feedback in relation to planning but she felt that it should be borne in mind that the applications being received were numerous and varied. It was an area where processes could be improved and the model which had been used to conduct the Revenues and Benefits review was being replicated in the Planning department with a review commencing that week focusing on the customer experience. The Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee reiterated that the Planning department had to deal with a number of very large and complex applications which could take a long time to determine. It was hoped that the new Scheme of Delegation, which had been approved by the Council in April, would help to improve the situation with more applications being determined under delegated powers.

P68 – KPI No. 32 – Food establishments in area broadly compliant with food

The Environmental and Housing Services Group Manager explained that it was compulsory for food establishments to be

hygiene regulations (%) – A Member questioned why premises were not being inspected.

inspected and new premises were required to contact the Council to arrange an inspection. Establishments were inspected at different rates depending on the activity which they would be carrying out, for example, a bakery serving food on a high demand basis would be a higher risk than a child-minder and would therefore be inspected as a priority. Rather than visit every premises, it was proposed that those which were classed as low risk be asked to attend a seminar at the Council to be assessed through a question and answer session. The Member sought further explanation as to the difference between high, medium and low risk and the Environmental and Housing Services Group Manager undertook to circulate this information to Members following the meeting.

- 11.6 The Corporate Services Group Manager indicated that a training session would be arranged for the Committee, prior to the September meeting, to provide a more in-depth look at the performance tracker and how the Council Plan was linked to performance indicators.
- 11.7 The Financial Budget Summary Statement, attached at Appendix 3 to the report, showed a £207,442 saving against the annual budget, which was a significant increase on the £37,906 saving reported in quarter 3. This was largely due to income targets being exceeded in areas such as planning, land charges and garden waste. There had also been less expenditure on benefit payments than budgeted and, due to the size of the figures involved, this translated to a significant saving; however, it was to be borne in mind that this was netted off against a reduced housing subsidy claim to the Government. There had been a continuing deficit in terms of employee costs since quarter 3 with increased payments for agency staff to cover vacancies and sickness. A recruitment drive had helped to replace staff more quickly than in previous years which had reduced savings from holding vacancies. It was noted that some of the additional costs incurred through staffing had resulted in extra income being generated, for example, in One Legal. Another area which had seen a deficit against budget was increased expenditure on premises costs; this was almost entirely in relation to the release of the rent for the Cheltenham depot as part of the move to Ubico, although this was being negotiated with Cheltenham Borough Council. A number of unbudgeted costs had impacted on the overall savings, for example, various health and safety investigations had been funded from elsewhere in the budget.
- 11.8 Whilst the Council had a saving against budget, there were a number of significant pressures on the Council's financing streams. The financing of the Council's net revenue position had been impacted following the revaluation of a major business within the retained business rates scheme brought in by the Government in 2013. There had been a 30-40% reduction in the valuation of that particular business which had contributed significantly to a total loss of £600,000 for Tewkesbury Borough Council within the scheme. Reserves had previously been set aside to deal with the volatility of the scheme and, whilst they had done the job they had been intended for, it would be necessary to replenish those reserves. It was noted that Tewkesbury Borough Council had incurred a safety net payment of £3.95M from the Gloucestershire Business Rates Pool with the individual Councils contributing to fund this loss. There were a number of other appeals to be heard which could have a further potential negative impact, although none would be of

the same magnitude. Members were informed that the Council had expended £3.68M on capital projects in 2014/15, utilising £2.88M of capital reserves and £0.80M of capital grants. Over £819,000 capital had been spent during the year on the office refurbishment project which had been completed in September 2014. The new leisure facility build project had commenced in February 2015 with £1.25M being spent by 31 March 2015. Another area of major expenditure was the Disabled Facilities Grants which had totalled £778,000. A more detailed report outlining the Council's financial outturn position for 2014/15 would be presented to the Executive Committee in July. In addition, the Council's Statement of Accounts for the financial year would be presented to Audit Committee in September. The financial performance reporting for the first quarter of 2015/16 had been revised to provide greater detail for Members and would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September.

11.9 A Member queried whether anything could be done to claw back some of the £600,000 which had been lost as a result of the business rates revaluation. The Deputy Chief Executive considered that it was very unfair that Tewkesbury Borough Council was taking a hit for the revaluation of a business under a national scheme which was not in the Council's control at that time. All of the local authorities within Gloucestershire had written to the Secretary of State to complain about this inequity and to request a response from the Government in recognition of this unfairness. Whilst the initial reaction from the civil servants had not been very hopeful, the Councils were united in their approach. The Finance and Asset Management Group Manager went on to explain that money had been set aside in 2014/15 to ensure that the Council was able to cover the cost of revaluations during the year. This meant that, whilst revaluation had not left a black hole in the budget, it would be necessary to replenish reserves in order to protect the Council from risk in future years. Tewkesbury Borough Council had the support of the rest of the County and Members were reminded that the Council had already received a £3.95M safety net payment from the Gloucestershire Business Rates Pool which had contributed significantly to the loss.

11.10 Having considered the information provided, it was

RESOLVED That the performance management information for quarter 4 2014/15 be **NOTED**.

OS.12 CORPORATE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

12.1 The report of the Corporate Services Group Manager, circulated at Pages No. 73-84, provided the list of corporate policies and strategies. Members were asked to consider the list and identify those for inclusion within the Committee's 2015/16 Work Programme.

12.2 The Corporate Services Group Manager explained that the Committee had previously requested a list of the policies and strategies to help inform its Work Programme. The list was revised and updated on an annual basis and the policies and strategies that were due for review in 2015/16 were highlighted in bold at Appendix 1 to the report. He indicated that there were potentially four policies/strategies which he felt could be focused upon for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme: Customer Services Strategy; Discretionary Housing Payments Policy which aligned with the gold standard for housing options; Corporate Enforcement Policy; and Risk Management Strategy.

12.3 A Member noted that the Absence Management Policy was not due to be reviewed until 2017, however, he queried whether it would be prudent to bring that forward given that the absence statistics had been less positive in recent months. The

Chief Executive provided assurance that there was no problem with absence management and he reiterated that there had been a number of long term absences due to serious illnesses and, unfortunately, this had a significant impact on the figures due to the size of the organisation. He indicated that it was short term sickness absence which tended to cause problems and he felt that the absence management procedures were robust in those situations. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had conducted a review of the Absence Management Policy in 2012 and had made a number of recommendations which had been incorporated into the Policy. He felt that it was important to keep a close eye on sickness absence going forward, and to challenge Officers if the situation did not improve, however, he did not recommend a review at this stage. The Corporate Services Group Manager confirmed that the Committee had been pivotal in producing the current Policy and it was to be borne in mind that the Policy was subject to regular internal review; a report had been taken to the Executive Committee in March which had resulted in the trigger periods for sickness absence being reduced.

12.4 Members agreed that the four policies/strategies identified would be the most appropriate and accordingly it was

RESOLVED That the following policies and strategies be included for review in the Committee's 2015/16 Work Programme:

- Customer Services Strategy;
- Discretionary Housing Payment Policy (incorporating the gold standard for housing options) – a workshop would be arranged to undertake this review on Wednesday 8 July at 2.00pm;
- Corporate Enforcement Policy; and
- Risk Management Strategy.

OS.13 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY ANNUAL REVIEW

13.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Corporate Services Group Manager, circulated at Pages No. 85-115, which asked Members to consider the progress made in relation to the Communications Strategy Review actions.

13.2 The Communications Team Leader explained that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had helped to develop the Communications Strategy through a workshop on 17 March 2014 and the Strategy had subsequently been approved by the Executive Committee on 30 April 2014. It had been agreed that the Strategy should be reviewed on an annual basis in order to ensure that there was effective monitoring of the actions which had been identified in the Strategy. A review of the actions for year one of the Strategy was attached at Appendix 2 to the report and it was noted that the majority of actions were either complete or ongoing into year two. Two of the actions were marked as 'partly complete': undertake a baseline assessment of communications and graphics to explore opportunities for shared working; and work with the Community Development team to improve communications with the Borough's hard-to-reach groups. Members were advised that the baseline assessment had been completed and submitted to the Corporate Leadership Team, however, the opportunities for shared working had not yet been explored as the team was currently under review as part of the restructure of the Chief Executive's Unit. In terms of hard-to-reach groups, a young people's column had been introduced in the Tewkesbury Borough News, however, no other work had been undertaken and the Communications team would need to focus on this action during year two. The Communications Team Leader went on to indicate that she intended to arrange a seminar on communications for all Members which would include discussions as to how communications could be improved and how

Members could help to promote the Borough. In addition, media training would be provided for Members and she would circulate details as soon as they were available.

13.3 Several Members indicated that they would welcome media training and it was suggested that this may also be beneficial to Parish Councils, particularly in terms of social media and responding to negative posts from members of the public. The Chief Executive explained that himself and the Communications Team Leader put a lot of effort into liaising with the media to protect the Borough Council's reputation and to ensure that reports about the Council were fair. Social media was very different as people were largely free to say whatever they wanted and training for Borough Councillors would be very important in that regard. It was down to Parish Councils to decide how to approach social media and this was something which could be raised at the Town and Parish Council seminars, which were held biannually, and promoted in the Parish Matters newsletter.

13.4 A Member raised concern that the Borough was covered by two different local newspapers, the Gloucestershire Echo and the Citizen, however, the Citizen did not tend to report on issues within Tewkesbury Borough. The Communications Team Leader explained that both newspapers did tend to run stories which were Borough-wide, however, she did have to make additional effort with the Citizen to ensure that was the case. Once the restructure of the Chief Executive's Unit was complete, there would be extra capacity within the Communications team to assist with such issues.

13.5 It was

RESOLVED That the progress made in relation to the Communications Strategy actions be **NOTED**.

OS.14 REVIEW OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM STRATEGY

14.1 The report of the Development Services Group Manager, circulated at Pages No. 117-123, advised Members of the need to develop a new Economic Development and Tourism Strategy for Tewkesbury Borough. Members were asked to establish an Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group to develop the Strategy and to approve the proposed Terms of Reference for the Working Group as set out at Appendix 1.

14.2 Members were informed that the current Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 'Regenerating and Growing the Economy' had come to the end of its life and, in order to reflect the changing nature of the local economy and the impact on businesses, the Council needed to develop a new strategy. This would include a review of the Council's small business grant scheme. Since it was established there had been many changes to the economy, both locally and nationally, therefore it was sensible to consider whether the scheme could be developed to maximise the benefits it could deliver to the business community. It was recommended that a small Working Group be established to conduct the review, drawn from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and including the two key Portfolio Holders for Economic Development/Promotion and Finance and Asset Management. It was anticipated that there would be three to four meetings of the Working Group and the Strategy would be reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee before consideration by the Executive Committee.

14.3 It was subsequently

RESOLVED 1. That an Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group be established to develop a new Economic Development and Tourism Strategy comprising the following Members:
Councillors D T Foyle, T A Spencer, Mrs P E Stokes,

P D Surman, M G Sztymiak and M J Williams plus the Lead Members for Economic Development/Promotion and Finance and Asset Management.

2. That the Terms of Reference for the Working Group, as set out at Appendix 1, be **APPROVED**.

The meeting closed at 6:05 pm