

**Questions raised by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at meeting held on
14 June 2016**

| QUESTIONS RAISED BY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE | RESPONSE FROM OFFICERS |
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| <i>Performance Tracker</i> | |
| <p>Use resources effectively and efficiently Rationalise office accommodation through new ways of working and to increase rental income – A Member questioned whether there was any indication as to when a decision may be made about how the top floor would be used.</p> | <p>The Finance and Asset Management Group Manager clarified that the One Legal expansion was not going ahead and therefore the top floor would no longer be needed for that purpose. It was intended to improve and expand the Public Services Centre and Officers had been working with Gloucestershire County Council on proposed use of the building but unfortunately the figures were not currently stacking up for either side. A meeting had been arranged for early July to establish whether the plans could progress or to rule out this option in which case Officers could start to look at other alternatives such as renting to the private sector. It was noted that there were indications of a growing interest in renting office accommodation in Tewkesbury.</p> |
| <p>Use resources effectively and efficiently Develop a new workforce strategy – A Member noted that this had been delayed due to staff sickness absence and he questioned when it would be delivered.</p> | <p>Members were advised that there was a new implementation date of September 2016. The Corporate Services Group Manager undertook to include revised dates in the Performance Tracker in future where applicable.</p> |

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| <p>Provide Customer-Focused Community Support</p> <p>Develop a place programme of area, working across the Councils services – A Member raised concern that he had not received enough information about the place programme for his area.</p> | <p>Members were advised that it was intended to roll-out the place programme approach following a successful pilot in the east area of the borough and meeting dates had now been fixed for the north-west and south areas. The Economic and Community Development Manager reminded Members that the approach was about projects and solutions to make the areas better places to live and work and was based on a two-way relationship between Officers and Members. A workshop was being arranged for 20 September 2016 to provide an update on the success of the pilot and to give Members an opportunity to ask questions about how it had worked. A Member who had participated in the trial expressed his support for the approach and hoped that it would be just as beneficial for other parts of the borough.</p> |
| <p><i>Key Performance Indicators</i></p> | |
| <p>KPI No's. 13-14 – Planning processing times – A Member noted that there had previously been issues with recruitment in the Planning department which had impacted on performance and he questioned whether the section was now at full capacity.</p> | <p>The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Planning department had never been at full complement in the time she had worked for the Council. New initiatives had been introduced as a result of the first phase of the review and some posts had been filled as a result, however, recruitment continued to be a problem at a time when demand for the service was particularly high and the income being generated was significant. It was noted that the Committee would be receiving a presentation on the Planning review at its next meeting where there would be an opportunity to explore the issues further.</p> <p>A Member queried whether there was any relationship between the difficulties with recruitment and the relatively high level of sickness absence. The Chief Executive clarified the sickness absence statistics had been adversely affected by a number of unfortunate long term absences as a result of a reduced Council workforce. He provided assurance that there was no particular problem with sickness absence in the Planning department.</p> |

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| <i>Financial Analysis</i> | |
| <p>It was noted that £7.8M of capital funds had been spent on projects during 2015/16. A Member questioned whether the Council maximised potential interest on underspends.</p> | <p>The Finance and Asset Management Group Manager advised that the money was tied into investments via the treasury management function with most in cash deposits in money market funds or institutions such as banks and building societies. The current rate of return was approximately 0.8%, which was considered to be a good return, and the property purchase would make even better use of resources.</p> |