

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the
Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Tuesday, 6 September 2016
commencing at 4:30 pm**

Present:

Chair

Councillor P W Awford

and Councillors:

G J Bocking, K J Cromwell, R D East, D T Foyle, Mrs J Greening (Substitute for T A Spencer),
Mrs R M Hatton, Mrs H C McLain, A S Reece (Substitute for Mrs G F Blackwell),
Mrs P E Stokes, P D Surman and H A E Turbyfield

also present:

Councillor R E Allen

OS.30 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 30.1 The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was taken as read.
- 30.2 The Chair welcomed Councillor R E Allen, Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing, to the meeting and indicated that he was in attendance for Item 7 – Healthwatch Gloucestershire Presentation.

OS.31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

- 31.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs G F Blackwell (Vice-Chair), Mrs J E Day, T A Spencer, M G Sztymiak and M J Williams. Councillors Mrs J Greening and A S Reece would be acting as substitutes for the meeting.

OS.32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 32.1 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.
- 32.2 There were no declarations made on this occasion.

OS.33 MINUTES

- 33.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2016, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

OS.34 CONSIDERATION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

- 34.1 Attention was drawn to the Executive Committee Forward Plan, circulated at Pages No. 15-19. 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.
- 34.2 With regard to free Christmas parking, which was due to be considered at the Executive Committee meeting on 12 October 2016, a Member noted that it was proposed to change this from the last Saturday in November to the first one in December in order to coincide with 'Small Business Saturday' and she questioned whether there would still be free parking for the switching on of the Christmas lights in Tewkesbury Town which was usually on the last weekend in November. Another Member sought clarification as to what the Fee Charging Strategy, due to be considered at the Executive Committee meeting on 23 November 2016, would include. The Chief Executive indicated that he did not have the information to respond to these queries at this time but he would ensure that answers were provided following the meeting.
- 34.3 A Member raised concern that the Forward Plan did not contain many items of business for meetings beyond November 2016 and he sought clarification as to the reason for this. The Chief Executive advised that the Plan was subject to frequent amendment, and it was often difficult to predict the work that would come forward, so it was not unusual to see fewer items on the later scheduled meetings. Notwithstanding this, he recognised why Members may be concerned and undertook to work with Group Managers to ensure that the Plan was populated.

34.4 It was

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

OS.35 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

- 35.1 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.
- 35.2 The Chair drew attention to the Agenda for the meeting on 18 October 2016 and sought views from Members as to whether there would be adequate time to debate the Joint Waste and Grounds Maintenance items. Members generally agreed that these would be the two most significant topics for that meeting and it would be important to allow enough time for them to be properly considered. On that basis, it was suggested that the scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership item be moved to a future meeting and it was agreed that the meeting on 10 January 2017 would be most appropriate. In terms of the Grounds Maintenance Update, a Member expressed the view that a representative from Ubico should present the report as Tewkesbury Borough Council Officers may not be best placed to answer all of the queries. The Corporate Services Group Manager agreed that this would be beneficial and he undertook to ensure that Ubico was represented at the meeting.
- 35.3 The Corporate Services Group Manager went on to advise that he had been in contact with a representative from Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service, as had previously been requested by Members during the review of the effectiveness of the Committee, and it had provisionally been agreed that a presentation would be brought to the meeting on 23 November 2016. Once confirmation was received this would be removed from the 'Pending Items' section of the Work Programme.

35.4 It was

RESOLVED 1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

be **NOTED**.

2. That the Scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership be moved from the meeting on 18 October 2016 to 10 January 2017.

OS.36 HEALTHWATCH GLOUCESTERSHIRE PRESENTATION

36.1 The Chair welcomed the Chief Executive of Healthwatch Gloucestershire, Barbara Piranty, to the meeting and indicated that she would be providing Members with further information on the work of Healthwatch Gloucestershire at the request of the Committee.

36.2 Copies of Healthwatch Gloucestershire's annual report were circulated around the table for information. The Chief Executive of Healthwatch Gloucestershire explained that there were 148 local Healthwatch groups in England, although it was anticipated that this would be reduced from 2017 due to local authority budget cuts which were likely to result in the amalgamation of the smaller organisations. Healthwatch Gloucestershire was quite unique as there was only one Clinical Commissioning Group for the County. The following key points were made during the presentation:

- Statutory functions – Information and signposting – it was important for self-care and prevention to know the right place to go at the right time and there was a team who disseminated information from the office to members of the public and professionals; influencing – by gathering patients' experiences and passing on comments to the commissioners and providers; advocacy – for areas which were not covered, there was a very strong advocacy network and Healthwatch worked closely with SEAP (Support, Empower, Advocate, Promote) which provided independent advocacy services to help make a complaint about any aspect of NHS care or treatment.
- Healthwatch in numbers – 1,050 Healthwatch members as at the end of March 2016; 140,254 website visitors; 45 health and social care working groups; 197 events which Healthwatch had been involved in; 17 'enter and view' inspections undertaken; 50 referrals to advocacy; 85% of calls dealt with in-house; 1,296 comments made; 27 sites visited; in contact with 60 patient participant groups.
- What you told us – Most talked about: acute and GP; areas of increased feedback: social care, domiciliary care, transport and pharmacy; high levels of satisfaction: GPs (39% positive), acute (37% positive) and integrated community teams.

- Health and Social Care Issues –
 - acute - hospital discharge;

- GP services - long waits for appointments;
 - pharmacy - long waits for prescriptions;
 - community services - concerns about the number of district nurses;
 - mental health services – delayed access to the crisis team;
 - emergency care – responsiveness to care e.g. ambulance response;
 - domiciliary care – consistency of care;
 - transport – long waits for non-emergency patient transport and delays getting to hospital.
- How are we making a difference? – Task group reports and recommendations; working with others; reviews/influencing; patient stories; membership; specialist website pages; readers’ panels; learning disability project; ‘enter and view’.
 - Our priorities in 2016/17 – Hospital discharge/hospital aftercare; access to early intervention mental health services for young people; dementia care; pharmacy services; access to GP services; ‘enter and view’.
 - What we did in 2015/16 – Attended 197 events throughout Gloucestershire; gathered nearly 2,500 comments and experiences; community engagement team: staff and volunteers.
 - How did we do it?
 - 2013/14 - 8% talk; 13% information stand; 50% retail outlet; 7% enquiry hub; 22% ‘other’.
 - 2014/15 - 32% talk; 28% information stand; 18% retail outlet; 5% enquiry hub; 17% ‘other’.
 - 2015/16 - 34% talk; 24% information stand; 16% retail outlet; 10% enquiry hub; 16% ‘other’.

36.3 A Member questioned how much influence Healthwatch Gloucestershire actually had given funding constraints and the Chief Executive of Healthwatch Gloucestershire indicated that she liked to think that it was able to incite change; Healthwatch Gloucestershire was well-established and there had been good links within the county for some time. Account was taken of financial constraints when reports were written and they did not propose whole system changes; often it was tiny tweaks which made a huge difference. The patient experience could be lost in the planning of services so the main aim was to keep them at the centre e.g. with regard to stroke rehabilitation, it had been found that drug rounds were being interrupted at meal times and this had been easily addressed by introducing red tabards so people were aware that drug rounds were in progress and should not be disturbed.

36.4 A Member queried whether satisfaction data was broken down to a local, single surgery, level and was informed that Healthwatch Gloucestershire had produced two versions of the report on patient experience of GP surgeries. There had

generally been quite a high satisfaction rate, however, there were some poorly performing practices and this had been fed back to the Care Quality Commission separately in the second version of the report. The Member went on to question whether areas which were about to go through significant change were specifically targeted in order to provide feedback and he was advised that this was the case, for example, Healthwatch Gloucestershire was currently working with Gloucestershire Care Service on what they felt was appropriate in view of changing the hours on the Minor Injuries Unit.

- 36.5 In response to a Member query as to whether Healthwatch Gloucestershire worked with the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), confirmation was provided that any current complaints or concerns were referred on. A Member questioned how people got involved with Healthwatch Gloucestershire and was advised that people who rang the office were often encouraged to get involved if they expressed an interest in community engagement work and wanted to exert an influence in terms of health.
- 36.6 A Member indicated that he was particularly concerned about delays with hospital discharges and admissions and the Chief Executive of Healthwatch Gloucestershire explained that this was a knock on effect of various issues throughout the system. For example, if there were lots of people going into accident and emergency for treatment, less patients could be admitted for scheduled procedures; patients could not be discharged without the correct continuing care in place. Healthwatch Gloucestershire was providing separate insight to develop ideas and an 'enter and view' of accident and emergency was being undertaken to ensure that people knew about the alternatives.
- 36.7 The Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing expressed his support for the Healthwatch service and the Chair thanked the Chief Executive of Healthwatch Gloucestershire for her informative presentation. It was subsequently

RESOLVED That the Healthwatch Gloucestershire presentation be **NOTED**.

OS.37 PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 1 2016/17

- 37.1 The report of the Corporate Services Group Manager, circulated at Pages No. 26-56, attached performance management information for quarter 1 of 2016/17. 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.
- 37.2 Members were advised that the new Council Plan priorities had been approved by Council on 19 April 2016. The four priorities were: finance and resources; economic development; housing; and customer focused services. Progress against delivering the objectives and actions for each priority was reported through the Council Plan Performance Tracker, attached at Appendix 1 to the report. The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which had previously been presented to the Committee as a separate Appendix, had been consolidated with the tracker so Members would now receive a single document. This was the first quarterly monitoring report of 2016/17; the majority of actions were progressing well and Paragraph 2.3 of the report highlighted a number of key activities to bring to Members' attention including: the introduction of a new commercial theme to the Council's business transformation programme; opening of the new leisure centre; commencement of the demolition of Cascades; commencement of Phase 2 of the Planning service review; and development of a new corporate website for implementation in November. The Corporate Services Group Manager went on to advise that, due to the complex nature of the actions being delivered, inevitably some had not progressed as quickly or as smoothly as envisaged. Those actions were highlighted at Page No. 29, Paragraph 2.4 of the report, and related to the development of the Tewkesbury Borough Plan, which had been delayed due to the

focus on the Joint Core Strategy, and letting out the top floor of the Public Services Centre as proposals were still being considered.

- 37.3 In terms of the KPIs, Members were informed that the status of each indicator was set out at Paragraph 3.2 of the report. Key areas of interest included KPIs 15-16, which related to processing of minor and 'other' planning applications, where performance was currently below target but improved upon 2015/16; KPI 20 which suggested that the number of reported enviro-crimes would exceed the target for 2016/17; KPI 23-24 which showed that the processing of benefit claims and change of circumstances was not as good as the previous year but remained in the top quartile nationally; and, KPI 29 which demonstrated that long term sickness was impacting on the ability to meet targets.
- 37.4 During the debate which ensued, the following queries and comments were made in relation to the Performance Tracker:

Priority: Finance and Resources

<p>P34 – Objective 3 – Action c) Undertake a review of the discretionary trade waste service to ensure it is operating on a viable commercial level – A Member questioned when the review would take place.</p>	<p>The Corporate Services Group Manager advised that the review was part of the commercial programme and a date would be brought forward once that was operational. The Member went on to raise concern that a number of the actions did not include target dates and felt that this would be beneficial. The Corporate Services Group Manager agreed that target dates would make the Performance Tracker a more robust document and it was agreed that they should be included for all actions where possible.</p>
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Key Performance Indicators for Priority: Finance and Resources

<p>P35 – KPI 2 – Outstanding sundry debt in excess of 12 months old – A Member sought clarification as to the amount of old debt.</p>	<p>The Chief Executive indicated that he did not have any further detail on this performance indicator but he would arrange for a response to be circulated to Members following the meeting.</p>
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Priority: Economic Development

<p>P35 – Objective 1 – Action b) Produce, deliver and launch a new Economic Development</p>	<p>The Corporate Services Group Manager indicated that the target was for the Working Group report to be presented to the Overview</p>
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and Tourism Strategy – A Member raised concern that the Overview and Scrutiny Working Group conducting the review of the Strategy had been ongoing for some time and he questioned whether it was realistic for the strategy to be in place by the end of the year.

and Scrutiny Committee by the end of the year and to the Executive Committee in January. He appreciated that the comment in the Performance Tracker may be misleading and undertook to ensure it was amended.

The Member felt that if a review went on beyond six months then the Committee should receive a progress report explaining when it would be completed. The Member was advised that the Economic and Community Development Manager had been asked to circulate a Member Update when this issue had been raised at the Committee meeting in June and Officers would check that this had been actioned.

P37 – Objective 3 – Action a)
Produce a vision for the J9 area.

The Chief Executive indicated that a successful bid had been made to the Large Sites Infrastructure Fund (LSIF) for £130,000 to kick start work on the vision for Junction 9 and work was now ongoing. In addition, £200,000 had been secured from the Homes and Communities Agency for a road study at Junction 9; clarification was provided that this was a Tewkesbury Borough Council bid but the money had been passed to the County Council to commission the study. The County Council had contributed a further £70,000 resulting in a total of £400,000 for work to support improvement and development around Junction 9.

P38 – Objective 4 – Action b)
Work with Tewkesbury Regeneration Partnership to progress projects that regenerate Tewkesbury Town – A Member raised concern that the Partnership was meeting frequently but it seemed that little was being achieved.

The Chief Executive advised that the major scheme was on hold awaiting feedback from partners; the details could not be made public at the moment but he provided assurance that work was ongoing.

Key Performance Indicators for Priority: Economic Development

P38 – KPI 3 – Employment rate 16-64 year olds – A Member questioned whether

The Revenues and Benefits Group Manager advised that Government statistics looked at employment rates amongst working age

64 should still be used as the retirement age given that people were often working much beyond that.

people and he believed that 64 was the national figure which organisations worked to. This would be checked following the meeting and, if that was not the case, it would be amended accordingly.

Priority: Housing

P40 – Objective 1 – Action b) Develop the Tewkesbury Borough Plan – A Member sought clarification as to whether the Plan was still progressing at a reasonable rate.

The Chief Executive explained that, unfortunately, a lot of work on the Tewkesbury Borough Plan had stopped due to resources within the strategic planning team where the focus had been on the Joint Core Strategy amendments. Although there were a number of elements of the Borough Plan which were reliant upon the completion of the Joint Core Strategy, there were some areas where work had been able to continue when resources had allowed and, whilst it was not on target, it was still moving.

P43 – Objective 4 – Action b) Deliver 150 affordable homes each year – A Member noted that 43% of affordable homes were being built to Sustainable Homes Code Level 4 and 39% of homes to Lifetime Home standard. He questioned what standard the remaining 18% were being built to and why they were not all built to the same, higher, standard.

The Development Manager advised that the Sustainable Homes Code had been abolished so these figures referred to those homes where it had been possible to agree the same criteria via Section 106 Agreement. Lifetime Homes standard could not be insisted upon but Officers did negotiate within the Section 106 Agreement and, from what he understood, the figures showed a very positive outcome. In terms of the percentages, he explained that they were not intended to add up to 100%; some of the homes would have been built to both Sustainable Homes Code Level 4 and Lifetime Homes standard.

Key Performance Indicators for Priority: Housing

P45 – KPIs 14-15 – Planning processing times – A Member noted that there had been staffing issues within the

The Development Manager clarified that these were targets which Officers always aspired to achieve, however, there were various challenges each year which impacted

Planning department and he questioned whether this was the main barrier to achieving these targets.

Another Member questioned how morale was among the Planning team given the challenges currently being faced.

A Member also raised concern that Phase 2 of the Planning Services Review had commenced before Phase 1 had been fully completed.

upon performance. Staffing had been a particular problem in recent months and, although new appointments had been made, there were still a number of posts to fill. It was noted that some staff had changed departments, for example from Planning to Planning Policy, and, whilst this did add to the challenges, the Development Manager advised that his priority was to have a happy team. In that particular instance, he felt that retaining the Planning Officer's local knowledge of the area would benefit the Planning Policy Team and, as a lot of his work would be related to the Tewkesbury Borough Plan, he would have experience of applying the policy to real life scenarios.

In terms of major applications, where performance had fallen during the quarter, he explained that this was based on a relatively small number of applications and he was confident that the target would be met by the end of the year. The targets in respect of the other two indicators, relating to minor applications and 'other' applications, were achievable but, to a certain extent, would be dependent on the success of the next round of recruitment.

In response to a Member query as to the main reason for the turnover of staff, the Development Manager advised that Officers often wanted to move into the private sector and the non-monetary perks that had previously been associated with working for local government i.e. job security, no longer existed making it very difficult to compete; however, Tewkesbury Borough Council was reasonably successful at attracting people and the market supplements for new and existing roles which had been approved by Council were helping with retention and recruitment. In terms of morale, the Development Manager indicated that it was surprisingly good and the new recruits had brought a new energy to the relatively young team. There was a good ethos and everyone was working well together.

The Chief Executive reminded Members that Phase 2 of the Planning Services review was underway and consideration was always being given as to how things could be improved to make the service as good as it could be. Recruitment in planning was a problem for every local authority in the

country and it may be necessary to consider different business models which would improve performance whilst also ensuring that the service could compete in a more commercial environment, particularly given the Government's Planning reform proposals. He made reference to One Legal which had earned £300,000 of income in 2015/16 and indicated that this model may be possible for other services such as Planning. A Member questioned when this work would start and was advised that the commercial programme would commence before the end of the year and a report would be taken to the Transform Working Group setting out what was planned. All senior managers were being trained in commercial approaches and the programme was being developed with the support of the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE).

With regard to Phase 2 of the Planning Services Review, Members were reminded that this had been scaled back and was achievable within the timescales. The first workstream was to review Phase 1 and it was recognised that some of the changes had had a positive effect in terms of the minor and 'other' applications but there were other changes which had not benefited the customer or Officers. Assurance was provided that the team constantly reviewed procedures and if something was not working they would stop doing it.

Priority: Customer Focused Services

P48 – Objective 2 – Action b)
Roll out a programme of customer services training for staff across the Council – A Member questioned whether there had been any particular issues which had prompted the need for training and whether this could be provided in-house.

Confirmation was provided that there had been no problems; however, it was important to ensure that staff were delivering the best customer service possible. Customer service training across all services was something that the Corporate Services Group Manager was keen to implement as part of the Customer Care Strategy which was centred on the Customer Care Standards. It was thought that an external provider would deliver the training and this would be rolled out in early 2017.

P48 – Objective 3 – Action a)
Work with partners to investigate the potential for a reception refurbishment and integrated customer services team – A Member queried

The Chief Executive confirmed that this was the case and undertook to ensure that this was made clear in future.

whether this was linked to the letting of the top floor of the Public Services Centre.

P49 – Objective 3 – Action b)
To let out the top floor of the Public Services Centre – A Member sought an explanation as to why it was taking so long to let out the office space.

The Chief Executive explained that the Public Services Centre was unique in Gloucestershire and was at the cutting edge of Local Government service provision. This was a concept which Officers had been keen to build on for some time and, whilst the space could be let to the private sector, this would not necessarily do justice to the potential for enhancing the Public Services Centre. He provided assurance that work was ongoing with Gloucestershire County Council partners on a potential way forward for the building and a number of options were being considered. A business case was expected to come forward by the end of September and, provided it was a positive outcome, this would be presented to the Executive Committee and Council in November/December. If the business case was unviable then it would be necessary to look at an alternative solution based on monetary return. He explained that there were a number of challenges when looking at the future use of the whole building and a range of potential issues in terms of the relocation of services for both staff and members of the public. Members would appreciate that there was an element of confidentiality to the discussions; however, he was able to advise that one element was a bid to the Local Enterprise Partnership to host a growth hub centre which would be a very positive provision for businesses within the Borough.

Key Performance Indicators for Priority: Corporate

P53 – KPIs 23-24 – Benefits processing times – A Member questioned why there had been a reduction in

The Revenues and Benefits Group Manager advised that there had been some sickness absence within the team but those staff members had now returned to work. There

performance.

had been a small increase in the number of housing benefit claims, however, processing of new claims was now back on track and there had been an outturn of 15 days during July 2016. Change in circumstances claims were also holding steady and council tax was in line with the previous year. Business rates were more volatile and, during the early months, firms had been slow to pay but had now caught up. There had been a significant increase in rateable values which was positive.

P54 – KPI 29 – Average number of sick days per full time equivalent – A Member noted that this was significantly higher than the same quarter in 2015/16 and queried what was being done to mitigate this.

The Chief Executive explained that there were a number of long term physical illnesses which were impacting on the statistics. There were also some issues in certain services which were subject to change and assurance was provided that they were being closely monitored by service managers and the Corporate Leadership Team. The overall position remained quite positive.

P56 – KPI 31 – Residual household waste collected per property in kilograms – A Member questioned why there was no mention of commercial waste within the performance indicators.

Members were advised that this was one of the old Best Value Performance Indicators and the Council's performance was benchmarked nationally alongside all other local authorities. There was currently no indicator for commercial waste and that was something which would be considered as part of the trade waste review.

- 37.5 Having considered the information provided and views expressed, it was
RESOLVED That the performance management information for quarter 1 of 2016/17 be **NOTED**.

OS.38 COMPLAINTS REPORT

- 38.1 The report of the Corporate Services Group Manager, circulated at Pages No. 57-66, provided a six month update on complaints received from April to June 2016. Members were asked to consider the information provided and determine whether any further action was required.

- 38.2 Members were advised that the formal complaints framework had been reviewed in early 2016 and a new complaints policy had been approved, supported by a new reporting and monitoring system, to ensure that complaints were effectively managed. The new system had gone live on 6 April 2016. It was noted that 26 formal complaints had been received within the reporting period, of which 23 had been responded to within the 20 day timeframe. Three complaints had been subject to a stage two review, of which one had been justified. A breakdown of

complaints by service area, nature and remedy was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. The Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter provided details of the number of complaints and enquiries received and this was attached at Appendix 2 to the report. During 2015/16 the Local Government Ombudsman had received 10 complaints/enquiries relating to Tewkesbury Borough Council and these were detailed at Paragraph 4.2 of the report.

38.3 A Member noted that the majority of formal complaints were in relation to waste and recycling and he was advised that, whilst complaints were highest in this area, the actual number was still very low and this was an incredible performance for an authority of Tewkesbury Borough Council's size. It was to be borne in mind that the report related to formal complaints as opposed to service complaints e.g. missed bin collections.

38.4 The Chair indicated that Officers had suggested it might be more beneficial for the report to be brought to the Committee on an annual basis, as opposed to biannually as it was currently, given the low number of complaints. This would be in line with the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter. Assurance was provided that this would not prevent a report being taken to the Committee at any time, should the need arise. It was subsequently

RESOLVED

1. That the six month update on complaints received for the period April to June 2016 be **NOTED**.
2. That the complaints report be brought to the Committee on an annual basis, as opposed to biannually, going forward.

The meeting closed at 6:40 pm