

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	21 March 2017
Subject:	Review of Borough News
Report of:	Graeme Simpson, Head of Corporate Services
Corporate Lead:	Mike Dawson, Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Councillor R J E Vines, Leader of the Council
Number of Appendices:	One

Executive Summary:

A Member workshop was held on 10 October 2016 to gain feedback on corporate communications. This was a positive session and a number of recommendations implemented as a result of feedback. One specific area discussed was Borough News and this generated a lot of discussion such as cost, quality, regularity of production and format, without reaching any formal conclusion. Given the extent of discussion it was agreed a formal review of the Borough News was a good idea and that an Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group could undertake the work. It is therefore proposed that a Working Group be established to conduct the review and establish if the current arrangements for the Borough News provide value for money and is an effective communication tool. The outcome of the review and any recommendations will be reported to Executive Committee.

Recommendation:

- 1. To establish an Overview and Scrutiny Working Group, comprising five Members plus the Lead Member for Customer Focus, to review the Borough News.**
- 2. To APPROVE the proposed Terms of Reference for the Working Group as set out at Appendix 1.**

Reasons for Recommendation:

The idea of a Working Group came from a Member workshop on communications. This is also timely as it has been a number of years since the arrangements for the design, print and post of the Borough News have been reviewed.

Resource Implications:

No additional resources will be required to undertake this review.

Legal Implications:

None directly arising from this report.

Risk Management Implications:

None specifically arising from this report but there could be a reputational risk to the Council's communication strategy depending upon the outcome of the review.

Performance Management Follow-up:

If approved, a timetable will be established to ensure the timely completion of the review.

Environmental Implications:

None directly associated with this report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 A Member workshop was held on 10 October 2016 to gain feedback on corporate communications. There were a number of viewpoints around the Borough News with regards to cost, quality, regularity of production and format. It was an action arising from the workshop to undertake a review of the Borough News and this could be undertaken by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group.

2.0 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP

2.1 It is proposed that an Overview and Scrutiny Committee comprising five Members be established to work with officers to review the design, print and post arrangements. The Lead Member for Customer Focus will also be invited to join the group. This will establish if the current arrangements provide value for money and also if the Borough News remains an effective communication tool.

3.0 BOROUGH NEWS OVERVIEW

- 3.1
- There are three editions per year.
 - It is delivered to every household in the borough.
 - It is in newspaper format comprising 12 pages.
 - It is used to inform our communities about important service or local activity including local community actions, not only the council's.
 - There are three elements to the process, all undertaken externally (design, print and post).
 - The Communications Officer pulls together and edits all the news stories prior to the design submission.
 - The 2017/18 net budget is £27,000 which includes advertising income of £3,600.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 Officers could prepare a report themselves but it was Members who concluded this would be an ideal piece of work to be undertaken by a Working Group. The production of Borough News is also a discretionary budget item within the council's overall budget so an independent type review would be prudent.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 The review will involve external consultation with the Citizens' Panel.

6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

6.1 Communication Strategy.

7.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

7.1 Code of recommended practice on Local Authority Publicity.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

8.1 None directly arising from this report.

9.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

9.1 None directly arising from this report.

10.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

10.1 There could be potential recommendations around cost or digital alternatives.

11.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

11.1 None.

Background Papers: Executive Committee 4 June 2014 – Approval of Peer Challenge approach.

Council 11 February 2015 – Approval of final Peer Challenge Report and Action Plan.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 December 2015 – First monitoring report on progress of actions.

Contact Officer: Graeme Simpson, Head of Corporate Services
01684 272002 graeme.simpson@tewkesbury.gov.uk

Appendix: Appendix 1 – Working Group Terms of Reference