

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee's annual report

## 2016-17



May 2017

# Message from the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Phil Awford



I am pleased to present the 2016-17 Annual Report of Tewkesbury Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Since May 2015, I have chaired the committee, supported by Councillor Gill Blackwell as vice chair, and by a very able and committed group of councillors.

This has been another productive year for the committee. Providing support to key priority areas, facilitating the delivery of new strategies - such as the Housing and Homelessness strategy and the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy.

The committee has also not been frightened to challenge itself, and with an independent facilitator has reviewed the committee's own effectiveness. Recommendations made will ensure the value of the committee is maximised.

We continue to monitor the progress of important activities such as formal complaints, Ubico performance, the communications strategy and enviro-crimes. The committee also continues to receive quarterly performance information on the delivery of the new Council Plan (2016-2020).

The committee also received presentations from key partners to build up our knowledge and understanding of how partners help deliver our priorities. These included the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Healthwatch Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service.

Looking ahead, I am positive the committee will add even greater value to support the council in its future challenges, and through the work of the committee this will have a positive impact on our communities. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the committee members for their contributions and continued support.

Best wishes

**Councillor Phil Awford**

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## The role of overview and scrutiny

The role of overview and scrutiny is an important one in the council's governance structure, in providing challenge and driving improvement. It is often referred to as the “critical friend” of the council and can hold a magnifying glass over any area which is causing concern or issues for local residents.

## Formal work programme

Tewkesbury Borough Council has a single overarching Overview and Scrutiny Committee that examines all areas of the council's business.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a number of roles within the council. These include:

- Holding the Executive Committee to account by thoroughly scrutinising their decisions to ensure that the council continues to provide the best services possible for Tewkesbury Borough residents.

As part of this role, the committee has the power to ‘call-in’ decisions made by the Executive Committee and request that they consider them again, taking into account the issues raised by the committee.

- Acting as a ‘critical friend’ to the Executive Committee by reviewing council policies and strategy, making recommendations where appropriate.
- Overviews of work areas or topics of interest to the committee and members of the council –

including feedback from the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel and the Gloucestershire County Council Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- Performance and financial monitoring, to ensure the council services are sustainable and to the highest possible standard.
- Commissioning reviews of services/topics that impact on the council or on the lives of Tewkesbury Borough residents.
- Pre-scrutiny of items prior to their consideration by the Executive Committee.
- Complaints – on an annual basis a report is received summarising customer complaints and Local Government Ombudsman complaints made in the year. This helps to identify trends and potential opportunities to learn from the complaints made.
- Setting up task and finish groups to focus on specific reviews and recommend ways to improve existing practices within the council. A flow chart on how to consider potential scrutiny reviews can be found at Appendix A.

## **Overview and scrutiny activity during 2016-17**

### **Scrutiny reviews of policy and strategy**

#### **Review of Car Parking Strategy** **29 November 2016**

Following work by an Overview and Scrutiny Working Group, a new Car Parking Strategy was approved by Council on 27 January 2015. A report on the success of the strategy was considered by committee, which was pleased to be informed that the aspiration to encourage visitors to stay longer was being achieved and that overall ticket sales had also increased. Recommendations in relation to the introduction of mobile phone technology, improved signage and a programme of inspections and maintenance were also confirmed as implemented.

### **Presentations made to overview and scrutiny**

#### **Gloucestershire Families First Update** **12 April 2016**

The committee has received a number of updates on the progress of the scheme since its inception in 2012. Gloucestershire has seen great success in delivering the scheme and was one of the first in the country to achieve its targets and expand the scheme further. It was explained to committee that one of the reasons behind the underlying success is the number of agencies working together under one roof within the Public Services Centre.

More details can be found [here](#).

#### **Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)** **presentation 14 June 2016**

The bureau manager demonstrated to the committee how the council receives value for money in relation to the £54k granted to CAB. The presentation gave an insight into the breadth of advice given, the parts of the borough which were seeking advice and this was supported with a couple of case studies.

More information on the discussion can be found [here](#).

#### **Planning review presentation** **19 July 2016**

The planning service is a high profile, front line service which deals with a significant number of transactions, queries and applications. To improve its performance and customer focus, the service undertook a review to see how it could do things better.

A presentation given by the development manager explained this was an ongoing piece of work with particular emphasis around the use of ICT, customer improvements and website information. The committee recognised the importance of this work whilst being delivered against a backdrop of unprecedented numbers of applications and related pressures.

More information can be found [here](#).

## **Healthwatch Gloucestershire Presentation**

**6 September 2016**

At the request of the committee, a presentation was given by the chief executive of Healthwatch Gloucestershire.

The presentation informed the committee on the statutory functions of Healthwatch Gloucestershire along with what areas are most talked about, the areas of increased feedback and what the health and social care issues are within the borough.

The information broadened the committee’s knowledge on how Healthwatch supports the health and well-being of communities and how the council can act as an advocate for this.

More information on the presentation and can be found [here](#)

## **Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service Presentation**

**10 January 2017**

The committee received an informative presentation from the local risk manager of Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service.

A strategic review of the service had been undertaken and one of the significant outcomes was that prevention and protection is now at the heart of the service. A national study identified seven at-risk groups within communities. Examples were given on how these groups were being targeted within the borough, particularly successful work undertaken within Priors Park.

Another successful outcome was an 82% reduction in false alarms for automatic fire detection devices within commercial premises and committee was interested to know how this had been achieved.

More information can be found [here](#).

## **Overview and scrutiny working groups**

### **Scheme of public participation at planning committee review working group.**

A working group reviewed the [Scheme of Public Participation at Planning Committee](#) following council’s decision to introduce the scheme for a one year trial period.

The group interviewed numerous stakeholders as part of the process and it was concluded that the opportunity to speak at Planning Committee is valued. It supports an open, transparent and accountable local government and the scheme should be introduced on a permanent basis. Council supported this and resolved on 17 May 2016 that the scheme be confirmed as a permanent arrangement.

### **Housing Strategy review working group**

A working group was set up to develop a new [Housing Strategy](#). Housing is a key priority in the new Council Plan. The resultant work has produced a strategy which pulls together the council’s strategic priorities around housing,



including homelessness and tenancy management. The strategy was approved at Council on 10 January. An action plan for the first year was agreed and is to be updated annually to allow the council to be proactive as well as reactive to the changing needs of the community, and to respond when new government policies are implemented.

## Other general areas of review

### Performance management (quarterly report)

The committee has an important role in scrutinising the delivery of the council’s priorities. To achieve this, on a quarterly basis, the committee receives a Council Plan Performance Tracker. This provides a wealth of information in relation to the overall progress of the Council Plan’s actions. The committee reviews and scrutinises the information including missed target dates, progression of key projects and outcomes, and where appropriate, refer for a response or action from the Executive Committee. During the year, the committee has consistently challenged areas such as planning performance, sickness absence and the level of enviro-crimes.

### Review of Ubico (12 month update) 12 April 2016

Ubico is the local authority management company which delivers the council’s waste and recycling, grounds maintenance and street cleaning services. Given the high profile of the service, delivery of the contract is monitored annually by the committee. The first 12 month review took

place and performance was robustly scrutinised. In particular, members requested more effective performance information on the grounds maintenance and street cleaning services.

### Revenues and Benefits Improvement Project (12 month update) 12 April 2016

Members were advised that the transformation project started in the summer of 2014. Following the presentation at its meeting on 7 April 2015, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had resolved that a further update be provided in 12 months. The update reported that performance was being successfully sustained and remains in the top quartile nationally, the service previously being bottom quartile performers. Committee passed on its congratulations to the team.

### Review of complaints (six monthly) 12 April 2016 and 6 September 2016

Complaints are an important indicator as to how well the council is performing. As such, on a six monthly basis, committee receives a report on numbers, type, by service and any resulting improvements. On an annual basis, the report from the Local Government Ombudsman is also presented. Reports were brought to the committee on 12 April and 6 September 2016. Committee supported an officer recommendation that given the low number of complaints received an annual report would suffice for future reporting.

“The committee considered the latest information on the extent of enviro-crimes, **with particular focus on fly-tipping.**”

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## **Review of Communications Strategy 2014-2016 (annual review)**

**14 June 2016**

The committee was involved in the development of this strategy. It provides the framework to promote and protect the reputation of the council. The annual review considered the progress made against the actions within the strategy. The majority of actions have been completed or are ongoing into year three. Key actions such as promoting the new leisure centre as well as providing continued support for the Joint Core Strategy have been achieved.

## **Enviro-Crimes (six monthly update)**

**19 July 2016**

At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April, members requested additional information in relation to enviro-crimes. The report focused on the three main enviro-crimes: dog fouling, abandoned vehicles and fly-tipping. Members were informed about current measures being considered and actioned in respect of these. It was recognised that enviro-crimes would continue to be a serious concern for members, and several issues had been raised for officers to address. It was requested that a report be brought back to the committee in six months' time to consider the progress made.

**7 February 2017**

The committee considered the latest information on the extent of enviro-crimes, with particular focus on fly-tipping. Since the last report there had

been notable activity and progress dealing with enviro-crimes, including the successful prosecution of a householder whose waste had been fly-tipped by a contractor who was not a registered waste carrier. Members were informed about further options that were being explored. An action plan was requested to be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 2 May 2017.

## **Peer Challenge Action Plan (six monthly update)**

**19 July 2016 and 7 February 2017**

Members were given an update to consider the progress made in delivering the recommendations within the Peer Challenge Action Plan. The peer challenge had been an excellent learning opportunity for the council, providing an external health check of the council's position. The second half yearly report confirmed the majority of actions as being complete. Committee agreed to sign off the action plan on the basis that two remaining recommendations were being monitored by Audit Committee.

## **Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee (JWC) 2016/17 action plan update and 2017-20 business and action plan outline (annual update)**

**18 October 2016**

Members were updated on the progress against the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee Action Plan for 2016/17 and were given a detailed outline business plan for 2017-20. The action plan sets out how the JWC and the Joint Waste Team monitor,



co-ordinate and add improvement to the waste and street cleansing service. Significant actions noted by the committee included the ongoing procurement of a new vehicle fleet, addressing needle contamination within the waste stream, retender of material reclamation facility and recycling awareness campaigns.

### **Grounds maintenance update (annual update)**

**18 October 2016**

Committee noted the performance of the grounds maintenance service. In particular, the transformational project on tree inspections through introducing mobile technology, the scheduling and quality of grass cuts and general number of service requests received. To monitor performance more effectively, the committee tasked the service to develop a set of performance indicators. These will be reported in 2017/18.

### **Gloucestershire Families First (Six monthly report)**

**29 November 2016**

Members were given an update to consider the progress made in delivering the Families First Programme and to remove it from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reporting cycle. The programme had been introduced in 2013 and members were advised that it had proven to be a great success and was now run as ‘business as usual’. Members felt it beneficial for the committee to still be kept informed and that updates be brought on an annual basis as opposed to six monthly.

### **Disabled Facilities Grants Review Monitoring Report**

**29 November 2016**

An update was given to the committee on the progress made against recommendations arising from the Disabled Facilities Grants Review. The way in which the council delivered Disabled Facilities Grants was reviewed by working group and adopted in April 2016. The review has streamlined the way the service is delivered and many improvements to the service have already been made, as well as possible savings to the authority.

### **Gloucestershire County Council updates**

The committee receives regular updates from Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel. These updates provide the committee with information on any issues arising and where the council can act as advocates for both community safety and for health and well-being.

For further details on both, Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel, see links below to Gloucestershire County Council’s website:

- [Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#)
- [Police and Crime Panel](#)

## **Review of the effectiveness of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**10 January 2017**

Members are keen for the committee to maximize the value of overview and scrutiny within the council. As part of this process, a committee meeting was peer reviewed by an independent assessor, Ann Reeder. Initial observations were fed back to the committee directly following the meeting with a draft formal report considered by Overview and Scrutiny on 10 January 2017.

Ann had highlighted numerous examples of good practice and how the committee really added value when undertaking reviews. In terms of improvement, there were three overarching recommendations:

1. The identification of key partners who contribute to the delivery of the council's priorities and programming in their attendance at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – it was felt that it would be more beneficial to focus on partners who would help to deliver the Council Plan rather than choosing them randomly due to an interest in a particular area.
2. Consistency of approach across all monitoring reports e.g. the use of RAG (Red, Amber, Green) or direction of travel indicators – It was agreed that this would be advantageous and officers would ensure that future reports included a RAG rating or direction of travel indicators in a similar way to the performance tracker.

3. Ongoing training and development, particularly in respect of effective questioning and developing the relationship between the Executive Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **Looking forward to 2017/18**

The committee has an exciting work programme for the forthcoming year. The hard work of the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy working group will come to fruition in the early part of 2017/18 when the draft strategy will be considered. This is a key strategy for the council, as we have an ambition to be the 'primary growth engine for Gloucestershire'.

The review of Tewkesbury Borough News will start in May 2017. This promises to be a good piece of work on one of the council's key communication tools and whether we can do things differently.

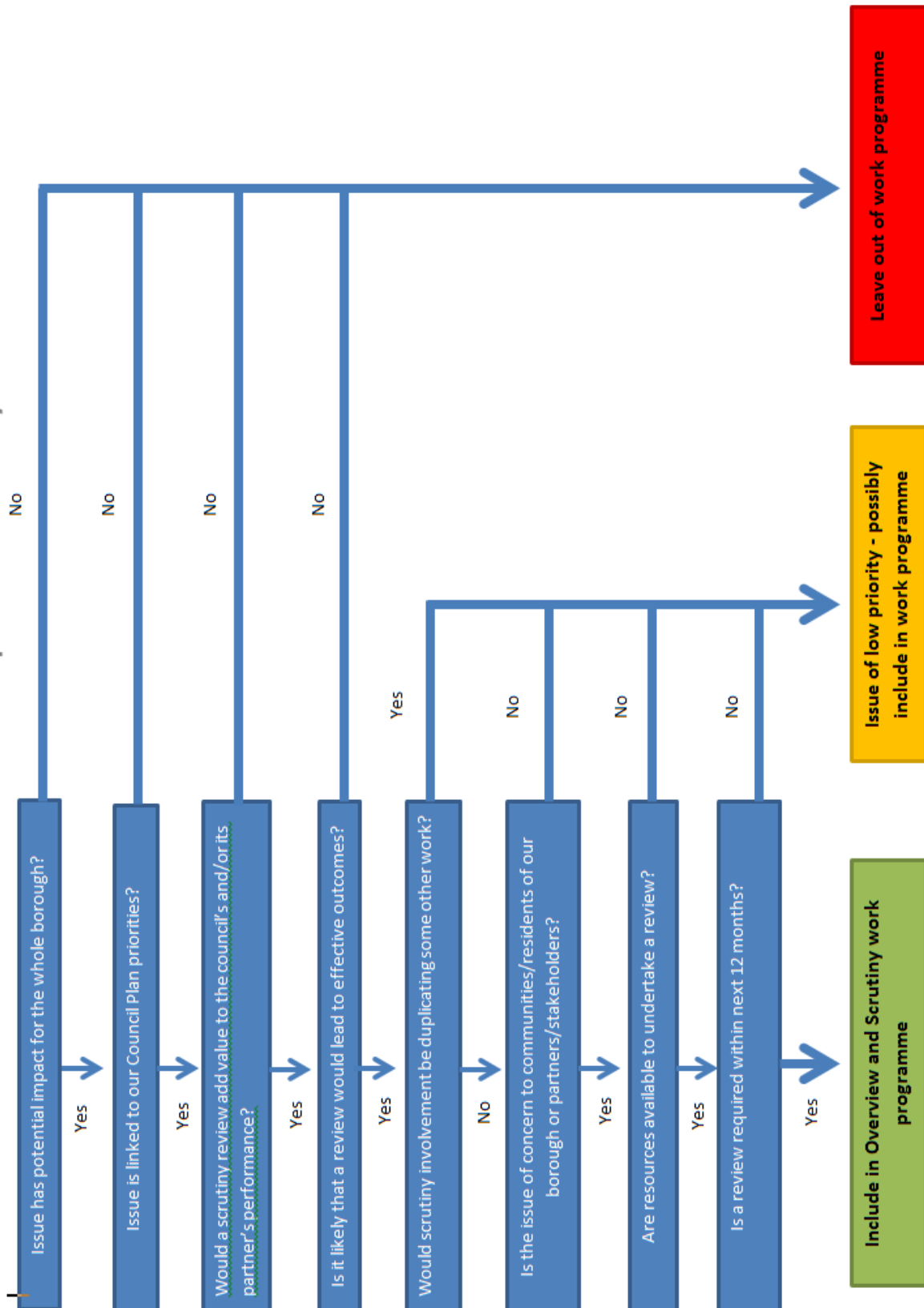
The committee's work programme also includes periodic review of key strategies such as Housing and Homelessness, Communications and Customer Care and ongoing scrutiny of key performance areas such as the Council Plan, enviro crimes and Ubico. The programme is flexible so any new areas for review can be added. The 2017-18 work programme can be found in Appendix B.

The committee also looks forward to challenging its effectiveness and ensuring it continues to play an important role in helping deliver successful outcomes for both the council and its communities.

## Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2015-2016

			
Chair Councillor Phil Awford Highnam with Haw Bridge	Vice Chair Councillor Gill Blackwell Hucclecote	Councillor Bob East Cleeve St Michael's	Councillor David Foyle Churchdown Brookfield
			
Councillor Graham Bocking Innsworth with Down Hatherley	Councillor Harry Turbyfield Brockworth	Councillor Heather McLain Ashchurch with Walton Cardiff	Councillor Janet Day Winchcombe
			
Councillor Kevin Cromwell Tewkesbury Priors Park	Councillor Mark Williams Coombe Hill	Councillor Mike Sztymiak Tewkesbury Town with Mitton	Councillor Pearl Stokes Churchdown St John's
			
Councillor Philip Surman Shurdington	Councillor Ruth Hatton Brockworth	Councillor Terence Spencer Twynning	

## Flowchart on how to select a potential scrutiny review



Committee Date: 13 June 2017				
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required	
Citizens' Advice Bureau Presentation.	To provide an update on CAB activity in the borough.	Andy Sanders, Economic and Community Development Manager	No.	
Performance Management – Quarter 4 and Full Year 2016/17.	To review and scrutinise the performance management information and, where appropriate, to require response or action from the Executive Committee.	Graeme Simpson, Head of Corporate Services	No.	
Corporate Policies and Strategies.	For potential review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during 2017/18.	Graeme Simpson, Head of Corporate Services	No.	
Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee Update	To receive an update from the Council's representative on matters considered at the last meeting (6 June 2017).	N/A	No.	

Committee Date: 18 July 2017			
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required
Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee Update	To receive an update from the Council's representative on matters considered at the last meeting (11 July 2017).	N/A	No.
Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel Update	To receive an update from the Council's representative on matters considered at the last meeting (14 July 2017).	N/A	No.

Committee Date: 5 September 2017			
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required
Performance Report – Quarter 1 2017/18.	To review and scrutinise the performance management information and, where appropriate, to require response or action from the Executive Committee.	Graeme Simpson, Head of Corporate Services	No.
Complaints Report	To consider – annual update.	Graeme Simpson, Head of Corporate Services	No.



Committee Date: 17 October 2017				
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required	
Housing, Renewal and Homelessness Strategy Review Monitoring Report	To consider – six month update.	Paula Baker, Housing Services Manager	No.	
Update from Joint Waste Team	To receive an update from the Joint Waste Team on the business plan.	Peter Tonge, Head of Community Services / Rachel Capon	No.	
Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee Update	To receive an update from the Council's representative on matters considered at the last meeting (12 September 2017).	N/A	No.	
Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel Update	To receive an update from the Council's representative on matters considered at the last meeting (8 September 2017).	N/A	No.	

Committee Date: 28 November 2017				
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required	
Performance Report – Quarter 2 2017/18.	To review and scrutinise the performance management information and, where appropriate, to require response or action from the Executive Committee.	Graeme Simpson, Head of Corporate Services	No.	
Review of Ubico	To consider – six month update.	Peter Tonge, Head of Community Services	No.	
Disabled Facilities Grants Review Monitoring Report	To consider - six monthly update.	Peter Tonge, Head of Community Services	No.	
Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee Update	To receive an update from the Council's representative on matters considered at the last meeting (14 November 2017).	N/A	No.	
Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel Update	To receive an update from the Council's representative on matters considered at the last meeting (8 November 2017).	N/A	No.	

Committee Date: 9 January 2018			
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required
Gloucestershire Families First Update	To consider – annual update.	Adrian Goode, Community Development Officer	No.

Committee Date: 6 February 2018			
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required
Annual review of the effectiveness of the Council's involvement in the Gloucestershire Health, Community and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee	In order to authorise payment of the Council's contribution to the running costs for the forthcoming year.	Graeme Simpson, Head of Corporate Services	No.

Committee Date: 20 March 2018				
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required	
Performance Report – Quarter 3 2017/18.	To review and scrutinise the performance management information and, where appropriate, to require response or action from the Executive Committee.	Graeme Simpson, Head of Corporate Services	No.	
Flood Risk Management Group Report	To receive an annual report on the progress against the Flood Risk Management Action Plan.	Peter Tonge, Head of Community Services	No.	

<b>Committee Date: 1 May 2018</b>				
<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Overview of Agenda Item</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required</b>	
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2018/19.	To approve the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for the forthcoming year.	Graeme Simpson, Head of Corporate Services	No.	
Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report 2017/18.	To approve the annual report as required by the Council's Constitution to ensure that the activities of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are promoted both internally and publicly to reinforce transparency and accountability in the democratic process.	Graeme Simpson, Head of Corporate Services	No.	
Housing, Renewal and Homelessness Strategy Review Monitoring Report	To consider – six month update.	Paula Baker, Housing Services Manager	No.	
Review of Ubico	To consider – six month update.	Peter Tonge, Head of Community Services	No.	
Customer Care Strategy	To consider - annual update.	Clare Evans, Communications and Policy Manager	No.	
Disabled Facilities Grants Review Monitoring Report	To consider - six monthly update.	Peter Tonge, Head of Community Services	No.	

## PENDING ITEMS

Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item
Community Safety Partnership	Agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 7 February 2017 that updates would be provided as the County Community Safety Partnership progressed.
Risk Management Strategy Review	Agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 14 June 2016.
Absence Management Policy Review	Agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 14 June 2016.
Financial Inclusion	Requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 April 2016 – report to be considered by the Committee prior to the Executive Committee.
<i>Economic Development and Tourism Strategy Monitoring Report</i>	<i>Pending outcome of Working Group Review.</i>
Review of Communications Strategy	June 2018
<i>Enviro-Crimes</i>	<i>Pending outcome of meeting on 2 May 2017.</i>
<i>Review of Borough News Monitoring Report</i>	<i>Pending outcome of Working Group Review.</i>



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