

# TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Executive Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	11 October 2017
<b>Subject:</b>	Review of Tewkesbury Borough News
<b>Report of:</b>	Councillor M Dean, Chair of Tewkesbury Borough News Working Group
<b>Corporate Lead:</b>	Mike Dawson, Chief Executive
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Leader of the Council, Councillor D J Waters
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	Three

## **Executive Summary:**

A member workshop was held on 10 October 2016 to gain feedback on corporate communications. One specific area discussed was Tewkesbury 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, and the high profile nature of the newspaper, it was agreed a formal review of the newspaper was required and that an Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group could undertake the work.

The report and final recommendations of the Working Group were presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September, and the committee recommended them to Executive Committee for approval.

## **Recommendation:**

**To accept the findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Working Group and to RESOLVE :**

- 1. That two magazine editions of Tewkesbury Borough News be published per year with a one-flick PDF online version placed in a prominent place on the Council's website.**
- 2. That Head of Corporate Services be authorised to**
  - a) Enter into a contract with Wychavon District Council for a 12-month trial period and to waive the Contract Rules accordingly.**
  - b) Engage with parish councils who do not currently submit news articles.**
  - c) Seek to work to maximise advertising income.**

## **Reasons for Recommendation:**

To ensure we have a cost-effective way of communicating with our residents, which is fit for purpose.

## **Resource Implications:**

If the Working Group's recommendations are approved by Executive Committee, the overall cost of Tewkesbury Borough News will be reduced by £4,066 per year.

**Legal Implications:**

The contract with Wychavon District Council is in the sum of approx. £21,000. The Council's Contract Rules require such contract values to be subject to a formal competitive process but it is proposed that the Rules be waived for the reasons set out in the report.

**Risk Management Implications:**

None.

**Performance Management Follow-up:**

The 12-month trial will be reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2018.

**Environmental Implications:**

None.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

- 1.1** Tewkesbury Borough News is the Council's main proactive communications method, which reaches all households in the Borough. Following a Member workshop held on 10 October 2016 to gain feedback on corporate communications, it was agreed that an Overview and Scrutiny review of the Tewkesbury Borough News would be worthwhile.

The Overview and Scrutiny Review Working Group was made up of the following Members:

Councillors Mrs G F Blackwell, M Dean (Chair), D T Foyle, Mrs S E Hillier-Richardson, Mrs H C McClain and Mrs P E Stokes.

Officer support was provided by the Head of Corporate Services, the Policy and Communications Manager, the Finance Manager, the Economic Development and Community Manager and the Joint Waste Team Officer.

- 1.2** The review took place over three sessions, as described within the final report, which is attached at Appendix 2. The report and final recommendations were presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September, and they endorsed the findings of the Working Group and recommended them to Executive Committee for approval.

## **2.0 SCOPE OF THE REVIEW**

- 2.1** The Terms of Reference of the review (see Appendix 1) asked the Working Group to investigate three options for the future of Tewkesbury Borough News, which were to:

- retain Tewkesbury Borough News in its current format and circulation;
- retain Tewkesbury Borough News but consider an alternative format and/or circulation e.g. digital options/issue twice-yearly/reduced circulation; or
- stop producing Tewkesbury Borough News.

**2.2** The three Working Group sessions were filled with a range of information and debate on the following:

- Background of Tewkesbury Borough News – including current format and cost.
- Feedback from citizens' panel on their views of Tewkesbury Borough News and what they would like in future.
- Detailed costings and mock-ups from two designers.
- Cost avoidance.
- Advertising.
- The pros and cons of magazine and newspaper formats.

Please refer to Appendix 2 for the details of the review sessions, including cost options.

### **3.0 FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

**3.1** Having considered all the information provided during the review, in particular the costings and the mock-up front covers, it was agreed:

- That two magazine editions of Tewkesbury Borough News be published per year with a one-flick PDF online version placed in a prominent place on the Council's website.
- That Head of Corporate Services be authorised to enter into a contract with Wychavon District Council for a 12-month trial period and to waive the Contract Rules accordingly.
- To engage with Parish Councils who do not currently submit news articles.
- To seek to work to maximise advertising income.

**3.2** The reasons for appointing Wychavon District Council are set out below:

- Able to call upon a full team of designers.
- Has experience in magazine design.
- Understands local government issues and challenges.
- Potential for them to support the Council in other areas of communications and design in the future if it was required.

### **4.0 CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES**

**4.1** The Contract Rules have been waived due to the fact that specialist consultants, solicitor, barrister, agents, artist or professional advisers are required and:

- there is no satisfactory alternative; or
- evidence indicates that there is likely to be no genuine competition; or
- it is, in the opinion of the Authorised Officer, in the Authority's best interest to engage a particular consultant, solicitor, barrister, agent, artist or adviser.

### **5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

**5.1** None.

## **6.0 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1** Two consultations were carried out with the Citizens Panel as part of the review.  
Operational managers were consulted in terms of the impact reducing to two editions would have on their services.

## **7.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

- 7.1** None.

## **8.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

- 8.1** None.

## **9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)**

- 9.1** None.

## **10.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)**

- 10.1** None.

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

- 11.1** Attached at Appendix 3.

## **12.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS**

- 12.1** None.

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**Background Papers:** None.

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**Appendices:**

1. Working Group Terms of Reference.
2. Report of the Working Group.
3. Equalities Impact Assessment.