TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Committee held at the Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Wednesday, 7 December 2011 commencing at 2:00 pm

Present:

Chairman Vice Chairman Councillor R J E Vines Councillor A L Keyte

and Councillors:

D M M Davies, J R Mason, Mrs J M Perez, Ms A E Ricks, D J Waters, B Whelan and Mrs C Wright

also present:

Councillors B C Calway

EX.94 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was taken as read.
- 94.2 The Chairman welcomed Councillor Brian Calway to the meeting and explained that Councillor Calway was in attendance for Agenda Item 7 Performance Management Report Quarter Two 2011/12.

EX.95 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 95.1 The Committee's attention was drawn to the Tewkesbury Borough Council Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 24 September 2007, and Members were reminded that they had signed an undertaking in their Declaration of Acceptance of Office to observe the Code in carrying out their duties.
- 95.2 The following declarations were made:

Councillor	Application No./Item	Nature of Interest (where disclosed)	Declared Action in respect of Disclosure
J R Mason	Item 9 – Discretionary Relief Policy.	Is a Council representative on the Winchcombe Town Trust.	Would not speak or vote and would leave the meeting for the consideration of this item.

J R Mason	Item 10 – Economic Development & Tourism Strategy 2012- 2015 'Regenerating the Growing Economy'.	Is a Winchcombe Town Council representative on the Group that helps to organise Winchcombe Walking Festival.	Would speak and vote.
Mrs J M Perez	Item 9 – Discretionary Relief Policy.	Is a Brockworth Parish Council adviser on the Brockworth Community Project Management Committee.	Would not speak or vote and would leave the meeting for the consideration of this item.
Ms A E Ricks	Item 9 – Discretionary Relief Policy.	Is a Council representative on the Tewkesbury Swimming Bath Trust.	Would not speak or vote and would leave the meeting for the consideration of this item.
D J Waters	Item 9 – Discretionary Relief Policy.	Is a Council representative on the Tewkesbury Swimming Bath Trust.	Would not speak or vote and would leave the meeting for the consideration of this item.
B Whelan	Item 9 – Discretionary Relief Policy.	Is a Council representative on the Tewkesbury Swimming Bath Trust.	Would not speak or vote and would leave the meeting for the consideration of
		Is a Trustee of Churchdown Community Association.	this item.
		Is Chairman of GL3 Community Hub.	
		Is a representative on Churchdown Neighbourhood Partnership.	
Mrs C Wright	Item 9 – Discretionary Relief Policy.	Is a Council representative on the Prior's Park Neighbourhood Project.	Would not speak or vote and would leave the meeting for the consideration of this item.

EX.96 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2011, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

EX.97 ITEMS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

97.1 There were no items from members of the public.

EX.98 SIX MONTH FORWARD PLAN

- 98.1 Attention was drawn to the Committee's Six Month Forward Plan, circulated at Pages No. 10-15. Members were asked to consider the Plan.
- A Member questioned why the Homes Bonus Scheme was not included in the Plan and whether urban vs rural flood risk would be included within the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level Two report. In response the Director of Community explained that, in terms of the Council's housing responsibilities, a draft Housing Strategy would be considered at the end of February for consultation and the Strategy would need to be formally adopted by July. In terms of the Homes Bonus funding, the Director of Resources indicated that this would be included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. Referring to the flood risk issues in rural and urban areas, the Director of Development explained that this would be picked up within the Joint Core Strategy. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level Two work had been particularly raised through the extraordinary Council meeting in October and would be considered by the Executive Committee in the New Year.
- 98.3 Having considered the information provided it was

RESOLVED: That the Six Month Forward Plan be **NOTED**.

EX.99 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT - QUARTER TWO 2011/12

- 99.1 The report of the Corporate Improvement & Performance Manager, circulated at Pages No. 16-30, asked Members to consider the Council's performance against a range of non-financial and financial indicators, projects and financial assessments, and through that, to challenge and manage the Council's performance.
- 99.2 Members were advised that, at its meeting on 15 November 2011, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee had considered the full Service Summary Plans. The Committee's findings were presented to the Executive Committee for comment and action at Appendix A to the report. The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Councillor B C Calway, was in attendance to offer clarification or answer any questions that may arise.

99.3 During the discussion which ensued, particular attention was drawn to the following:

Overview & Scrutiny Committee Comment	Executive Committee Response
P110 – Commercial Services – Business Performance. Why there had been significantly greater compliance with food hygiene legislation in quarter 2 compared with quarter 1.	The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee questioned whether follow-up inspections were undertaken to ensure compliance where issues had been found. In response the Director of Development explained that this would depend on the issues identified. The reason for the increase in the number of inspections was that the introduction of a new regime had resulted in a number of premises receiving a different score than previously and this had meant they had requested a re-inspection.
P111 – Commercial Services – Service Delivery Plan Actions. Sought an update on the outcome of the first meeting of the Safety Advisory Group.	The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee felt that the Committee had not received a full response to the query. In response the Director of Development explained that the Group was ad-hoc and the idea was that, if there was a major event planned, the Group offered an opportunity for the relevant Authorities to get together to discuss how those events would be managed. The first meeting had been to discuss how the Cheese Rolling Festival would be managed. However, the event was subsequently withdrawn due to the number of Regulations which would require compliance.
P114 – Development Control & Conservation – Financial Performance. Concern expressed that the large scale major application had still not been submitted.	The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee indicated that this issue was regularly raised by the Committee due to concern about the potential implications for the Council's budget. It was felt that the Executive Committee needed to address the concerns. The Lead Member for Finance & Asset Management explained that there were difficulties in trying to forecast, in the Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy, what income was likely through planning applications as the Council

had no control over when applications would be submitted. However, there was a need to try and forecast the income from major applications as there could otherwise be an adverse effect on the service i.e. not enough staff to cover the service when required. Officers tried to make the best estimate they could in terms of the income that would be received from planning applications, however, if that did not balance out consistently over a number of years then the approach would need to be considered. P116 - Direct Services - Financial The Chairman of the Overview & Performance. Scrutiny Committee was of the view that the rental costs of the Portacabin at Swindon Road Depot should have Why the premises had cost more been anticipated and included in the than anticipated. original agreement. In response the Director of Community indicated that since the original shared service agreement had been made with Cheltenham Borough Council things had moved on considerably in terms of the future of Depot Services. The issue of additional rental costs could not therefore have been foreseen. Now that a decision had been made by the Council about the future delivery of Depot Services the issues would be resolved. P117 - Direct Services - Service The Chairman of the Overview & Delivery Plan Actions. Scrutiny Committee questioned whether it was the Council's premises or practices that were being Further information sought on the inspected. In response the Director of health & safety inspections Community indicated that the Health scheduled for November. & Safety Executive was inspecting every refuse collection service across the Country. Cheltenham Borough Council had had an inspection in November and Tewkesbury Borough would be having its inspection in January. The Health & Safety Executive would be inspecting the premises and practices of each organisation. There had been an incident at the Depot which had involved the Health & Safety Executive but that issue was not related to the inspection which was routinely being carried out.

P118 – Tourism & Economic Development – Business Performance.

Why did the figures for the Winchcombe TIC cumulative net cost v budget 2011/12 appear to be erratic compared to the equivalent figures for Tewkesbury TIC.

In response to a Member query about whether staff at Winchcombe TIC had been instructed not to purchase anything to sell in the Centre, the Director of Resources explained that the decision not to purchase stock had been an over enthusiastic response to the request of the Corporate Management Team for staff to carefully consider all expenditure. Clearly stock for the Tourist Information Centre was necessary and the misunderstanding had now been resolved.

Grounds Maintenance – Operational Risks.

Had Planning Officers been tasked with exploring the availability of suitable land to address the lack of future burial capacity at Tewkesbury Cemetery. The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee noted that no information had been available in response to this query at the Committee meeting and he questioned whether the lack of Cemetery space was being addressed. In response the Director of Development advised that this was a medium term, rather than an immediate, problem and would be addressed through the Joint Core Strategy process. In addition the Director of Community indicated that there were 6-10 years of use left at Tewkesbury Cemetery and Officers had been looking for sites. It was her view that the timescales involved in the Joint Core Strategy process would be fine in terms of finding a timely solution.

P124 Housing Enabling – Business Performance

Would the target for the number of affordable homes delivered be achieved.

The Lead Member for Built Environment indicated that the Government had, this week, issued a paper which stated that the number of affordable houses built in the six month period to date for the whole Country was 500. He was of the view that much more needed to be done nationwide to ensure affordable homes were delivered.

P142 – Finance Business Performance.

Further clarification sought as to why the percentage of supplier invoices paid within 32 days of In response to a query as to when the new finance system would be implemented, the Director of Resources advised that the new system now fully replicated what the Council had in place before and

receipt was currently red.	Officers could now move forward and begin developing new opportunities. The first option would be the introduction of telephone payments for things like garden waste, Council Tax etc.
P144 – Human Resources – Business Performance. A Member was of the view that the graph for sickness absence should be red rather than amber.	In response to concerns about the Council's sickness absence rates, the Director of Resources explained that the latest projections indicated that the Council should reach its 8 day target despite the below target performance earlier in the year. In addition the Chief Executive advised that the Human Resources Team kept a close eye on the statistics and took a positive approach with absence management. It was considered that the Council's system was supportive yet robust and this was shown by the fact that its sickness record compared favourably with that of other Authorities.

99.4 The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee indicated that the financial information was of overriding concern to his Committee and it was this that needed to be closely monitored. The Chairman of the Executive Committee thanked Councillor Calway and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for the input and, having considered the report and information provided, it was

RESOLVED: That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's comments on the

Performance Management report for Quarter Two of

2011/12 be **NOTED**.

EX.100 REVIEW OF WHISTLE-BLOWING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

- 100.1 The report of the Borough Solicitor, circulated at Pages No. 31-43, attached a revised Whistle-Blowing Policy & Procedure which Members were asked to consider and approve.
- Members were advised that the Council had a responsibility to ensure that high standards of openness, probity and accountability were maintained. Part of the work towards those standards involved having a Policy & Procedure in place to ensure that people felt they could report concerns about the Council's work without fear of reprisal, victimisation or harassment for doing so. The Council's Whistle-Blowing Policy & Procedure had been reviewed and updated to ensure that it reflected organisational change and best practice.
- 100.3 Members expressed the view that the document was clear and succinct and accordingly it was

RESOLVED: That the revised Whistle-Blowing Policy and Procedure be

APPROVED.

EX.101 DISCRETIONARY RELIEF POLICY

- 101.1 The report of the Revenues & Benefits Manager, circulated at Pages No. 44-93, attached a revised Discretionary Relief Policy which the Executive Committee was asked to adopt.
- A number of Members of the Committee had declared a prejudicial interest in the item which meant that the Committee was not quorate and accordingly it was

RESOLVED: That consideration of the revised Discretionary Relief Policy

be **DEFERRED** due to the number of declared prejudicial interests resulting in the Committee being inquorate to determine this matter.

EX.102 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM STRATEGY 2012 - 2015 REGENERATING AND GROWING THE ECONOMY

- The report of the Economic Development & Tourism Manager, circulated at Pages No. 94-125, attached the Economic Development & Tourism Strategy 2012-2015: 'Regenerating and Growing the Economy' and asked Members to approve the document.
- Members were advised that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee had identified a need to carry out a mid-term review of the Economic Development & Tourism Strategy and had established a Working Group to help develop the Strategy. The revised Strategy had been reported to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 15 November 2011 at which it had been resolved that the Strategy be adopted and referred to the Executive Committee for approval subject to an amendment to strengthen Paragraph 3.3 to demonstrate recognition of population projections for the Borough and to show that the Council was planning for future housing and employment need through the Joint Core Strategy.
- The Committee was advised that a need had been identified for a Strategy that was focussed on current issues as well as issues that may arise over the coming three years. The previous Strategy had been a five year Strategy but it had been agreed that, in the current economic climate and with the ongoing development of the Joint Core Strategy, it seemed sensible to develop a three year Strategy instead. Consultation on the draft Strategy had taken place between 27 September and 21 October 2011 and the responses to the consultation were attached to the report at Appendix 1. The Strategy Action Plan was attached at Appendix 2 and Members were reminded that, whilst the Strategy involved quite a lot of work, it was crucial that much of it would be delivered with, or by, the Council's partners. A number of the actions were already underway i.e. the new Business Support Scheme had been approved by the Council; the Tewkesbury Town Centre Master Plan project was up and running; and Opportunity Tewkesbury Local Jobs for Local People was being established.
- Referring to Page No. 117, Focus 1 Sustain & Encourage Growth of Existing Businesses, a Member indicated that, if there was a need to work with planning in encouraging a positive approach to more flexible provision/uses of premises, maybe some weight should be given to the Strategy within the Planning Framework. In response the Director of Development indicated that the Strategy would be one of a number of material considerations for planning applications and in practice discussions already took place between Officers to try and encourage positive growth in businesses. A Member drew attention to the Paragraphs referring to the expected declines in agriculture, manufacturing and the public sector and the need to tackle worklessness and questioned whether there was an

opportunity for offering apprenticeships. In response Members were advised that there was a need to encourage people to join those sectors which were expected to grow such as banking; finance and insurance; and care and tourism. There was also a need to get people into training which would help 'future proof' the Borough's working population. This was one of the areas that Gloucestershire Enterprise wished to discuss with the Borough Council. In terms of getting people into work, Members were referred to the project being run by Job Centre Plus called Opportunity Tewkesbury – Local Jobs for Local People. It had been identified that only 25% of vacancies within the area were advertised by the Job Centre and this meant there were many vacancies that local people would not necessarily be aware of. This was a pilot scheme being run by Tewkesbury Job Centre which, if successful, would be rolled out in other areas. There was some concern expressed that the project should be called Opportunity Tewkesbury Borough to ensure people understood that it was a Boroughwide project. However Members were advised that, whilst Officers could discuss concerns with the Job Centre and try to ensure it was absolutely clear that it would include people from anywhere in the Borough, it would not be possible for the Council to dictate the name of the project. The Chief Executive explained that the project was being piloted with the Borough Council and the Department for Work & Pensions through Job Centre Plus and Tewkesbury Job Centre had been chosen due to its close links with the Borough Council's Economic Development Team. As it was a national project it was great for Tewkesbury to have been chosen. A Member expressed concern that, if businesses across the Borough thought the project was just for Tewkesbury Town, there was a danger that they would not participate so it was of absolute importance that it was made clear that the project was Boroughwide. In response Members were advised that many of the businesses that had attended the recent B2B event at Sudeley Castle had expressed an interest in helping with the project and participation across the Borough would be encouraged.

- During the discussion which ensued, a Member indicated that he would have liked to have seen Highnam Business Centre, as well as Steadings Business Centre, included in Paragraph 2.2 of the Strategy and that it should be noted within the Strategy that the Localism Bill was now an Act. The Member also expressed the view that, when discussing the draft National Planning Policy Framework, there needed to be positive action taken to address the proposed homes to be built in rural areas through the Joint Core Strategy. Referring to the fact that Brockworth was in the process of establishing a Business Club, a Member indicated that the Parish Council was asking Brockworth Community Project to run the Club and in the meantime work by the Parish Council had been put on hold. In response Members were advised that the Economic Development Team would be happy to help anyone that was interested in setting up a Business Group should it be required.
- Having considered the report and information provided it was

RESOLVED: That the Economic Development & Tourism Strategy 2012-

2015: 'Regenerating and Growing the Economy' be

APPROVED.

EX.103 REVIEW OF THE LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

- The report of the Strategic Partnership Officer, circulated at Pages No. 126-137, set out a proposed new method of partnership working which removed a lot of the fixed organisational structure that had made up the Local Strategic Partnership and put in place a flexible approach which recognised Tewkesbury Borough Council's role as strategic lead for the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of its community. Members were asked to approve the new Framework for Strategic Partnership Working; to agree that the development of the detailed arrangements be undertaken by the Lead Member, Chief Executive and Director of Community; and that an element of flexibility be built into the programme to allow for feedback from key partners.
- The Director of Community explained that it was recognised that the current Local Strategic Partnership had not been functioning satisfactorily and, along with the fact that a number of significant Policy and financial changes had been made at a local and national level, it was considered time to review the Local Strategic Partnership. The proposed structure of the Strategic Partnership Framework was attached at Pages No. 133 & 134. The new overarching Framework would be more flexible and less bureaucratic, though Members were advised that there were still some detailed arrangements to work on.
- During the discussion which ensued, Members expressed the view that one of the main issues with the Local Strategic Partnership had been the lack of information getting through to Members. It was hoped that any new Framework would include a much better Communication Strategy. The Chairman accepted that the Local Strategic Partnership had not been as effective as he would have liked and it was anticipated that the new arrangements would be a great improvement. In response to a query as to whether the Council had a database of all Community & Neighbourhood Project Groups in the Borough, the Director of Community confirmed that it did and that the database was well used.
- Having considered the report and information provided it was

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the new framework for Strategic Partnership Working be **APPROVED**.
- 2. That the development of the detailed arrangements be undertaken by the Lead Member, Chief Executive and Director of Community.
- 3. That an element of flexibility is built into the programme to allow for feedback from key partners.

EX.104 GLOUCESTERSHIRE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

The report of the Leisure & Culture Manager and Strategic Partnership Officer, circulated at Pages No. 138-141, sought to secure agreement to signing the Gloucestershire Armed Forces Community Covenant with the aim that the Borough Council would show support and improve strategic planning and service delivery through increased information exchange and sharing of best practice.

- 104.2 The Director of Community explained that the Government had launched a Community Covenant Scheme which aimed to strengthen the ties between members of the Armed Forces community, the wider community in which they lived and local public agencies. The aims of the Community Covenant were to encourage local communities to support the Armed Forces communities in their areas; to nurture public understanding and awareness of issues affecting the Armed Forces community; to recognise and remember the sacrifices faced by the Armed Forces community; to encourage activities which helped to integrate the Armed Forces community into local life; and to encourage the Armed Forces community to help and support the wider community, whether through participation in events and joint projects, or other forms of engagement. A Community Covenant Grant Scheme had been created to support the aims of the Community Covenant and, once the Covenant had been signed, a Community Covenant Partnership would be established and applications could then be made to the Grant Scheme. The Armed Forces Communities in the Borough included the Allied Rapid Reaction Corp (ARRC) at Imjin Barracks, Innsworth and the Defence, Storage and Distribution Centre (DSDC) at Ashchurch.
- 104.3 Attention was drawn to Paragraph 2.3.4 of the report which set out the initial discussions that had been undertaken in response to the potential for funding via the Community Covenant. Members were advised that the Council had been approached by the ARRC Headquarters to improve the sports and community facilities on the site which would then be made available to the local community as well as the military and their families. If Members agreed to sign the Covenant, Officers would work closely with ARRC and other partners to progress the project and identify the need. Once the full implications were known a further report would be submitted to the Executive Committee.
- Members agreed that they fully supported the signing of a Community Covenant and encouraged the forging of closer links with the Armed Forces Communities within the Borough.
- 104.5 Accordingly it was

RESOLVED: That the Gloucestershire Armed Forces Community

Covenant be signed.

EX.105 SEPARATE BUSINESS

105.1 The Chairman proposed, and it was

RESOLVED: That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act

1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the

Act.

EX.106 SEPARATE MINUTES

The separate Minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2011, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

EX.107 LAND AT THE PARK, WINGMOOR

(Exempt –Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 –Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))

107.1 Members approved the sale of land at The Park, Wingmoor.

The meeting closed at 3:50 pm