

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Committee held at the Council Offices,
Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Wednesday, 10 June 2015 commencing at
2:00 pm**

Present:

Chairman
Vice Chairman

Councillor R J E Vines
Councillor D J Waters

and Councillors:

R E Allen, Mrs K J Berry, R A Bird, D M M Davies, M Dean, Mrs E J MacTiernan and J R Mason

EX.1 ANNOUNCEMENTS

1.1 The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was taken as read.

EX.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 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.

2.2 There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

EX.3 MINUTES

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2015, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

EX.4 ITEMS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

4.1 There were no items from members of the public on this occasion.

EX.5 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

5.1 Attention was drawn to the Committee's Forward Plan, circulated at Page No. 10-14. Members were asked to consider the Plan.

5.2 Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED: That the Committee's Forward Plan be **NOTED**.

EX.6 APPOINTMENT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS AND SUPPORT MEMBERS

- 6.1 Attention was drawn to the Lead Member Portfolios circulated at Page No. 15. Members were asked to consider the information provided.
- 6.2 The Chairman explained that, following the Annual Council Meeting, the membership of the Executive Committee had reduced from 10 to nine Members with many of the Committee being new. He also indicated that, at the Annual Council meeting, he had proposed that each Lead Member would have a Support Member. Historically, there had been Shadow Members from different Political Groups but he felt this had made things difficult and as such he had proposed that the new Support Members should be from the same Political Group as the Lead Member.
- 6.3 Referring to the information circulated with the Agenda, a Member advised that the Gloucestershire Waste Partnership no longer existed and therefore should be deleted from the Clean and Green Environment Portfolio. Another Member expressed the view that it would be useful to have a list of the Officers responsible for each Portfolio so that it was clear who they should refer to. In response, the Chief Executive indicated that he would ensure this was done. In terms of timing and content of the Lead Member meetings, he explained that they were largely for the benefit of the Lead Member and how they were shaped would be down to the Member and the Officers responsible for the Portfolio. The aim was to provide a regular update on what was happening within the Portfolio and also to provide an early indication of issues that were likely to arise so that the Member could input where necessary. Where information provided was of a confidential nature this would be made clear to the Member beforehand and they would then need to bear that in mind.
- 6.4 A Member expressed the view that Lead Member Briefings were an excellent idea as long as the Officers involved were fully committed to the process. In response, the Chief Executive agreed that teamwork between Lead Members and Officers would not work without there being quality support from both sides. If any Members felt that they were not getting what they needed from the Officers then they should speak to the relevant Group Manager or a Member of the Corporate Leadership Team.
- 6.5 Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED: That the following Portfolio Holders and their Support Members be **APPOINTED:**

Leader of the Council/Corporate Portfolio –
Councillor R J E Vines.

Corporate Portfolio Support Member –
Councillor Mrs G F Blackwell.

Customer Focus Portfolio –
Councillor M Dean.

Customer Focus Support Member –
Councillor Mrs H C McLain.

Organisational Development Portfolio Holder –
Councillor Mrs E J MacTiernan.

Organisational Development Support Member –
Councillor Mrs J Greening.

Finance and Asset Management Portfolio –
Councillor D J Waters.

Finance and Asset Management Support Member –
Councillor A J Evans.

Built Environment Portfolio Holder –
Councillor D M M Davies.

Built Environment Support Member –
Councillor R D East.

Clean and Green Environment Portfolio Holder –
Councillor J R Mason.

Clean and Green Environment Support Member –
Councillor M J Williams.

Community Portfolio Holder –
Councillor Mrs K J Berry.

Community Support Member –
Councillor Mrs P E Stokes.

Economic Development/Promotion Portfolio Holder –
Councillor R A Bird.

Economic Development/Promotion Support Member –
Councillor P D Surman.

Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder –
Councillor R E Allen.

Health and Wellbeing Support Member –
Councillor T A Spencer.

EX.7 HIGH LEVEL SERVICE PLAN SUMMARIES

- 7.1 The report of the Corporate Services Group Manager, circulated at Pages No. 16-49, set out the high level service plans for Corporate Services; Democratic Services; Development; Environmental and Housing Services; Finance and Asset Management; and Revenues and Benefits. Members were asked to consider and endorse the Plans.
- 7.2 Members were advised that each service grouping had been asked to prepare a Plan which set out the key service actions for the year along with the progress made on the key actions from the previous year. Those Service Plans detailed the non-Council Plan actions only as the Council Plan actions were assessed through the Council Plan Performance Tracker. The Tracker was monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its observations were then considered by the Executive Committee. When holding team meetings, Group Managers used their Service Plan and Performance Tracker actions in tandem.
- 7.3 The Chief Executive introduced the Service Plan for Corporate Services and explained that this was a new service group in the Council's structure which had been formed following the Council decision taken in April regarding the restructure of the Chief Executive's Unit. The new Group Manager for Corporate Services was now in place but there were a number of other structural changes which were still required and should result in an increase in the Council's corporate project management capacity. Due to these changes, the Plans that had been in place for the previous year would be quite different but they did offer a good reference point for what would be happening in the forthcoming year.

- 7.4 In terms of the key points, the Chief Executive advised that there had been significant improvements in 2014/15 within Customer Services and last year a major review had been commissioned. Customer Services was currently working on its standards and the results of the review would be fed into that work. There had also been a major review of ICT in the previous year and from that an action plan had been produced which was a big step forward in terms of identifying strengths and weaknesses; it had been identified that, generally, the Council was providing a good service despite some minor glitches. In addition, the Corporate Peer Review had taken place in November and had been extremely successful. In respect of ICT, a Member indicated that she had recently been getting a pop-up when she switched her computer on which said 'for IT only'; she questioned what this was. In response, the Corporate Services Group Manager undertook to investigate and advise Members accordingly.
- 7.5 A Member questioned what was happening currently in terms of Ubico as he, along with the local Parish Clerk, had been finding it difficult to contact people in respect of grass cutting. In response, the Deputy Chief Executive indicated that there had been some minor 'teething problems' in terms of communication since the Ubico transfer. Officers were working to put into place a more effective system of communication and a full list of email addresses and telephone numbers would be provided in due course. A Member indicated that when the waste service was in-house he had never had a problem contacting staff and he had thought that when the service transferred to Ubico the situation would improve further; however he had now been contacted by a number of people who had become frustrated at the lack of communication with Ubico.
- 7.6 Referring to the coming year, the Chief Executive indicated that the review of Customer Services was ongoing as was the ICT Action Plan which looked to invest in and further develop ICT. There would also be a major re-design of the Reception Area, which was linked to the ICT work that was developing the 'channel shift programme', and the Workforce Strategy which was being developed by Human Resources. In addition to this, the Council Plan was to be redeveloped and there was a lot of work to be done on this as it was a full review.
- 7.7 In terms of the Democratic Services Service Plan, the Borough Solicitor indicated that this covered Elections, Electoral Registration and Member Services. Last year had been dominated by Individual Electoral Registration (IER) and the election which had been the Council's first combined Parliamentary and Local Election. Into the current year IER would still be a dominating factor as the Council would have to run its annual canvass under that process; this would also be a challenge. In addition, the Police Crime and Commissioner Elections would be held in May 2016. During 2014/15 a temporary Scheme for Members' remuneration had been made and a complete review would be required by April 2016. Another major piece of work due for completion was the revision of the Council's Constitution and the Scheme of Delegation to Officers; the latter would require a commitment from other Officers as their input would be necessary to ensure the Scheme met everyone's requirements. The Borough Solicitor also reminded all present that Member Services was designed to be the main link from Members to Officers and they would always be able to help any Member that needed it; particularly in terms of contacting Officers and getting answers to queries.
- 7.8 The Deputy Chief Executive advised that 2014/15 had been the first full year since the creation of the Group Manager roles within the new management structure. She felt the roles were really working well and were now starting to take on project work. In terms of actions that had been completed in 2014/15, she advised that the Ubico transfer had taken place in April and had involved a number of staff across the Council; there was still more to do, particularly regarding communication with the Ubico team, but this was being addressed. Flood and drainage schemes were ongoing and the long awaited work in Tirley had now begun. A selection of flood

resilience work was ongoing with villages along the River Severn and this was being supported by the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC). In terms of rural affordable housing, Members were advised that the Council was focusing on the more difficult schemes in rural locations; there were some quite complicated land assembly issues but despite this real progress was being made. In respect of housing benefits, an amazing improvement in performance had been seen since the start of the Revenues and Benefits review; performance was in the top quartile and £230,000 savings should be made over two years. In addition to that work, a 'Financial Inclusion Partnership' had been set up which would focus on those challenged and vulnerable individuals in the Borough; the early signs were of good outcomes from that work which was extremely pleasing. In terms of the Asset Management Strategy, Officers were focussing on priority assets and there was much more work to do but there was at least a clearer sense of direction now. There had been some issues in terms of planning delivery and performance with there being a significant uplift in applications at the same time as a number of issues with staffing; this was being addressed and those team members that had left were being replaced. The last key action to draw to Members' attention was the creation of the Tewkesbury Town Regeneration Partnership; this was still in its early stages but was already helping the relationship between the Borough and Town Councils which in turn meant good things for the Town.

- 7.9 Referring to the key actions for 2015/16, the Deputy Chief Executive advised that a new Economic Development Strategy was due to be put together and Officers were already looking at the tools that were available to the Council to understand its priorities in this regard, and how it could promote the economic growth of the area. The Council was also recruiting a Community Funding Officer who would have the remit to maximise the external funding that was brought into the area. In addition, there were a number of longstanding actions due for completion such as the resolution of the 'missing link' section of the Riverside Walk in Tewkesbury Town; the achievement of the gold standard by the homelessness team, this would be a major piece of work; the systems review in Planning and Environmental Health; and training around safeguarding for taxi drivers.
- 7.10 A Member advised that, at a recent Parish Council meeting, there had been a presentation from a County Council Officer in respect of emergency planning and one of the Parish Councillors had been insistent that the Borough Council had not done anything in terms of flood resilience since 2007. She was extremely concerned that this seemed to be the view of many and that a majority of people did not believe how much money had gone into flood alleviation since the 2007 floods. The Councillor expressed the view that some information should go into the Borough News to ensure people understood how much the threat of flooding had diminished due to the work undertaken by the Borough Council and its partners. The Member was reassured that an article would be included in the winter edition of the Borough News as well as the next edition of 'Parish Matters'. In offering further clarification, the Chief Executive indicated that those properties at risk of flooding received a lot of information from the Borough Council and he hoped they felt reassured by that.
- 7.11 In response to a query about Local Development Orders, the Deputy Chief Executive indicated that there were certain places in the Borough where permitted development rights had been removed and the Orders were part of the process for addressing this. It was understood that Bishop's Cleeve and Hucclecote were the two main areas affected by this situation so they were being addressed first. After that, the process would be rolled out to other affected areas. In terms of planning at a local level, a Member expressed the view that she was often dismayed by the lack of knowledge that was evident from some Parish Councillors when they were asked to consider planning applications in their areas. She felt that all Parish Councils would benefit from being offered some training from Officers at the Borough Council and, in response, the Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the

Council's Development Manager had recently run a Parish event on enforcement and, following the success of that session, he planned to do other sessions on planning matters to help Parish Councillors with their roles.

- 7.12 In respect of the Service Plan for One Legal, the Borough Solicitor advised that 2014/15 had been dominated by the extension to the business for the Service. Gloucester City Council's Legal Service had joined One Legal relatively quickly and the One Legal service also acted for Ubico, Gloucester City Homes, Cheltenham Borough Homes and the Leisure Trust. For 2015/16 it was hoped that consistency of systems for all three Councils would be achieved as this would maximise efficiencies and ensure best value. The staffing of One Legal had been taxing but now, with the exception of planning, the section was fully staffed and the Borough Solicitor indicated that she was very pleased with the appointments made. In particular, the appointment of a planning advocate was good news.
- 7.13 Having considered the information provided, it was

RESOLVED: That the 2015/16 service plans be **ENDORSED**.

EX.8 VOLUNTEERING POLICY - MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC VOLUNTEERING WITH TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

- 8.1 The report of the Corporate Services Group Manager, circulated at Pages No. 50-64, set out phase one of the Volunteering Policy for Members of the Public who wish to Volunteer with Tewkesbury Borough Council. Members were asked to approve the policy with effect from 1 July 2015.
- 8.2 Members were advised that the Volunteering Policy would be introduced in two phases. The first phase set out the Volunteering Policy for Members of the Public who wished to Volunteer with Tewkesbury Borough Council and the second phase would set out how the Council would support employees who wished to do volunteer work within the community or for charitable institutions. The Council already engaged some volunteers as litter pickers in the Borough and was now looking to use volunteers in the Tewkesbury Tourist Information and Heritage and Visitor Centre. A Policy was required to encourage and support members of the public who wished to volunteer and to provide a framework for the Council in using them.
- 8.3 It was explained that a volunteer was a person who donated their time, skills and experience without receiving any form of compensation and the Policy before Members would apply in all situations where a member of the public was looking for a volunteering opportunity with the Council. The Policy set out clearly the Council's commitment to volunteers, the procedures and processes that needed to be followed and the nature of the volunteering relationship. It was anticipated that the Policy would help the Council to deliver services and improve communities as well as helping to build a robust and resilient society by enabling individuals to get involved in activities that benefitted the community, the environment and the relationships between communities and the Council. There were a number of benefits to individuals when they volunteered which included: personal achievement and development of self-worth; broadening of a person's outlook of the community; transference of a person's skills and experience to the community; development of a person's skills and experience; improving employability; creation of a 'can do' attitude; increase in social health and wellbeing; and help to adjust to the future i.e. retirement prospects.

8.4 The Deputy Chief Executive indicated that the second phase of the Policy would focus on the Council's staff volunteering elsewhere. This would work on a 'brokerage' basis whereby staff could volunteer whilst still maintaining their work with the Council. The businesses that used the brokerage scheme would pay a small amount to it to ensure they got the right volunteer support.

8.5 Members felt the Policy before them was a good idea and, accordingly, it was

RESOLVED: That the Volunteering Policy (Phase One) for Members of the Public Volunteering with Tewkesbury Borough Council be **APPROVED** with effect from 1 July 2015.

EX.9 SEPARATE BUSINESS

9.1 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.10 SEPARATE MINUTES

10.1 The separate Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2015, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

EX.11 TEWKESBURY RUGBY CLUB - DEED OF VARIATION AND DEED OF PRIORITY

(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))

11.1 Members noted the action taken in accordance with the Urgency Procedure in respect of the Rugby Club Lease.

The meeting closed at 3:25 pm