

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the
Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Tuesday, 29 November 2016
commencing at 4:30 pm**

Present:

Chair
Vice Chair

Councillor P W Awford
Councillor Mrs G F Blackwell

and Councillors:

K J Cromwell, Mrs J E Day, R D East, D T Foyle, Mrs J Greening (Substitute for G J Bocking),
Mrs R M Hatton, Mrs H C McLain, T A Spencer, Mrs P E Stokes, M G Sztymiak,
H A E Turbyfield and M J Williams

also present:

Councillors R E Garnham and Mrs E J MacTiernan

OS.49 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 49.1 The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was taken as read.
- 49.2 The Chair welcomed Councillors R E Garnham and Mrs E J MacTiernan to the meeting. Councillor Garnham was the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel and would be providing an update at Agenda Item 7, and Councillor MacTiernan was the Lead Member for Organisational Development and was present as an observer.
- 49.3 It was noted that this would be the last meeting for the Council's Environmental Health Manager, David Steels, who was leaving the authority in December and the Chair thanked him for his hard work and wished him luck with his new role on behalf of the Committee.

OS.50 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

- 50.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors G J Bocking and P D Surman. Councillor Mrs J Greening would be acting as a substitute for the meeting.

OS.51 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 51.1 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.
- 51.2 There were no declarations made on this occasion.

OS.52 MINUTES

- 52.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2016, copies of which had been circulated were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

OS.53 CONSIDERATION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

- 53.1 Attention was drawn to the Executive Committee Forward Plan, circulated at Pages No. 13-16. Members were asked to determine whether there were any questions for the relevant Lead Members and what support the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could give to the work contained within the Plan.
- 53.2 A Member noted that there were currently no Agenda items scheduled for the meeting in March 2017 and the Chief Executive advised that, whilst it was likely that items would come forward in time, he would have a look at the Forward Plan and see if this could be addressed. A Member indicated that the Forward Plan currently showed that the Executive Committee was due to receive the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy at its meeting on 4 January 2017, however, the report of the Working Group had not yet been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and therefore that date could not be achieved. In response the Economic and Community Development Manager advised that the Working Group had met on a number of occasions and he had previously circulated a Member Update setting out the progress which had been made. Since that time, a seminar had been held for all Members at which representatives from Bruton Knowles had provided feedback on the economic assessment and employment land review which had been undertaken to inform the strategy. The information and work which had been carried out was currently being collated in order to create the strategy and it was anticipated that the report would be taken to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 7 February 2017.
- 53.3 It was
- RESOLVED**
1. That the Executive Committee Forward Plan be **NOTED**.
 2. That the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy be moved from the meeting on 4 January 2017 to 15 March 2017.

OS.54 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

- 54.1 Attention was drawn to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2016/17, circulated at Pages No. 17-21, which Members were asked to consider.
- 54.2 The Head of Corporate Services indicated that it was intended to bring forward the Review of the Effectiveness of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, currently scheduled for the meeting on 7 February 2017, to the meeting on 10 January 2017. He reminded Members that Ann Reeder from Frontline Consulting had observed the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in June 2016 and her recommendations would be considered in the report. With regard to the Grounds Maintenance Update, which was due to be considered at the meeting on 21 March 2017, it was suggested that it might be more appropriate to combine this with the Review of Ubico on 2 May 2017, rather than have two separate reports, and Members agreed that was sensible. The Head of Corporate Services went on to explain that he was proposing to establish an Overview and Scrutiny Working Group to look at the Borough News; this was something which had come out of a communications workshop which had been held for Members earlier in the year. If Members were

agreeable, he intended to include this as a pending item within the Work Programme and a report would be brought to the Committee setting out the

proposed Terms of Reference for the Working Group when the Communications and Policy and Manager returned from maternity leave.

54.3 It was subsequently

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme be amended as follows:

- Review of Effectiveness of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be brought forward to the meeting on 10 January 2017;
- Grounds Maintenance Update due to be considered at the meeting in March 2017 to be combined with the Review of Ubico on 2 May 2017; and
- a report to be brought to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to establish a Working Group to undertake a review of the Borough News.

OS.55 GLOUCESTERSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL UPDATE

55.1 Members received an update from Councillor Rob Garnham, the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel, on matters discussed at the last meeting of the Panel held on 7 November 2016.

55.2 Councillor Garnham advised that the Chair continued to have meetings with the Chairs of Wiltshire and Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panels to ensure collaboration matters were addressed. The Panel had received a presentation on the new operating model which had been adopted by Gloucestershire Constabulary and it had been noted that there was a need for another £30M of savings. One aim of the model was to ensure that the Constabulary was as efficient as possible, for example, by introducing mobile technology, and he reported that Gloucestershire was now amongst the most digitally advanced in the country. The main focus was still protecting the most vulnerable and reducing harm; it was acknowledged that neighbourhood policing was not perfect but a balance had to be struck between using Officers on neighbourhood policing simply because they were available or using them on more productive business. The new Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner would have a focus on neighbourhood policing and further work was needed to develop a better strategy. Superintendent Richard Cooper had given the Panel an update on the results of the operating model and it was noted that Gloucestershire had the lowest violent crime rate per 1,000 population in the country and it was the second most improved Constabulary in the country from June 2015. One of the strengths of the model was greater research being carried out in the control room before despatch; however, this could also be perceived as a weakness because it then took longer to reach incidents. Officers now spent longer at incidents and this could be one of the reasons for improved satisfaction rates. Whilst the amount of crime had not risen, the amount of complex crime had increased and it was a challenge to keep on top of this with a reduced budget.

55.3 Councillor Garnham went on to advise that the Police and Crime Commissioner's latest plan for 2017-21 had been presented for final ratification and, apart from one objection, it had been supported by the Panel. The Chief Executive's report now contained useful crime statistics and data relating to complaints received. There had been an update on the 101 service with ongoing concerns that only 79.2% of callers had their call answered within 40 seconds when this should be 90% or more. One piece of good news that did not appear to have received much media attention was a report from the Howard League for Penal Reform which had published data relating to the number of children entering the criminal justice system. The report showed that, between 2010 and 2015, the number of children being arrested had fallen by 58% nationally, and by 52% in Gloucestershire which he believed was

excellent news. Members were also informed that the Blue Light Collaboration Task Group would begin its work in January and was aimed primarily at looking at how Gloucestershire might respond to the government's ideas around Police and Crime Panels taking responsibility for Fire and Rescue Services. It was noted that the next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel was due to be held on 9 January 2017.

55.4 In response to a query regarding the national initiative to discourage mobile telephone use when driving, Councillor Garnham advised that there had recently been a road safety campaign which had resulted in a number of people being stopped. The Chief Constable was the national lead for road policing and there was a strong message that this was something which was not to be tolerated.

55.5 The Chair thanked the Council's representative for his presentation and indicated that the update would be circulated to Members via email following the meeting. It was

RESOLVED That the feedback from the last meeting of the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel be **NOTED**.

OS.56 GLOUCESTERSHIRE HEALTH AND CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

56.1 Members received an update from Councillor Mrs J E Day, the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on matters discussed at its last meeting held on 15 November 2016.

56.2 Members were advised that the Committee had been pleased to welcome Deborah Lee, Chief Executive of the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, and Keith Norton, a newly appointed Non-Executive Director also from the Trust, to discuss the significant and unexpected deterioration in its reported financial position which had been announced in September. Ms Lee had acknowledged that there had been a failure of financial governance and, had the Trust, its regulators and auditors acted differently, it would not be in this position. The sudden nature of the announcement had given rise to the misconception that this situation had developed overnight and she had been clear that the position had developed over time. A high level review of the Trust's financial position and reporting arrangements had highlighted that there was an insufficient level of financial skills and expertise across the Trust's Non-Executive Directors; it was important to note that an externally commissioned review of the Board's arrangements in 2015 had not raised this as an area of concern. Changes to the Trust Board had already been made and the Committee had been assured that the specification for Non-Executive Directors reflected the need for financial expertise. The Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group commissioned the services provided by the Trust and, therefore, there would be a continuation of services to the public; the challenge was to do things better and more efficiently. An independent review of the circumstances that had led to the financial deterioration had been jointly commissioned by the Trust and the regulator NHS Improvement and an extraordinary meeting of the Committee had been set for 30 January 2017 to receive the outcome of the review.

56.3 Councillor Day went on to advise that the Committee had been pleased to discuss the Sustainability and Transformation Plan with the commissioners and providers of health and social care services in Gloucestershire. It was noted that the underlying detail on possible service changes would come forward later in 2017.

At present the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group was leading on an engagement exercise to inform and engage with the public. The Committee was clear that it intended to follow the progress and implementation of this plan and would be part of any consultation on service change proposals.

56.4 With regard to adult social care and public health performance, Members had welcomed the continued good work and congratulated Forwards Employment Services on winning the employment award at the Gloucestershire Health and Social Care Awards on 8 November 2016. It had been concerning to note that demand for paid carers was outstripping supply and it was thought that this related to some domiciliary care organisations going out of business. Performance against Health Checks targets continued to struggle; all GP practices in the county, apart from two, had signed up to deliver these checks. Advertising the checks and communicating with patients was the responsibility of the GP practice. A particular factor here was that, no matter how the benefits of these checks were communicated, people could not be forced to take them up. In terms of performance of the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, cancer targets continued to be a challenge and, whilst there was some improvement in the six week diagnostic target, more needed to be done. The Chair of Healthwatch Gloucestershire had informed the Committee that it would be working with the Care Quality Commission on the forthcoming inspection of the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. It was also undertaking a follow-up to its report on the hospital discharge process and expected to share this with the Committee in the New Year.

56.5 A Member queried whether the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group survey in relation to the Sustainability and Transformation Plan was being promoted in the national press and she was informed that it was on the Group's website and the link would be in the update which was circulated to Members following the meeting. The Economic and Community Development Manager advised that the consultation was open until the end of February and he had attended a meeting that morning where it had been suggested that an event could be held at the Public Services Centre; he would be happy to go back and confirm these arrangements if Members felt that would be beneficial.

56.6 The Chair indicated that the update would be circulated to Members following the meeting and it was

RESOLVED

1. That the feedback from the last meeting of the Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee be **NOTED**.
2. That arrangements be made for a consultation event to be held at the Public Services Centre as part of the engagement in relation to the Sustainability and Transformation Plan being led by the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group.

OS.57 PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 2 2016/17

57.1 The report of the Head of Corporate Services, circulated at Pages No. 22-52, attached performance management information for quarter 2 of 2016/17. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to review and scrutinise the performance information and, where appropriate, identify any issues to refer to the

Executive Committee for clarification or further action to be taken.

57.2 Members were advised that this was the second quarterly monitoring report for 2016/17 and progress against delivering the objectives and actions for each of the Council Plan priorities was reported through the Performance Tracker, attached at Appendix 1 to the report. It was noted that Managers had been asked to include target delivery dates for each action which it was hoped made the document more robust. Key actions which had advanced since quarter 1 were highlighted at Paragraph 2.3 of the report and included: the production of the Medium Term Financial Strategy; the approval of a significant commercial property investment which would be supported by a Commercial Property Investment Strategy; completion of the demolition of Cascades; a successful bid of £377,000 to the Local Enterprise Partnership to host a Growth Hub within the Public Services Centre; and the development of a new Council website due to go live the following day. There were some actions which were not progressing as smoothly as anticipated and they were set out at Paragraph 2.4 of the report. These had all been flagged up to the Committee previously and related to the Joint Core Strategy and Borough Plan; the regeneration of Spring Gardens; and the letting of the top floor of the Public Services Centre.

57.3 In terms of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Members were informed that the status of each indicator was set out at Paragraph 3.2 of the report. Key areas of interest included KPIs 14-16 which related to the processing of planning applications and it was noted that there had been improved performance in all areas, although the target for minor applications remained a challenge; KPI 20 relating to the number of reported enviro-crimes which remained significant; KPIs 23 and 24 in respect of processing benefit claims and change of circumstances where performance was not as good as the previous year but remained in the top quartile nationally; KPI 29 which had seen an improvement in sickness absence with a reduction in the average number of sick days as a result of less long term absence; and KPI 30 which showed that the direction of travel and target for recycling both remained very positive.

57.4 During the debate which ensued, the following queries and comments were made in relation to the Performance Tracker:

Priority: Economic Development

P34 – Objective 4 – Action a) Put in place a plan to	The Head of Finance and Asset Management explained that the preferred tenant for the site
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regenerate Spring Gardens, following the opening of the new leisure centre – A Member felt that this action should be given an unhappy face as no progress was being made and he suggested that a meeting of the Spring Gardens and Oldbury Road Regeneration Member Reference Panel needed to be held to discuss alternative solutions.

had indicated that it would not be investing in the near future based on concern following the Brexit decision. Unfortunately the whole project had been built on the preferred tenant and alternative options would need to stack up financially. The Chief Executive pointed out that this was a major long-term project for Tewkesbury Town centre and, whilst he appreciated it was difficult not to become impatient, it would be preferable to take the scheme forward as a whole. Notwithstanding this, the Panel would meet in the New Year to consider the issues and take things forward from there.

Key Performance Indicators for Priority: Housing

P40 – KPI 11 – Total number of active applications on the housing register – A Member queried whether the figures for quarter 2 included the same people from quarter 1.

The Housing Services Manager confirmed that was likely to be the case.

Priority: Customer Focused Services

P43 – Objective 1 – Action b) Consider our approach to enviro-crimes with particular focus on fly-tipping and dog-fouling – A Member noted that the Executive Committee had recently received a report regarding the recruitment of an Environmental Warden which would be funded by Parish and Town Councils and he questioned whether the Borough Council should be putting more into the role given that it was a Key Performance Indicator.

The Environmental Health Manager explained that this had been discussed at the Executive Committee the previous week where Members had expressed the strong opinion that the project should be cost neutral to the Borough Council; the Council would offer its expertise in terms of employment, management, legislation, equipment etc. The majority of Parish Councils had reacted well to that and most of the larger ones had indicated that they wished to play a part and would contribute financially. A meeting was being held the following week for further discussions. The Chief Executive clarified that the suggestion for the Environmental Warden role had come from the Parish and Town Councils initially.

P44 – Objective 3 – Action b) Let out the top floor of the Public Services Centre – A Member welcomed the approval of the Growth Hub bid but questioned whether

The Head of Finance and Asset Management explained that work on the overall plan for the Public Services Centre was ongoing, and footfall would need to be established; however, he understood that parking could be difficult and advised that it was intended to

there would be additional car parking provision as the Public Services Centre expanded further.

make improvements to Lower Lode Depot, which had spaces for 40-50 vehicles. The Chief Executive indicated that, given the number of potential new users of the building, management of the car park would need to be dealt with effectively through a plan and he provided assurance that would be done accordingly.

In response to a query regarding how the Growth Hub linked with the letting out of the top floor, Members were advised that there were several individual projects underway and they needed to be brought together into a phased plan. A number of positive meetings had been held with another local authority about its potential use of the building and there had been strong interest from an existing partner in relation to letting the top floor but advice was also being taken regarding a marketing strategy for putting it on the open market. Costings were currently being put together for a full package of the works required for the Public Services Centre including refurbishment of the Civic Suite. It was intended that a report would be brought to Members in February setting out the overall plan, the requirements to facilitate the letting out of the top floor and the renovation of the Lower Lode Depot and the Civic Suite which would bring the Public Services Centre to a position where it was fully refurbished.

Key Performance Indicators for Priority: Corporate

P48 – KPI 20 – Number of reported enviro-crimes – A Member indicated that this topic was discussed regularly by the Committee and needed to be addressed. He suggested that achievable targets be introduced so that Members could see exactly what was being done to try to reduce the figures.

The Environmental Health Manager felt that this was a fair comment and he took on board the point about the need for SMART (specific, measurable, agreed upon, realistic and time-based) targets. The Committee was due to receive a further update on enviro-crimes at its meeting in February 2017 and he suggested this could form part of that report depending on the staffing resources at that time. With regard to abandoned vehicles, he had received an email from the Police and Crime Commissioner who was looking to organise a meeting in the New Year to look at introducing community targets and ways of working between authorities; any progress would be shared with Members in due course. It was to be borne in mind that enviro-crimes was a national issue and one which was very difficult to address.

A Member queried whether focusing additional resources in this area would help to address the problem and was informed that

the Council had a deficit of £3.3M over the next five years and, whilst the Council would be discussing growth items in December, it was likely that any additional funding would need to be found from within existing resources. The Chief Executive felt that it was not advisable to take on additional costs given the pressures on the existing budget. There were already considerable resources within the Environmental Health department, the new Deputy Chief Executive would be in post in January and there would be a replacement for the Head of Environmental Services later in the year so he provided assurance that this issue would be dealt with. A Member asked for costings to be included within the update report in February to identify whether any savings could be made and where additional investment may be needed.

P50 – KPI 27 and 28 – Number of anti-social behaviour incidents and number of overall crime incidents – A Member felt that it would be useful if these figures could be broken down to show where the incidents were taking place and to give more detail about the age of the people involved e.g. how many were under 18.

The Head of Corporate Services indicated that he would find out what information was available on MAIDeN (Multi-Agency Information Database for Neighbourhoods); he understood that breakdowns were provided by Ward and Parish but he was unsure about age.

57.5 Having considered the information provided and views expressed, it was

RESOLVED That the performance management information for quarter 2 of 2016/17 be **NOTED**.

OS.58 REVIEW OF CAR PARKING STRATEGY

58.1 The report of the Head of Development Services, circulated at Pages No. 53-57, provided an update on the outcomes arising from the Car Parking Strategy. Members were asked to agree that no changes be made to the existing strategy and that it be monitored by the Head of Development Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Economic Development/Promotion, with a report brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee where appropriate, should any amendments need to be considered.

58.2 Members were informed that, following a review by an Overview and Scrutiny Working Group, the Council's Car Parking Strategy had been approved by the Council on 27 January 2015 with the new charges introduced on 1 April 2015. The overriding aspiration in the strategy was to support the economic viability and vitality of Tewkesbury and Winchcombe Towns and whilst the strategy had not proposed an increase in parking charges, it had removed the categorisation

between long and short stay car parks and changed the charging periods and charges to encourage visitors to stay for longer. Other key recommendations had included the introduction of a new off-peak permit; replacement of signage and introduction of new signage; and introduction of mobile telephone technology as an alternative payment method. It was considered timely to review the outcomes of the strategy in terms of the actions and effectiveness of the new charges and, as part of the review, an analysis of parking usage and income had been undertaken for the first full 12 months of the strategy. A table of ticket sales for 2014/15 and 2015/16 was attached at Appendix 1 to the report and showed that the aspiration to encourage visitors to stay longer had been successful with ticket sales increasing for those staying over three hours. Overall ticket sales had increased by over 4,500 which demonstrated that the strategy seemed to be working well and achieving its aims. In terms of permits, the take-up of the new off-peak permit had been low and it was felt that further promotion of this, and other permits available to businesses, should be undertaken. Whilst the signage in car parks had been improved, and on-street signage removed where practicable, the delivery of further directional signage at town gateways had been delayed to allow for the completion of other signage projects. A programme of inspection and maintenance was in place and improvements such as line painting and installation of barriers had been carried out with plans to replace existing lighting with LED lighting. Given these outcomes, it was recommended that no changes be made to the strategy and that it be monitored by the Head of Development Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Economic Development/Promotion, with the caveat that it could be brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee if any amendments were considered to be necessary.

- 58.3 A Member felt that the new strategy was an improvement on the previous one and the overall report was positive; he welcomed the introduction of the LED lighting and agreed that the permits should be advertised more widely as they did offer very good discounts. Conversely, he had been made aware of several issues with visitors being unable to find the car parks and he questioned what was being done to address that. He also queried whether Tewkesbury and Winchcombe Town Councils had been asked for feedback on the strategy and whether income from tickets sales had increased over the last two years. In response, the Head of Finance and Asset Management reiterated that old signage had been removed where possible e.g. long/short stay car park signs, however, a lot of highway signage was multifunctional so it was difficult to remove certain parts. He provided assurance that Officers were working with County Highways where possible and advised that the gateway signage would come forward in 2017. Feedback from the Town Councils would be welcomed and he undertook to contact them, along with the Chamber of Commerce, to obtain their views. With regard to income, the figures for 2015/16 were on par with the previous year; when the new strategy had been introduced it had been anticipated that there would be a reduction of £33,000 in car parking fees but that had not materialised so this was a significant improvement for the Council.

- 58.4 A Member expressed the view that it was important to publicise the fact that a review had been carried out. He agreed that clear signage was vital, particularly for visitors, and this could be addressed relatively easily. His main concern was regarding the condition of the car parks and he felt that more could be done to improve this. The Head of Finance and Asset Management took on board the point about maintenance, however, he advised that a £5,000 maintenance budget was available and had helped to improve their condition over the last 12 months. Officers worked with Ubico to ensure any issues were addressed and they would

continue to do that going forward.

- 58.5 A Member noted that the number of coaches staying in Tewkesbury Town for half a day was increasing but they did not tend to stay for a whole day and she queried whether anything could be done to address that. The Head of Finance and Asset Management undertook to feed this back to the Economic and Community Development Manager to take into account within the Review of the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy but pointed out that Tewkesbury was viewed very much as a half day destination and it was a question of whether it had enough to offer to encourage longer stays. Whilst he realised the Council had little control over on-street parking, a Member raised concern that the car parking attendants could be overzealous at times, which may discourage visitors, and the Head of Finance and Asset Manager indicated that he would pass this comment on the appropriate Officer to take forward.

- 58.6 It was subsequently

RESOLVED

1. That the outcomes arising from the Car Parking Strategy be **NOTED** and it be **AGREED** that no changes be made to the existing Car Parking Strategy.
2. That it be **AGREED** that the strategy be monitored by the Head of Development Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Economic Development/Promotion, and a report brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, where appropriate, should any amendments to the strategy need to be considered.

OS.59 GLOUCESTERSHIRE FAMILIES FIRST UPDATE

- 59.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Head of Development Services, circulated at Pages No. 58-62, which set out the progress made in delivering the Families First programme. Members were asked to consider the update and to agree to remove this from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reporting cycle.

- 59.2 Members were advised that Families First Plus, formerly Families First, was the local name for the national Troubled Families programme. It had been introduced in 2013 as a three year programme aimed at turning around the lives of the estimated 120,000 troubled families in the country with the three main criteria being adults on out of work benefit; children not attending school; and family members involved in crime and anti-social behaviour. There was an agreement that an estimated 900 families would be worked with in Gloucestershire 10% of which, i.e. 90 families, were within Tewkesbury Borough. The programme had proven to be a great success with the target for the first phase to engage with 90 families reached a year early in March 2015. Due to the success of the programme in Gloucestershire, the County had been chosen as an 'early adopter' for the next phase of the programme which had widened the criteria to include parents and children involved in anti-social behaviour; children who had not been

attending school regularly; children who needed help; adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion and young people at risk of 'worklessness'; families affected by domestic violence or abuse; and parents and children with a range of health issues including mental health issues.

- 59.3 In terms of the outcomes of the programme, it was noted that there had been some negative articles in the press recently which had suggested that the programme had not been as successful as it was meant to be. Gloucestershire County Council had conducted a survey of the families who had been involved in the programme

and had found that they generally felt more supported and confident, particularly in relation to financial matters. 95% of families had indicated that they valued an assertive and challenging approach as it encouraged them to do things for themselves. During the second phase, Gloucestershire had been working to target 3,000 families over five years; the target for the first year was 540 claims across all localities, 55 of which were within Tewkesbury Borough. The programme had changed the way public sector organisations worked together, i.e. taking a joint approach as opposed to single agencies each doing their bit, and the Public Services Centre had played a key part in that. Families First Plus had now been adopted as 'business as usual' by Gloucestershire County Council and the principles and ways of working were embedded into its system. As a result, the Community Development Officer indicated that he no longer had any direct involvement in the programme and it had been removed from the new Council Plan. It was therefore recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee no longer needed to monitor the programme on a six monthly basis and it was proposed that it be removed from the Work Programme. It was noted that the County Council had recently put together a briefing note in respect of the Families First Plus programme and he undertook to circulate this to Members following the meeting.

59.4 A Member noted that 90 families within Tewkesbury Borough had been involved in phase one of the programme and she questioned whether some of those were still being worked with, or whether the 55 families introduced for the second phase were completely new. The Community Development Officer explained that some families inevitably came back into the system although it was difficult to know how many, particularly as some children came back as adults. He confirmed that the 55 families in phase two were all new families which had been picked up due to the wider scope. The Member went on to question whether the initial contact was made by the individual families or by the Families First Plus team and she was advised that they came to the attention of the team via referrals from a wide range of partners. There was an allocations group which looked at each case and allocated a key worker to the particular family. The Member felt that some great work was being done through the programme and it would be a shame if progress reports were no longer shared with the Committee. In response, the Community Development Manager advised that there were alternative ways of reporting the success of the programme, for instance, he would be happy to circulate Member Updates as and when necessary. The County Council was able to provide a breakdown by Parish and he could ask for that information if Members so wished. Several Members expressed the view that it would be beneficial for the Committee to be kept informed and it was suggested that an update could continue to be provided on an annual basis.

59.5 In response to a query regarding funding, Members were advised that no money was received by the Borough Council; Families First Plus was a Gloucestershire County Council programme and the payment-by-results money went directly to the County Council. The money was used to support the teams locally and to fund the allocations budget.

59.6 Having considered the information provided, it was

RESOLVED

1. That the progress made in delivering the Families First programme be **NOTED**.
2. That reports continue to be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee but on an annual, as opposed to six monthly, basis.

- 60.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Interim Head of Community Services, circulated at Pages No. 63-69, which set out the progress against the recommendations arising from the Disabled Facilities Grants Review. Members were asked to consider the report.
- 60.2 Members were reminded that a review of the way in which the Council delivered Disabled Facilities Grants had been undertaken by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group in 2015/16 and the review report had been adopted by the Executive Committee on 6 April 2016. The table at Appendix 1 to the report showed the progress that had been made against actions contained within the report. The review had highlighted the need to change certain processes and ways of working and it was noted that a named Officer working within the Housing Enabling team now worked with new case referrals in order to check whether moving to more suitable accommodation would be a better outcome. This action was known to have saved the Council at least £6,000 to date and particular reference was made to a case where a landlord thought it was inappropriate for a property to be adapted to install a walk-in shower. The client had been given close support to make an informed decision as to what they would like to do and had subsequently moved to a bungalow which had already been adapted; feedback was that, whilst they had not originally considered this as an option, they were very pleased with their new home. In terms of the second action, which related to methods of procuring work such as schedules of rates and preferred contractors, discussions had taken place with Severn Vale Housing Society Ltd around sharing resources and information. Going forward the Council may wish to consider whether Severn Vale, or another housing organisation, might be able to assist the local authority in discharging its statutory duty in respect of Disabled Facilities Grants. These discussions were still at an early stage, with negotiations ongoing within One Legal and Finance, and it was hoped that it would be brought to a conclusion by April as this would coincide with the end of the six month contract of the employee who had been brought in to deliver Disabled Facilities Grants following the retirement of the Officer who had previously been responsible.
- 60.3 Members were advised that action three had been completed; this related to the review of existing paperwork connected with the Disabled Facilities Grants process. The fourth action, around exploring the further use of technology to speed up the process, had been expanded to include all aspects of Environmental Health delivery. This was being monitored by the corporate project board and initial results were expected in the New Year. With regard to action five, using learning gained from the review to inform local health and wellbeing plans, strategies and processes, it was noted that the report had been shared widely and the outcomes had been used to inform a current review by Supporting People around helping people to live independently. Action six was to review the impact of the other actions on the costs of delivering the service and to subsequently reduce the Council's capital contribution due to depleting capital resources. As actions two and four had not been completed, this could not yet be quantified, however, there could be savings as a result of action five as Tewkesbury Borough Council currently contributed £45,000 to the 'Safe at Home' Home Improvement Agency and the County Council had resolved not to re-tender for that service.
- 60.4 A Member indicated that he had sat on the Working Group and pointed out that there had been a lot of 'red tape' so it had been fairly straightforward to streamline the processes. Whilst he could understand the reasons behind the slippages in some of the actions, he felt that it was important that these did not go on beyond 12

months if the Council wanted to become more efficient in this area. The Environmental Health Manager explained that this was the reason behind including a target date for each action; he hoped that they would be delivered sooner than suggested, however, a lot was down to working with partners and this could be difficult to influence.

60.5

It was

RESOLVED That the progress against the recommendations arising from the Disabled Facilities Grants Review be **NOTED**.

The meeting closed at 6:10 pm