

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Tuesday, 27 November 2018 commencing at 4:30 pm

Present:

Chair	Councillor P W Awford
Vice Chair	Councillor R E Allen

and Councillors:

K J Cromwell, D T Foyle, P A Godwin, R M Hatton, H C McLain, T A Spencer, P E Stokes, P D Surman, M G Szymiak, H A E Turbyfield and M J Williams

also present:

Councillors G F Blackwell, R E Garnham and J Greening

OS.51 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 51.1 The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was taken as read.
- 51.2 The Chair indicated that the Gloucestershire Constabulary Neighbourhood Policing Inspector for Tewkesbury Borough would be giving a presentation on Agenda Item 7 - Crime Detection Rates, and he would be varying the Agenda to take that item after Agenda Item 8 – Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel Update, to accommodate her attendance. He welcomed the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel to the meeting and indicated that the Lead Members for Organisational Development and Health and Wellbeing were also present as observers.

OS.52 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

- 52.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G J Bocking and J E Day. There were no substitutions for the meeting.

OS.53 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 53.1 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.
- 53.2 There were no declarations made on this occasion.

OS.54 MINUTES

- 54.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2018, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

OS.55 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

55.1 Attention was drawn to the Executive Committee Forward Plan, circulated at Pages No. 13-17. 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.

55.2 It was

RESOLVED That the Executive Committee Forward Plan be **NOTED**.

OS.56 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

56.1 Attention was drawn to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2018/19, circulated at Pages No. 18-25, which Members were asked to consider.

56.2 The Head of Corporate Services pointed out that the Agenda for the meeting on 12 February 2019 was quite substantial and it might be beneficial for Officers to review the Work Programme to see if anything could be moved. It was noted that external speakers from Gloucestershire Healthwatch had already been invited to attend the February meeting so it would not be appropriate to delay that item. Members indicated they were happy for Officers to consider what changes could be made to the Work Programme to reduce the amount of Agenda items at the February meeting.

RESOLVED

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2018/19 be **NOTED**.
2. That Officers review the Work Programme and make changes as necessary to reduce the amount of Agenda Items for the meeting on 12 February 2019.

OS.57 GLOUCESTERSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL UPDATE

57.1 Members received an update from the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel on matters discussed at the last meeting of the Panel held on 16 November 2018.

57.2 Members were advised that the Panel had considered a lengthy paper from the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding his wish to review his previous decision not to pursue a case for change in fire governance. The Commissioner said that, in light of a recent internal audit investigation into whistleblowing concerns relating to Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service, now was the time to re-consult on the Police and Crime Commissioner taking over governance. The Council's representative indicated that little support had been shown towards the Commissioner's plans but he expected there would be lengthy ongoing discussions and a further briefing was being organised for the Panel. He noted that this was also an Agenda Item for the Council meeting on 4 December 2018 so Members would have an opportunity to discuss it then.

57.3 The Chief Executive's report had included the annual report of the Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) and it had been pleasing to note the increase in the number of visits taking place on a Friday and Saturday night, and in the evenings; overall the ICVs had spoken to 65% of detainees in custody which was up from 58% in 2017. The Panel had also received its usual report on Police and Crime Plan priorities and the Council's representative advised that 999 calls were 7% higher than the previous year - in the first quarter of the year they had been 25% higher than in 2015 which was concerning.

- 57.4 It was noted that a copy of the whistleblowing policy, which applied both to Gloucestershire Constabulary and the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, had been tabled at the meeting. It had been intended to have a presentation on safe and social driving but that had been deferred to the next meeting. The Council's representative advised that the Panel had agreed the request from the newly formed National Association of Police and Crime (Fire) Panels for him to become a member of its Executive. It was also confirmed that the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel would be represented at any regional meetings called by Panels in the South West.
- 57.5 The Council's representative indicated that there had been some discussion around the issue of employer pension contributions. It was noted that the treasury had recalculated a formula which related to all public sector pension schemes but had particularly hit unfunded schemes such as the Police. There would be an increase in contributions that the employer would have to make which equated to the Police and Crime Commissioner needing to find an extra £1.7M in the coming financial year.
- 57.6 The Chief Executive advised that an item on the Police and Crime Commissioner consultation in respect of the Fire Service had been included on the Agenda for the Council meeting on 4 December 2018 at the request of the Leader of the Council who felt it was appropriate for Members to have an opportunity to discuss the proposal and to respond to the consultation if necessary.
- 57.7 The Chair thanked the Council's representative for his report and indicated that it would be circulated following the meeting. It was

RESOLVED That the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel Update be
NOTED.

OS.58 CRIME DETECTION RATES

- 58.1 The Chair welcomed the Gloucestershire Constabulary Neighbourhood Policing Inspector for Tewkesbury Borough to the meeting. She indicated that she had been invited to attend the meeting to discuss crime detection rates but she felt it would firstly be useful to give Members an overview of what neighbourhood policing in Tewkesbury Borough was about.
- 58.2 The Gloucestershire Constabulary Neighbourhood Policing Inspector for Tewkesbury Borough gave a brief presentation during which the following key points were raised:
- Neighbourhood Policing Offer (1) – Launched in January 2018 by Chief Constable who stated that there would be: a dedicated neighbourhood policing team for the Tewkesbury Borough area; a named Police Community Support Officer (PCSO); up-to-date information about policing in each neighbourhood on the Constabulary's website, social media and in key public spaces in the community; a Police reception in every district that could be accessed at least five days per week; the ability to listen people's concerns through meetings in communities and the Police engagement vehicles; invitations to join the new community messaging scheme "Your Community Alerts"; use of mobile technology so local officers and staff could stay out in the community as much as possible; open and approachable officers wearing named epaulettes; new additions to the team including a Rural Crime Officer, Safeguarding Officer and, shortly, a School Beat Officer.
 - How do we Police Tewkesbury? – Tewkesbury Borough was divided into three areas – North, South and East – each with their own dedicated team.

- Police Family – Roads Policing Unit; Mounted Unit; Firearms Officers; Criminal Investigation Department (CID); Rape and Serious Sexual Offences Unit (RASSO); Divisional Intelligence Unit (DIU); Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Team (DAST); Special Constabulary; Cadets; Custody Investigation Unit; Operations and Planning; Dogs Unit; Professional Standards Department; Force Control Room; Mobile Crisis Intervention Team (MCIT); Intelligence Unit; Crime Operations, and many more.
- What have we achieved? – From January to March 2018 dealt with 14 offenders for drug dealing removing cannabis, crack cocaine and heroin from the Tewkesbury Borough area; recovered a stolen quad bike and significant amount of cash linked to criminal activity; convicted an offender for a large number of dwelling burglaries - they had received a four year custodial sentence, which was rare, and so gave an indication of the level of criminality; interviewed prisoners in custody and established their involvement in burglaries in the area; dismantled a number of Dangerous Drug Networks - where drug dealers took over addresses of vulnerable people - at an early stage to ensure they did not become embedded in the community; provided police response to community events such as the Mop Fair, Remembrance Parades etc.; and, engaged with Parish Councils, returning to meetings including Community Safety Partnerships.

- 58.3 During the debate which ensued, a Member raised concern about the number of break-ins in the Churchdown area. The Gloucestershire Constabulary Neighbourhood Policing Inspector for Tewkesbury Borough explained that, whilst it was not an epidemic, the Police were aware of several break-ins and were very active in the area in relation to that. There had recently been an article in the local press regarding one case and she confirmed that was an isolated incident. She suggested that signing up to “Your Community Alerts” might be helpful in terms of keeping up-to-date with incidents in particular areas. A Member indicated that he checked for incidents in his area on the Police website but he did not find it particularly helpful in terms of outcomes. The Gloucestershire Constabulary Neighbourhood Policing Inspector for Tewkesbury Borough advised that, whilst this might sound simple to achieve, the reality was that there was no immediate outcome if someone had to go through the court system following arrest as the end result was not reported back at a local level.
- 58.4 A Member understood that each community had its own dedicated PCSO and he raised concern that nobody had been attending Parish Council meetings in Shurdington. The Gloucestershire Constabulary Neighbourhood Policing Inspector for Tewkesbury Borough clarified that PCSOs were shared as, unfortunately, there was not enough for one per community; however, that did not mean they were not focused on all of the areas they were responsible for. The Police website listed the PCSOs, and the areas they covered, and she indicated that she was also happy to be a point of contact should Members have any concerns.
- 58.5 In response to a query regarding mobile technology, the Gloucestershire Constabulary Neighbourhood Policing Inspector for Tewkesbury Borough explained that Police Officers used a mobile telephone with a number of apps which enabled them to take statements etc. In terms of “Your Community Alerts”, this had been launched fairly recently and was only being used by 3% of the community currently – it was a very useful tool and she undertook to circulate the link to Members following the meeting. A Member raised concern that the Police engagement vehicle had been in Brockworth the previous week but he had only received notification 12 hours before it had been due to arrive and the vehicle was only there for a few hours. He questioned whether it would be possible to have at least 48 hours’ notice so it could be advertised to local residents. The Gloucestershire Constabulary Neighbourhood Policing Inspector for Tewkesbury Borough confirmed that the dates were publicised on the Police website so that people could find out

where the vehicle was in advance. She indicated that this could be included in “Your Community Alerts” as well if it was helpful.

- 58.6 A Member raised concern that there had been a delay in reconstituting the Community Safety Partnerships and this meant there was a gap in the information which communities were receiving. The Head of Community Services confirmed that the Tewkesbury Borough Community Safety Partnership (CSP) had been reconstituted and the first meeting had been attended by the nominated Member representatives from the Council; the CSP was now looking to set local priorities. It had not been easy to get a meeting with all partners, all of which had competing priorities that they wished to see represented, but a programme had now been set for the year so meetings would take place on a quarterly basis. The Member felt that this should have been communicated more widely and, in response, the Chief Executive explained that the nature of the CSP in Tewkesbury Borough had changed and the Committee had been involved in considering what those changes would be. A strategic group was now working to address community safety issues in the borough and there were different links into the wider community in terms of how the group would operate. He advised that a Member Update would be circulated to ensure Members were aware that the first CSP meeting had taken place.
- 58.7 A Member went on to advise that he had attended a Parish Council meeting the previous night and there had been a lot of criticism that the Police were not present at meetings; the PCSO had indicated they would be attending the meeting but had not turned up which added to frustrations. He felt there was a need to ensure that Parish Councils were notified if PCSOs were not able to attend meetings and to make them aware of opportunities to meet PCSOs elsewhere. The Gloucestershire Constabulary Neighbourhood Policing Inspector for Tewkesbury Borough advised that a PCSO would generally be on the engagement vehicle when it visited various parts of the borough; however, it would not necessarily be the local PCSO for the area. In terms of attendance at Parish Council meetings, it was not always an effective use of Police time if the meeting was just covering general business; however, if Parish Councils had a particular concern and wanted a PCSO to attend for a specific reason, she urged Members to let them know as arrangements could be made for someone from the area team to attend.
- 58.8 The Chair thanked the Gloucestershire Constabulary Neighbourhood Policing Inspector for Tewkesbury Borough for her presentation and indicated that it would be circulated to Members following the meeting. It was

RESOLVED That the presentation and update on neighbouring policing and crime detection rates in Tewkesbury Borough be **NOTED**.

OS.59 GLOUCESTERSHIRE HEALTH AND CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE UPDATE

- 59.1 Members received an update from the Council’s reserve representative on the Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee on matters discussed at its last meeting held on 13 November 2018.
- 59.2 Members were advised that the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report had been presented to the Committee and it was pleasing to note that the Board was already working closely with the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board. There was concern regarding those placed out of area – both by Gloucestershire County Council and other local authorities placing people in Gloucestershire – who were more vulnerable to abuse as they were distanced from family and friends. Although the placing authority should ensure placements were suitable and that the individual was safe, the Committee heard that did not always happen and the County Council had no powers to enforce that duty. It was also

concerning that providers were not required to inform the County Council when a person from out of the area was placed with them and the Committee had therefore agreed to write a letter to the Secretary of State for Health and Care outlining these issues.

- 59.3 The Committee had shared its concerns regarding drugs and alcohol on previous occasions and additional information on this matter had been included in the Director of Public Health's report. It was also stated that the data for Cheltenham in relation to disadvantaged children and the effect on their life chances was stark. Members had been advised that the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board was in the process of refreshing the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and this would be included in the discussion around priorities. The Board was also leading on the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) work; Gloucestershire County Council was leading on a restorative practice programme and led the Children's Partnership Framework in Gloucestershire. With regard to the Adult Social Care performance report, the Committee continued to be concerned about performance against reassessment which was exacerbated by the lack of detail in the comments section about what was being done to address the situation. It was acknowledged that it was a complex area but a positive shift in performance against those targets was needed.
- 59.4 In terms of the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group's performance report, the Council's reserve representative advised that the Committee had previously expressed concerns with regard to the performance of the South Western Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust against category 1 calls and the Trust had been congratulated for achieving this target. Some Members had continued to express concern at the difference in performance against the four-hour Accident and Emergency target across the two acute hospitals; however, it was important to note that, at the overall Trust level, the target had been consistently met in 2018/19. In the areas where performance targets were not being met, one of the contributing factors related to the available workforce – this was about shortages at a national level as opposed to finance. A particular concern related to the two-week wait and 62 day cancer targets which had been consistently missed. The Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust had appointed two urology consultants and it was expected to see the impact of this in the performance going forward.
- 59.5 The Committee had received a presentation on the proposal for the general surgery pilot. The consultant surgeons in attendance had explained what an average day in general surgery looked like and the expected benefits of the pilot. Clarification was provided that the Committee's role in relation to this was to act as a "critical friend". To provide some context, Members were advised that the proposal was first put forward following a leaked internal staff memo from Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in September which was followed by 57 consultants writing to all members of the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Board to express their views on the preferred model of care – this had subsequently been the basis of articles in the local media. The presentation had given the detail of expected benefits of the pilot and the metrics by which its success would be measured.
- 59.6 The final Agenda item had focused on the need to implement a temporary service change within interventional and community radiology and a detailed presentation had been given on the reasons for that. Members were advised that it was intended to curtail radiology days in a range of hospitals due to a national shortage of radiologists which had been reported in the media. There would be a knock-on effect for people seeking x-rays locally. Another Member confirmed that Tewkesbury Community Hospital would be reducing the number of days radiology could be accessed to two per week.

- 59.7 The Chair thanked the Council's reserve representative for his update and indicated that it would be circulated to the Committee following the meeting. It was subsequently

RESOLVED That the Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee update be **NOTED**.

OS.60 GLOUCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE UPDATE

- 60.1 The Chair advised that he was the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee but there was no update for the Committee as the last meeting had been cancelled. Another Member who was also on the Committee indicated that he had brought several copies of the Gloucestershire Local Enterprise Partnership annual report which would be made available in the Members' Lounge – this may be of interest to Members given that the Gloucestershire Local Enterprise Partnership would be giving a presentation prior to the Council meeting the following week. A link to the online report had been circulated to the Committee by Democratic Services at his request.

OS.61 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT - QUARTER 2 2018/19

- 61.1 The report of the Head of Corporate Services, circulated at Pages No. 26-69, attached performance management information for the second quarter of 2018/19. 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.
- 61.2 Members were advised that this was the second quarterly monitoring report for 2018/19 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. Key actions for the quarter were highlighted at Paragraph 2.3 of the report and included: purchase of a £3.8M office property in August and a £4.6M retail property in October; appointment of Mace Group Ltd as developer advisor for the next phase of the Spring Gardens project; official launch of the Growth Hub on 21 November 2018; completion of the Public Services Centre refurbishment; appointment of a contractor to carry out works to Lower Lode Depot to increase car parking and improve site facilities; approval of Ashchurch Concept Masterplan for public consultation at Council on 15 October 2018; and, at its meeting on 21 November 2018, Executive Committee approval of a commercial strategy for the Council, and the draft Tewkesbury Town Regeneration Supplementary Planning Document for consultation. Members were advised that no actions had been reported as having a significant risk in terms of not being achieved, or where there had been significant slippage in the timetable or performance was below target, as such, there were no unhappy faces in the performance tracker. The Head of Corporate Services indicated that he had taken the performance tracker to management team on two occasions to ensure that target dates were feasible given concerns raised by the Committee.
- 61.3 In terms of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Members were informed that the status of each indicator was set out at Paragraph 3.2 of the report. Of the 16 indicators with targets, three had not been achieved as at the end of the second quarter. It was noted that KPI 20, in relation to the average number of days to process new benefit claims, had increased to 22 days with the target being 15 days - whilst this was not as good as Members would like, it was still below the national average; KPI 27, average number of sick days per full time equivalent, had also increased significantly compared to the previous year but this was due to long term sickness which was out of the Council's control; KPI 31 and KPI 32 were new indicators relating to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and formal complaints

respectively, and it was noted that 127 FOI requests had been received within the period and that all 49 formal complaints had been answered within the required timescales.

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

Priority: Finance and Resources

<p>P36 – Objective 4 – Action b) Explore options for the regeneration of Spring Gardens – A Member noted that Mace Group Ltd had been appointed to “explore the options for redevelopment and future of the Spring Gardens and wider Tewkesbury area” and she questioned how the wider Tewkesbury area was defined.</p>	<p>The Head of Finance and Asset Management advised that Mace Group Ltd was focusing primarily on the site within the Council’s ownership; however, the Spring Gardens and Oldbury Road Regeneration Member Reference Group felt it would be appropriate to also look at neighbouring sites to consider whether there was an opportunity for a single project to reinvigorate the whole town. He confirmed there was a fixed cost for the activity Mace Group Ltd was undertaking and a report was expected in the summer detailing the options.</p>
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Priority: Promoting and Supporting Economic Growth

<p>P37 – Objective 1 – Action b) Launch a business growth hub in the Public Services Centre – A Member pointed out that the car parks at the Public Services Centre were already very busy and he was concerned this would be exacerbated by the launch of the Growth Hub. He questioned what strategy was in place to address this, aside from the additional parking at Lower Lode Depot which he did not feel would be adequate.</p>	<p>The Head of Finance and Asset Management confirmed that the works to Lower Lode Depot would create an additional 40-45 car parking spaces which would relieve some of the pressure. Once that had been delivered, it would be reviewed to see whether any additional parking could be provided on the Council Offices site. Various other measures could be considered alongside this, for example, promoting home working, encouraging staff to leave cars at home, limiting the amount of parking available etc. but it was prudent to wait until the work at the depot had been completed to ensure staff were able to park there and free up parking spaces for visitors at the Public Services Centre.</p>
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<p>P40 – Objective 5 – Action a) Explore with partners – including the Battlefield Society – the potential to increase the heritage offer at the Battlefield site – Concern was raised that local Members had not received any updates on this action.</p>	<p>The Chief Executive explained that a meeting was being set-up with the Battlefield Society to discuss the options which would then be brought to Members. It was important to recognise that the issues associated with the project went beyond a single Ward as it was inextricably linked to the economic success of Tewkesbury Town and the borough as a whole.</p>
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P41 – Objective 5 – Action c) Review the tourism resources to maximise the tourist provisions in the borough – A Member raised concern that this action had an implementation date of April 2019 and progress was denoted with a smiley face; however, there was no detail in terms of what was being done to demonstrate that it was on target for completion within the timescale set out – he felt this was a problem with many of the actions in the tracker this quarter.

The Head of Development Services provided assurance that the tourism service was being reviewed but there were a whole host of issues linked to Cotswold Tourism and how this impacted on the Council's ability to support tourism in the borough. A lot of options had been put forward in terms of how to deliver the Tourist Information Centre in Tewkesbury and, whilst nothing had been finalised, she provided assurance that Officers were evaluating those options with a view to implementing a new way of working in the spring. It was noted that some of the options had human resources and legal implications and therefore needed to be formally assessed before taking forward.

Priority: Growing and Supporting Communities

P44 – Objective 1 – Action e) With partners, explore options for the provision of modular and innovative housing to meet housing needs – A Member questioned what was happening with modular housing given that this had been a popular concept with Officers and Members earlier in the year.

The Head of Community Services explained that several potential sites for modular housing had been discussed with a number of registered providers, but it was important to get the right partner and agreement in place and, unfortunately, this required several meetings which were not always in quick succession. The Chief Executive reiterated that modular housing was not straightforward, and Officers were talking with several organisations. He had recently met with Officers from the West Midlands Combined Authority, which had a framework to achieve its target of 25% of all housing development in West Midlands to be modular construction by 2025 – this was very ambitious but Tewkesbury Borough Council may be able to use certain elements of the framework.

P46 – Objective 3 – Action b) Work with partners, infrastructure providers and developers to progress the delivery of key sites – With regard to Brockworth, a Member noted that planning permission had been granted several years ago and she sought clarification as to whether there had been any progress in terms of getting “a spade in the ground”.

The Head of Development Services explained that a number of reserved matters applications were now moving forward and there was a time limit for those which related to outline planning permissions so they would need to come forward quickly. In terms of the Brockworth application, various discussions were taking place around development in the area, notably in relation to sports facilities, and Officers were trying to remove any barriers which were preventing the developer from progressing the application.

P46 – Objective 3 – Action c)
Produce a business case for improvements to the A40 at Longford, including improvements to Longford roundabout – A Member raised concern that a drop-in event was not being held in Innsworth and expressed the view that most affected communities needed to be kept informed. Another Member supported this view.

The Chief Executive noted these comments and undertook to discuss them with the Head of Development Services and the team as part of the analysis of the information gathered from the drop-in sessions and the comments being received via the online consultation.

P47 – Objective 3 – Action e)
To produce a Place Development Strategy – A Member indicated that the comments section stated a workshop would be held in November 2018, which was clearly not realistic, and he asked when this would be taking place.

The Head of Development Services explained that Officers had been working with relevant Members to set a date for the workshop. She was pleased to report that this had now been agreed as 17 January 2019 and an invitation would be sent out to all Members shortly.

Priority: Customer Focused Services

P55 – Objective 2 – Action c)
Develop a programme to create partnerships within the Public Services Centre – A Member raised concern that there was no detail to support the fact that action had been given a smiley face to show it was on target.

Members were advised that the Council was effectively already working in partnership with various agencies that were co-located in the building; this objective related to working with particular partners to see how this could be developed further and those discussions were ongoing. It was noted that part of the action had been integrating the Growth Hub into the building and the official launch had taken place the previous week. Colleagues from the Department for Work and Pensions would be brought back into the main reception area before the end of the year and the Deputy Chief Executive was exploring ways in which the Council could work more closely with other partners. The Member recognised that there were discussions taking place but his concern was how this was reported to the Committee to allow Members to properly scrutinise whether the action was likely to be delivered on target - he would like to see more detail in the comments section as opposed to generic statements.

Key Performance Indicators for Customer Focused Services

P60 – KPI 22 – Average number of days to process change in circumstances – A Member raised concern that the difference between the target of four days and the quarter two outturn of six days was significant in terms of the percentage increase and he sought assurance that action was being taken to alleviate this.

Members were advised that resources in Revenues and Benefits had been reduced based on the introduction of Universal Credit and a reduction in the number of claims; however, there was still residual work to be done e.g. Council Tax reduction, change of circumstances. The team had been under new management for the last 12 months and there had been a few legacy issues to address in terms of policies and staffing. The Head of Corporate Services was pleased to report that there had been an improvement over the last two months and a better performance culture was being developed within the team. There was now monthly reporting to help identify any trends and he expected to see this reflected in the figures for the remainder of the year.

P62 – KPI 27 – Average number of sick days per full time equivalent – A Member raised concern that this had dramatically exceeded the target and equated to almost a week per full time member of staff.

The Head of Corporate Services explained that four or five years earlier, the Council had a particularly low sickness absence rate and the target had been lowered as a result. He felt that it may be time to consider putting in place a more realistic target. There were several staff with significant illnesses throughout the Council - at one point there had been 10 members of staff on long term sick leave which had impacted on the figures but he was pleased to report that seven of those staff were now back at work so he would expect the figures to improve over the second half of the year.

- 61.5 The Chief Executive indicated that he would discuss the performance tracker with Officers following the meeting as he felt that a lot of the concerns being raised by Members could be addressed by more careful wording - for example, some projects could take a long time to deliver, and Officers would not normally report back to Members until there was something significant to tell them about; therefore, the comments against those actions may not be a true reflection of the work being done and could give Members the impression they had stalled. In terms of the actions with target dates of March 2019, he wanted to be clear about whether they would be delivered in the current financial year, or if they would roll forward into 2019/20 given that this document only covered the 2018/19 year.
- 61.6 Turning to the financial information, the Head of Finance and Asset Management was pleased to report a £572,086 surplus against the profiled budget as at the end of quarter two; a significant improvement from £81,867 in quarter one. The table at Page No. 30, Paragraph 4.2 of the report showed how that surplus had been generated. It was noted that the majority of savings related to employees, which arose mainly through staff vacancies and using current staff to cover work in the short term, and business rates, which showed a £334,901 surplus due to the government having to compensate authorities for the multiplier cap which had artificially kept business rates down. The surplus on income was £26,697 at the end of quarter two, the majority of which was from the garden waste service which

had generated additional income as a result of the new sticker system and fixed renewal date. More detail about how the surplus had been generated could be found in the budget report, attached at Appendix 2 to the report, which set out the variances for each Head of Service. Appendix 3 to the report set out the capital budget position which showed an underspend due to the purchase of a commercial property being less than the profiled budget expectation. An assumption had been made that the Council would purchase three buildings of equal value – one unit had been purchased at a lesser value but it was anticipated that the full allocation of funds would be spent before year end with options for a second and third building being explored. The final element of the report related to the current usage of available reserves and a breakdown was shown at Appendix 4 to the report.

- 61.7 A Member noted that the business rates pilot had been receiving a lot of press with the suggestion being that it may be necessary to support poor performing Councils. The Head of Finance and Asset Management advised that the base budget for business rates was 50% for an individual authority; this year the Council had been successful in achieving 100% but it would be a 75% scheme from 2020 across all local authorities and he was keenly awaiting the government guidance in order to forecast the potential future business rates return. In response to a query regarding the surplus on income, Members were advised that, although additional income had been generated, there were areas where it had decreased, for example, planning income had been significantly less than anticipated, and therefore the overall surplus was reduced to £26,697; however, this was still a positive position to be in. In response to a question regarding how the surplus would be spent, the Chief Executive indicated that local government finances were never certain, and a significant surplus could easily become a deficit when relying on volatile income streams such as business rates. Consideration must be given to how the surplus might be spent to meet the Council strategic priorities and this would be developed over the coming months. He stressed that, generally, the Council remained in an extremely difficult position with a very significant deficit of over £3M in the Medium Term Financial Strategy over the next three years so any additional money would be used to develop a strategy to close that gap. He felt that it was important to recognise that the positive position being reported today was down to the hard work of Members and Officers of the Council.

- 61.8 It was

RESOLVED That the performance management report for quarter two of 2018/19 be **NOTED**.

OS.62 GRASS CUTTING IMPROVEMENT PLAN WORKING GROUP

- 62.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Head of Community Services, circulated at Pages No. 70-73, which asked Members to establish a Grass Cutting Improvement Plan Working Group in accordance with the Terms of Reference at Appendix 1.
- 62.2 Members were reminded that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had previously had in-depth discussions about the grass cutting service and it was currently monitoring delivery of the Grass Cutting Improvement Plan. Arising from that, there was a need for some more detailed work to be done, particularly around the future standard of the service, number and level of cuts in certain areas, resources etc. It was therefore proposed to set up a small Working Group to work with the Head of Community Services in order to report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on these matters in February 2019.

62.3

It was

RESOLVED

1. That a Grass Cutting Improvement Plan Working Group be established with the following membership:

Councillors: K J Cromwell, D T Foyle, H C McLain,
M G Sztymiak, M J Williams and the Lead Member for Clean
and Green Environment.

2. That the Terms of Reference for the Working Group be **APPROVED** as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

The meeting closed at 6:25 pm