

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Tuesday, 23 July 2019 commencing at 4:30 pm

Present:

Chair
Vice Chair

Councillor K J Cromwell
Councillor J W Murphy

and Councillors:

G J Bocking, C L J Carter, P A Godwin, H C McLain, P D McLain, H S Munro, P W Ockelton, J K Smith, R J G Smith, P D Surman, M J Williams and P N Workman

also present:

Councillors G F Blackwell, D W Gray and J R Mason

OS.18 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 18.1 The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was taken as read.
- 18.2 The Chair welcomed the representatives from Ubico to the meeting and indicated that they were in attendance for Agenda Item 9 – Ubico Report 2018/19 along with the Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment. He also welcomed the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel who was in attendance for Agenda Item 7 – Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel Update, and the Lead Member for Housing who was present as an observer.

OS.19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

- 19.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S A T Stevens. There were no substitutions for the meeting.

OS.20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 20.1 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.
- 20.2 There were no declarations made on this occasion.

OS.21 MINUTES

- 21.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2019, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

OS.22 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

22.1 Attention was drawn to the Executive Committee Forward Plan, circulated at Pages No. 25-30. 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.

22.2 A Member raised concern that the Forward Plan was quite light in October and November and he hoped that more items would come forward for those meetings. It was subsequently

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

OS.23 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

23.1 Attention was drawn to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/20, circulated at Pages No. 31-40, which Members were asked to consider.

23.2 A Member queried when the Grounds Maintenance Working Group would be reporting back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Head of Community Services advised that the first meeting of the Working Group was scheduled to take place on 6 August 2019. He explained that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was required to review the Working Group's Terms of Reference on an annual basis, and make a recommendation to the Executive Committee as to whether there was a continuing role for the Group, so he anticipated that a report would be brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2020.

23.3 It was

RESOLVED That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/20 be **NOTED** subject to the inclusion of the Grounds Maintenance Working Group Report on 5 February 2020.

OS.24 GLOUCESTERSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL UPDATE

24.1 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 19 July 2019.

24.2 The Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel advised that this was the first meeting of the year so there had been a number of procedural tasks to complete such as electing a Chair and Vice-Chair, both of whom had changed from previous years. There were several new Members on the Panel and, following a discussion on the Terms of Reference, it was agreed that additional training would be helpful in order for them to better understand the role of the Panel and its relationship with the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Chair had emphasised that the Panel's role was not to provide oversight of the Police as they were accountable to the Police and Crime Commissioner who was accountable to the electorate in turn. The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners stated that the role of the Police and Crime Panel was to scrutinise the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner and to be a "critical friend" with a duty to support as well as challenge.

24.3 The Police and Crime Commissioner's annual report 2018/19 had been circulated to the Panel and, whilst this was supposedly a draft document, it had appeared to be at a fairly advanced stage giving the Panel very little opportunity to input into its content. The Police and Crime Commissioner had given an overview of the current situation from his perspective and the 2.5% pay rise for public employees had been welcomed. The report covered a range of issues including the challenges and impacts of missing persons in the county; a new collaboration agreement

across all six Police forces in the region, the approach to knife crime in the county – this was still rare by national standards; purchase of a new training facility at Berkeley which would free up another building; details of the annual budget and an overview of the Gloucestershire force. The Panel had discussed the report and made a number of observations including a request to see the report earlier in the production process so that more feedback could be provided and reflected in the final content. The focus on “Gloucestershire – a child-friendly county” had been debated and the progress on reducing the number of juveniles entering the criminal justice system in order to help prevent the chances of reoffending had been noted. A number of Members had felt that the report should contain more details on performance as it was difficult to form a clear view without any specifics. With regard to the proposal to merge the Fire Service with the Police, the Panel had questioned whether the broadly supportive presentation by the Police and Crime Commissioner was justified, particularly as only a small percentage of the population had been consulted. The Police and Crime Commissioner had subsequently agreed to check the data more thoroughly and reconsider the wording. A lot of time had been spent talking about the new training centre and its importance and the Council’s representative indicated that his personal view was that it needed to be used as an opportunity to build closer connections with other services.

- 24.4 The remainder of the meeting had been spent discussing detailed reports regarding the delivery plan and the wide range of the activities of the Police. It had been interesting to note that Home Office statistics showed a 20% increase in reported crimes and a 10% reduction in the number of charges meaning that the ratio had reduced from 14.4% to 11.4% so the vast majority of crimes were going without punishment. Overall, it had been an interesting meeting and he indicated that his role was to act as a conduit for Members’ concerns so he would be pleased to take any comments or questions they may have throughout the course of the year.
- 24.5 In response to a query, the Council’s representative advised that the Panel meetings were held at Shire Hall; however, it had been suggested that a tour of the Police facilities at Waterwells would be beneficial and this was being arranged. A Member made reference to the Ofsted report on children’s services at the County Council and questioned whether this had had any impact on Police resources. The Council’s representative explained that policing was a highly complex area, with connections to various services, so it would take some time to tease this out. A Member queried who received the Police and Crime Commissioner’s annual report and was advised that it could be downloaded from the Commissioner’s website.
- 24.6 The Chair thanked the Council’s representative for his update and indicated that it would be circulated to the Committee following the meeting. It was subsequently
- RESOLVED** That the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel Update be
NOTED.

OS.25 ANNUAL REVIEW OF PLANNING COMMITTEE OVERTURNS

- 25.1 The report of the Head of Development Services, circulated at Pages No. 41-49, provided a template for the annual review of Planning Committee overturns. Members were asked to consider the template.
- 25.2 The Head of Development Services advised that, at its meeting on 8 January 2019, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had received a report on the new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and had requested that the template for the annual review of Committee overturns be brought back to the Committee. At the meeting on 9 April 2019, it had subsequently been agreed that a populated version of the template be submitted for consideration. By way of background, she explained

that the Planning Committee could make a decision which was different from the Officer recommendation. Planning Officers prepared reports for the Committee which were debated and certain issues may arise which resulted in Members taking a different view; sometimes this changed the outcome from an approval to a refusal or vice versa. This may reflect a difference in the assessment of how a policy had been complied with, or different weight may be attributed to material considerations. The template attached at Appendix 1 had been designed to provide sufficient information for the statistical analysis required by the Protocol for Councillors and Officers Involved in the Planning Process and to enable an annual review of the reasons why decisions differed to the recommendation. It was noted that the Protocol, which had been refreshed in December 2016, included an annual review of Committee decisions and this was the first stage of that process.

- 25.3 Members were advised that Part 1 of the template comprised a statistical analysis of all decisions made by the Committee and the percentage of decisions that had changed from a permit to refuse and vice versa. The template covered a three year period from April 2016 to March 2019 with a three year summary and information for each individual year which would allow an assessment of trends. Part 2 of the template provided a qualitative analysis for the previous financial year i.e. 2018-19 with full details of each application where the Committee decision differed from the Officer recommendation, together with the narrative for that e.g. site location, proposal, summary of reasons for recommendation etc.
- 25.4 During the debate which ensued, a Member indicated that whilst the information was interesting, he was unclear what could be done with it. The Head of Development Services advised that it was intended to help identify any recurring issues or emerging trends, for example, if there was a lack of clarity on a particular policy. The Business Transformation Manager explained that the annual review of Planning Committee decisions required by the Protocol for Councillors and Officers Involved in the Planning Process would be a check and balance to ensure that everyone involved was doing the best they could. It would include all Committee decisions, not just those where decisions had been made against Officer advice, and there would be an opportunity to use this in planning training by referring to particular decisions and relating them to policy which could be useful for both Officers and Members. In response to a query as to when the report would be considered by the Planning Committee and what that Committee would be asked to do with it, the Head of Development Services reminded Members that if applications were refused there was an opportunity for applicants to appeal the decision so it was useful to have a six month grace period, as such, it would be taken to Planning Committee in December 2019 or January 2020 and it would be down to the Committee to decide what it wanted to do with the information.
- 25.5 A Member raised concern that there was no summary page setting out the patterns or trends that had been identified by Officers and that was something he would like to see introduced. Another Member asked whether any comparisons could be drawn with other local authorities on a national basis. In response the Business Transformation Manager advised that, although she could ask other authorities in the county whether they went through a similar process, each authority had different criteria which made comparisons very difficult. Notwithstanding this, Officers would give this some consideration going forward. A Member drew attention to Page No. 48 of the report and indicated that Reference 18/00543/FUL Staverton Connection, Gloucester Road, had been permitted by the Committee against the Officer recommendation to refuse but no reasons had been provided for that decision. The Head of Development Services apologised for the omission and advised that the reason for the decision - as stated in the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting - was that "the economic benefits of the proposal would outweigh the harm caused to the Green Belt and character and appearance of the area". A Member noted that the reason was subjective and the Head of Development Services clarified that the issues presented in Committee reports

were material considerations for the determination of the application which Officers had balanced; however, Members could weigh those considerations slightly differently as they had done in this instance. In response to a query as to how this was specified, she stressed that there was no formal weighting – decisions must be based on policy and although some parameters would be more clearly defined than others, Members were at liberty to make certain choices within that.

- 25.6 A Member noted that Part 2 of the template only contained data from 2018/19 and indicated that he would like to have seen the information for previous years in order to identify patterns, particularly in terms of policy impact. The Head of Development Services indicated that 2018/19 was considered a stable point to start the analysis in planning policy terms given the status of the Joint Core Strategy and Tewkesbury Borough Plan. If Members wanted to see the information for the previous two years, resources could be directed to that but she warned that it would be time-consuming. Another Member indicated that the figures at Page No. 45 of the report did not add up in terms of the number of permissions that had changed to refusals and vice versa which should be 17 and 34 respectively. In terms of comparisons with other local authorities, he felt it would be nice to know how many had gone to appeal and whether they had been successful. He agreed that Part 2 of the template should have included three years' worth of data in order to identify trends and that it would have been helpful to know what conclusions Officers had drawn from the information. He requested that the call-in section be amended to give a reason for the application going to Planning Committee for determination, for instance, had it been called-in by a Member, was there an objection from the Parish Council etc. and Officers undertook to make that amendment going forward. The Chair sought a steer from Members as to whether they wished to see Part 2 of the template populated back to March 2016. The Head of Development Services reiterated that this would require considerable Officer time which would inevitably impact on other projects - it was noted that the Review of the Planning Enforcement Plan had been deferred from the current meeting to 22 October 2019, partly to allow it to be considered alongside the Development Services Improvement Plan but also to focus resources on this piece of work. A Member recognised the implications of undertaking this additional work and indicated that he was happy to make a proposal on that basis. This was seconded and, upon being taken to the vote, the motion was lost. It was subsequently

RESOLVED

1. That the template for the annual review of Planning Committee overturns be **NOTED**.
2. That it be **AGREED** that Part 2 of the template be populated going forward as opposed to retrospectively for the two years preceding 2018/19.

OS.26 UBICO REPORT 2018/19

- 26.1 The report of the Head of Community Services, circulated at Pages No. 50-103, provided the annual update on the Ubico contract for waste and recycling, street cleansing and grounds maintenance services. Members were asked to consider the 2018/19 outturn performance update on the services provided by Ubico.
- 26.2 The Head of Community Services advised that a range of performance information was collected and reported to the Environmental Services Partnership Board on a quarterly basis and was monitored by the Joint Waste Team monthly. Appendix 1 to the report attached the annual commissioner report which was prepared for the Board and detailed service requests, performance and health and safety statistics for the year; this was the first full year of tracking the newly adopted Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which were the same across the partnership to allow

for comparison. The document attached at Appendix 2 to the report was the Ubico corporate update which outlined the company's view on progress throughout the year.

- 26.3 The Head of Community Services indicated that the Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment was in attendance and he invited him to make a comment prior to any questions from the Committee. The Lead Member explained that the figures for missed bin collections were extremely good in the context of the amount of collections and he reminded Members that missed bins were not always the fault of Ubico or its drivers, for instance, there was a blackspot in Winchcombe where inconsiderate on-street parking meant that vehicles were unable to exit particular streets until those vehicles had been moved which had a knock on effect on the remainder of their round – this was just one example. In his view Ubico was very efficient and he provided assurance that missed bins were collected once they had been reported.
- 26.4 The Head of Community Services felt it was important to recognise the amount of work that had been done to improve performance since 2017 and the service was now in a completely different place than it had been at that time. Residual household waste collection and percentage of household waste reused, recycled and composted were still within target and the figures for 2017/18 and 2018/19, and the 2019/20 target, were set out at Page No. 52, Paragraph 3.2 of the report. There had been a slight increase in residual waste and a dip in recycling in the last quarter but that could be attributed to contamination of recyclate being taken to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) and it was recognised that work needed to be done with the community around what could and could not be recycled, for example, soiled nappies were a particular problem currently. With regard to bin deliveries, the number of requests fluctuated across the months. It was noted that there was error within the system which meant that Ubico was not able to respond as it should and work was ongoing to address this. In April 2018, the Council had changed the way it delivered the green garden waste service and how it charged for that service. This had continued to grow and now had over 18,000 customers generating approximately £863,000.
- 26.5 With regard to grounds maintenance, Members would be aware that the grass cutting service had suffered during 2018 due to unpredictable weather conditions and this was now being monitored much more closely via the Grounds Maintenance Working Group that had been established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Ubico was approximately one week behind currently which was significantly better than the previous year. In terms of street cleansing, graffiti, fly-tipping and dead animals, requests remained fairly consistent although it was noted that the five day target to remove fly-tips was not regularly achieved which could be partly due to the use of third party contractors to remove larger and more complex fly-tips e.g. asbestos. Notwithstanding this, overall he felt it had been a good year and some significant improvements had been made. The Managing Director of Ubico advised that attempts were being made to be more transparent in the performance and financial information provided and he agreed that the last year had been a good year for the organisation capped by the fact that it had achieved the International Standard for Health and Safety (ISO45001) in April 2019 which was a significant milestone. There had also been consolidation among the Finance team and he reminded Members that when he had joined the company there had been one full-time equivalent who was not directly employed by Ubico which was completely inadequate. He had taken time to build up the finance function and ensure that the Head of Finance and Asset Management and the Head of Community Services had the same information as Ubico in order to improve financial risk and think about how the information was collectively delivered to Members. Ultimately Ubico wanted to make dividends and he hoped that the consolidation would demonstrate the desire to have a long term future with the Council.

- 26.6 During the debate which ensued, a Member drew attention to Page No. 58 of the report in relation to missed recycling collections per 100,000 which seemed to suggest an average of 20,000 collections per day which would equate to 100,000 per week. In response, he was advised that there were 5.3 refuse crews which collected from approximately 1,000 properties each, so the average number of collections per day was in the region of 5,000. The Member went on to note that Page No. 60 of the report in relation to missed food waste collections stated that there was an average of 170,000 collections per month but it was unclear whether the figures shown in the graph reflected the amount of bins actually missed during that particular week, for instance, the week commencing 7 October appeared to show 45 missed bins according to the graph but the actual number was considerably less. He felt it would be easier if the graphs showed how many collections were missed instead of per 100,000. In response, the Managing Director of Ubico explained that this was a national benchmark that had been agreed by the Joint Waste Team which allowed comparison between the services and across the company so Tewkesbury Borough Council's performance could be compared with other authorities. Notwithstanding this, he indicated that he would discuss with the Head of Community Services and his team whether there was an opportunity to give a snapshot of the raw numbers as he accepted that a few missed collections could skew the figures when represented per 100,000 collections so it may be possible to add a local percentage to the graphs. Another Member indicated that she could see a lot of time and effort had gone into producing the graphs but this made it difficult to see a clear message and she suggested that the Managing Director of Ubico liaise with the Head of Corporate Services in order to agree a set of reports which would be easier for the Committee to understand. The Managing Director of Ubico welcomed this feedback and indicated that when he had taken up the role the level of responsibility had been poor in terms of the information that was provided to shareholders and owners and he had started off by going through the report slide by slide with the Head of Community Services to ensure they gave a full and detailed picture. He would be happy to go away and think about introducing a summary to capture the crucial KPIs so that this information was digestible for Members and it would be for them to decide how much they wanted to delve beyond this. The Chair indicated that he had concerns regarding Page No. 62 which related to missed collections for garden waste as this seemed to suggest that the target had only been achieved once in the six month period but that was not the reality. He agreed that Members needed to be able to digest and understand the information in order to come to the right conclusions so this was an important action to take forward. The Managing Director of Ubico reminded Members that the original target for missed collections within the contract had been too easy to achieve and had firstly been revised to 0.1% and then to a stretch target of 99.95% - the red line on the graphs was the stretch target which was regularly exceeded so this was something to be proud of.
- 26.7 A Member noted that Cotswold District Council used cameras in its waste collection vehicles and asked whether other partners did the same. In response, the Managing Director of Ubico advised that most of the fleet had cameras but these were mainly used for reviewing accident data if a complaint was made around driver behaviour; Cotswold District Council was in the process of procuring new vehicles and had opted for a service change as part of that which meant that updated technology would be installed to allow a live feed to some collections in real time and, therefore, to establish whether a bin had been presented for collection. This had already been done in Oxford where missed collections had reduced from 5,000 to less than 2,000 per year. Introducing this type of technology was a decision for individual Councils to make depending on the type of approach they wished to take with residents and how stringent they wanted to be. Whilst this could be costly initially, there were benefits for a rural borough such as Tewkesbury where a round trip cost in the region of £100. A Member queried whether it was possible for Ward Councillors to be informed of hotspots for missed collections in their areas so they

could try to resolve any issues locally. He was advised that any areas of non-compliance were added to a whiteboard on the Tewkesbury Borough system to enable Customer Services to see which properties had not presented a bin etc. so that information was available. It was noted that the Managing Director of Ubico had previously gone out with the Head of Community Services and members of the team in order to address areas where there were access issues etc. At present there was no in-cab technology; should that be introduced it would be possible to get better live data to obtain higher quality information about hotspot issues so, whilst there was a system in place, it could be improved.

- 26.8 A Member queried what Ubico defined as a 'missed collection' and was informed that this was when a resident contacted the Council to report that they had got home and their bin had not been emptied. This would be recorded and passed to Ubico and a process was undertaken at the end of the week to remove any which were known not to have been presented. The Member asked whether these were then collected and the Managing Director of Ubico confirmed that Ubico always went back to collect any genuine misses. In response to a query regarding a missed garden waste collection, the Head of Community Services advised that when the new sticker system had been introduced in April 2018, crews had been given strict instructions not to pick up any bins without a sticker so there had been some initial teething problems whilst people got used to the new system. Mistakes did happen but there were safeguards to ensure these were kept to a minimum and a number of mechanisms were in place to deal with repeat issues including an 'amber' list and a 'red' list so supervisors could provide assurance bins had been collected. The Managing Director of Ubico indicated that when Members visited the depot they would be able to see the system from the operatives' perspective which would help them to better understand the internal processes. He stressed that, as a company, Ubico carried out one million collections every two weeks so there were bound to be some which slipped through the net. A Member felt it would be fair to assume that there were many more missed garden waste collections than were being reported as it was highly likely that some people would simply wait for two weeks until the next collection.
- 26.9 A Member questioned when the KPIs in relation to grass cutting would be available and the Head of Community Services provided assurance that this was something which the Grounds Maintenance Working Group would be looking at. It was not intended to bring a report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee until a full year of information was available, although the Committee would receive a report when the Working Group had completed its work and it may also be appropriate to include this information in the Ubico six month update report.
- 26.10 Attention was drawn to Page No. 74 of the report in respect of street cleansing and a Member questioned whether there were plans in place to increase this in October when there had been a spike in the number of requests, presumably due to fallen leaves. In response, Members were informed that a "firefighting" approach was taken currently with two mechanical sweepers directed around the borough as and when they were needed, although scheduled routes were in the processes of being designed. The Managing Director of Ubico went on to explain that there was a national issue with driver shortages which impacted every local authority and this was felt acutely between October and December when drivers were more able to pick and choose other higher paid driving jobs. If there were a number of drivers off sick, or an agency worker had not turned up, waste collections were prioritised so there were occasions when street sweeping may suffer. Notwithstanding this, he provided assurance that this was being managed as best as they could and a number of actions were being discussed as to how the situation could be addressed e.g. training programmes etc. A Member indicated that he had been contacted by a Parish Council in respect of fallen leaves and this had been dealt with promptly when he had reported it to Ubico.

- 26.11 Another Member drew attention to the final bullet point on Page No. 94 of the report which referred to an overspend of £93,765 on transport costs, the majority of which was an overspend on tyres, and he indicated that he failed to see how that had happened as depreciation should have been taken into account in the business plan so he questioned why this had not been identified sooner. The Managing Director of Ubico agreed that the costs on tyres should have been identified and that had been a key learning point; nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that maintenance of the fleet had previously been an external contract so this was relatively new for Ubico and the fact that the tyres on the new fleet would all wear at the same rate had been an oversight. He provided assurance that the budget setting process had been reviewed in order to address this for future years. The Member also noted that the majority of additional expenditure on employee costs could be attributed to the use of agency staff and he sought further information in this regard. The Managing Director of Ubico advised that three full time equivalent staff had been absent for an entire year due to long term sickness. The budget for employee costs did include an assumption of sickness as it was not an option not to replace staff, as such, agency staff had been covering a large amount of long and short term sickness throughout the year. The third reason for the overspend was the additional costs in relation to grounds maintenance and Members would recall that the Executive Committee had authorised additional funds in order to address the problems with grass cutting. He indicated that value for money was being delivered within the contract and the service was preferential when compared to the private sector or an outsourced provider.
- 26.12 In response to a query regarding the cost of the recyclate that was being rejected by the MRF, and whether offending areas could be identified in order to target those particular residents, the Head of Community Services clarified that the Council operated a mixed recycling service so all recyclate collected was tipped into the same lorry and it could take between two and four days for this recyclate to reach the MRF. A gate fee was negotiated and could be affected by a number of factors including the market, where the recyclate was going to and the quantity and type of recyclate. He had met with Suez earlier that day and advised that new technology was being introduced at the MRF which meant that the recyclate would be much cleaner and therefore a higher price could be achieved; however, this also meant that the recyclate had to be much higher quality when it went in and a number of campaigns would be run over the course of the year to work with the community in that respect. The Managing Director of Ubico advised that a consultation event was being held for all stakeholders later in the year which would include a closer look at the journey of recycling - this would be open to all Members who may find it useful in terms of arming themselves with general information which could be relayed to residents. A Member questioned whether the Council reviewed what it recycled and looked for opportunities to recycle more. In response, the Head of Community Services advised that it was important to ensure there was a market for material being recycled and there were cost implications for everything that was recycled. Consideration was currently being given to whether it would be feasible to recycle small electrical items but it was necessary to find a market for these items and to identify a collection methodology. It was noted that putting an additional vehicle onto a round cost in the region of £150,000 and there would be other knock on effects such as the need to increase the operator licence at the depot. Nevertheless, Officers were constantly looking at what could be recycled and communicating with residents in order to maximise these opportunities. The Managing Director of Ubico pointed out that a kerbside collection could mean that people did not use the household recycling centres and that cost was passed on to the Council. Ubico's strategic position was that the focus should be on reducing waste and what people threw away, taking into account the carbon emissions from additional vehicles etc. A Member queried how the initial trips to Javelin Pak had been going and the Head of Community Services advised that there had been a small protest group from Extinction Rebellion on the opening day but this had not

resulted in any disruption for Tewkesbury Borough Council which was delivering to Javelin Park on Mondays and Tuesdays; since that time there had been no protests at all and his understanding was that things had been going reasonably well.

- 26.13 A brief debate ensued in relation to the comment at the bottom of Page 91 which several Members found confusing and clarification was provided that any vehicles not in use were clearly marked with "vehicle off road" signs so that these were not subject to an inspection. The Managing Director of Ubico indicated that this comment intended to highlight the interaction between the operational team and the workshop to ensure that all vehicles were safe and there was as little impact on the service as possible.
- 26.14 In relation to Appendix 2, Ubico Corporate Update, a Member drew attention to Paragraph 4.2 which stated that Ubico had moved to providing monthly financial reporting in 2018 and questioned exactly when this had happened as he would have expected the overspend to be identified through that reporting process. The Managing Director for Ubico confirmed that monthly reporting had been carried out throughout 2018 but the accuracy had improved as the year had gone on. The Head of Community Services explained that these type of services always attracted overspends but the overspend had increased significantly towards the end of the year and it was concerning that no sensible explanation had been provided for this. The reporting for quarter one of 2019/20 looked more positive and, whilst there were still a lot of queries, adjustments could be made to ensure there were no surprises at the end of the year. The Managing Director of Ubico confirmed that the target for this year was to improve accuracy and a number of things had been done to address that, for instance, an in-house accountant was working with the Council's Finance team to co-design the monthly report, operational managers were being supported to improve knowledge of their budgets and supervisors were being trained so they were able to flag up any issues.
- 26.15 A Member raised concern that there was a problem with the metrics at Page No. 97, Paragraph 5.2 of the report which stated that "In 2019, Ubico will continue to refine and improve its reporting. Ideally, the company would like to streamline and harmonise reporting to make it more efficient, however, this is dependent on partners agreeing to more standardised metrics and, at present, commissioners are retaining bespoke measures". The Managing Director of Ubico explained that some metrics were standard, i.e. the one for missed collections, but there were differences based on local policy decisions on service KPIs which meant that Ubico had to adjust its performance reporting. The Member expressed the view that this was much more onerous and the Managing Director of Ubico agreed that it was challenging but it was important to respect local decisions to meet residents' needs. He confirmed that the current level of reporting was acceptable but if it became more complex in terms of the information being requested then there would be a resource issue.
- 26.16 A query was raised in relation to the range of options being considered for commercial waste, as set out at Page No. 99 of the report, and, in response, the Head of Community Services advised that Officers were working in partnership with Ubico to develop the options to bring back to the relevant Committees later in the year. A Member questioned why it was sometimes necessary to undertake more than one journey in order to collect bulky waste and was informed that there was a limit on the number of collections per day and Ubico did not know what was being collected until the day. The Head of Community Services recognised that the system was not quite right and it was being reviewed; however, it was worth remembering that bulky waste items such as three piece suites were not always the same size.

26.17 A Member expressed the view that the waste collection service in Tewkesbury Borough was far preferable to the service he received from the local authority in the area where he lived. Ubico had been on quite a journey and the current service was now considerably better than it had been and the introduction of KPIs which were being accurately reported was a particular achievement. The Chair thanked the representatives from Ubico for their attendance and it was

RESOLVED That the 2018/19 outturn performance update on the services provided by Ubico Ltd. be **NOTED**.

OS.27 DEPOT SERVICES WORKING GROUP

27.1 The report of the Head of Community Services, circulated at Pages No. 104-108, asked Members to establish a Depot Services Working Group in accordance with the Terms of Reference at Appendix A to the report.

27.2 The Head of Community Services indicated that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received regular reports on the performance of Ubico and there had previously been frustration about the perceived lack of control and transparency. It was important that Members fully understood the relationship with Tewkesbury Borough Council, including what being part of a teckal arrangement meant in terms of the level of control that the Council had over the company. In order to facilitate this, the Committee was asked to establish a Depot Services Working Group in accordance with the Terms of Reference attached at Appendix A to the report which set out that the Group would comprise nine Members of the Council to include six Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, one Member of the Audit and Governance Committee and the Lead Members for Clean and Green Environment and Finance and Asset Management.

27.3 It was

RESOLVED

1. That a Depot Services Working Group be established in accordance with the Terms of Reference set out at Appendix A.
2. That the following Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be appointed to the Working Group:
Councillors C L J Carter, K J Cromwell, J W Murphy,
P W Ockelton, R J G Smith and M J Williams.

OS.28 COMMUNITY SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN

28.1 The report of the Head of Community Services, circulated at Pages No. 109-117, provided an update on the progress made against the Community Services Improvement Plan. Members were asked to consider the report.

28.2 The Head of Community Services explained that the Community Services Review had been carried out in 2018 and an improvement plan containing 15 actions had subsequently been approved by the Council. Members were advised that six of the actions were complete and three were progressing well but four actions were not on target and two had not progressed. The main reason for the actions not progressing was due to several staff leaving the team and the need to appoint agency staff whilst recruiting permanent staff to new and vacant roles; this had been challenging, particularly in terms of training.

28.3 A Member sought clarification as to the current position in terms of recruiting a student Environmental Health Officer and was informed that there had been a change of approach as it was now intended to speak to schools and colleges in the area to try to engage someone who would like a career in environmental health rather than employ someone who was already involved. The Member indicated

that he had some concerns regarding hazardous properties in the private rented sector and he questioned whether any progress had been made in this regard. In response, the Head of Community Services indicated that he did not want to give the impression that nothing was done in respect of private sector housing and he stressed that robust action was taken when complaints were received – he pointed out that a Prohibition Order had recently been raised in respect of a House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) within the borough. Unfortunately, resources meant that it was not always possible to be more proactive as this was not a statutory requirement; however, Officers were engaging with private sector landlords where appropriate. It was noted that more work was now being done with the Community Development Officers in terms of their role in community safety and the reduction of crime and disorder and this was welcomed by Members.

28.4

It was

RESOLVED That the progress made in relation to the Community Services Improvement Plan be **NOTED**.

The meeting closed at 6:45 pm