

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Tuesday, 14 January 2020 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, J K Smith, P D Surman and M J Williams

also present:

Councillor D J Harwood

OS.66 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 66.1 The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was advised to those present.
- 66.2 The Chair welcomed the Deputy Chief Executive of GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to the meeting and indicated that he was in attendance for Agenda Item 7 – Gfirst LEP Presentation. He also introduced the representatives from Ubico who were present for Agenda Item 10 – Trade Waste Services.

OS.67 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

- 67.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R J G Smith and P N Workman. There were no substitutions for the meeting.

OS.68 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 68.1 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.
- 68.2 There were no declarations made on this occasion.

OS.69 MINUTES

- 69.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2019, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

OS.70 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

70.1 Attention was drawn to the Executive Committee Forward Plan, circulated at Pages 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.

70.2 It was noted that the Agenda for the meeting on 4 March 2020 only contained one item and the Chair requested that Officers be engaged to ensure that this was populated prior to the next meeting. The Deputy Chief Executive provided assurance this had already been raised as an issue and would be discussed at the forthcoming management team away day on Monday 20 January.

70.3 It was

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

OS.71 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

71.1 Attention was drawn to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/20, circulated at Pages No. 17-24, which Members were asked to consider.

71.2 It was

RESOLVED That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/20 be **NOTED**.

OS.72 GFIRST LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (LEP) PRESENTATION

72.1 The Chair introduced the Deputy Chief Executive of GFirst LEP and indicated that he would be giving a presentation which would cover LEP investments related to Tewkesbury Borough; the Growth Hub network; the inward investment team; and the Local Industrial Strategy.

72.2 Members were informed that the primary role of GFirst LEP was to drive economic growth and create jobs. It was set-up in 2011 and there were 38 LEPs across the country; it was noted that the GFirst LEP consistently appeared in the top five or 10 within the various league tables. In terms of the investments made, the GFirst LEP had been successful in securing £101m of growth deal funding which had been used to fund high profile projects within the county such as the roundabout at Elmbridge Court which had cost £10m and was an example of a development that had made a real difference. Members were advised that £550,000 had been invested in the south camp at Gloucestershire Airport which had provided two new hangars and associated road infrastructure, and a further £1.8m on Anson Park which would open up infrastructure and create more employment land for hangar space which could be used for aircraft, innovation, training etc. There had also been a £4.5m investment in Innsworth Gateway, which was key for traffic mitigation to release the strategic housing site. Members were informed that £1.6m had been allocated to the B4063 Staverton Bridge but this work had actually been done by Highways England as an element of the junction connected to the Cyber Park. It was noted that the LEP was funding the road infrastructure to open up the Cyber Park rather than anything actually on the Park itself.

72.3 A Member questioned whether the GFirst LEP funded any infrastructure that was not road-based, for example, trams or trains, and was advised that £6m had been invested in improving Cheltenham Spa Railway Station and funding was also being provided for the underpass at Gloucester Railway Station. The GFirst LEP was supporting four main road projects – A417 missing link, Junction 9, Junction 10 and A46 – and the focus would then be on rail, cycling and public transport, for instance, the proposed mass transit station between Gloucester and Cheltenham. It was

noted that the GFirst LEP had asked for information on investment priorities arising from the Gloucestershire Rail Strategy in order to establish what would give the best return and that information would be available over the next month or so. Another Member went on to question how much employment was generated from the significant investment in Gloucestershire Airport and was informed that this had resulted in approximately 200 jobs. Assurance was provided that any project funded by the GFirst LEP had to go through scrutiny and it was noted that green credentials were becoming increasingly important. A Member indicated that he would be very interested in additional detail about the mass transit centre and was advised that this was contained within the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) but was just an idea at this stage with no costings etc.

72.4 In terms of the Growth Hub network, Members were advised that it was planned to roll out physical Growth Hubs across the county with one in each local authority area. Gloucestershire was up to three – one in Cirencester in partnership with the Royal Agricultural University, one at the University of Gloucestershire in Gloucester and one at the Public Services Centre in Tewkesbury – with 31 mini Growth Hubs in libraries across the county. In total, £9.5m had been spent on the Growth Hub network. The mini Growth Hubs had been introduced as libraries were less intimidating than the larger Growth Hubs based on University campus'. This also gave the libraries another function, increased footfall and raised the profile of the brand. A Member questioned how Growth Hubs were marketed and was advised that word of mouth had proven to be best although they were advertised in Punchline Magazine and campaigns were also run in the Gloucestershire Echo and Citizen. Members were advised that Gloucester Growth Hub had opened in July 2017 and had attracted 20,000 unique visitors to date; Cirencester Growth Hub had opened in July 2018 and had attracted 4,000 visitors; and Tewkesbury Growth Hub had opened in October 2018 and had attracted 1,700 visitors – further statistics were displayed at the meeting giving a breakdown of the reasons for people visiting the Growth Hubs and the amount of three and 12 hour interventions. In response to a query regarding funding, Members were informed that the GFirst LEP was paid for by capital but the team was funded by the European Regional Development Fund. Going forward, the GFirst LEP had managed to secure a further three years of funding to take them to 2023; it was expected that funding would be brought under a new single scheme which it was hoped would all come via the GFirst LEP making it easier to divide up.

72.5 With regard to inward investment, it was noted that there had been no specific strategy in place for the last five to ten years but the purpose was two-fold: attracting new foreign owners into the county and looking after the existing foreign-owned businesses which were already located in the area e.g. Moog. The GFirst LEP has secured £500,000 funding for an inward investment project which had involved match funding from all local authorities within Gloucestershire who had contributed via the business rates pool. A key focus of the inward investment team was to encourage more European businesses in four sectors: cyber, agritech, advanced engineering and manufacturing and renewables. The project had been running for a year and was a real opportunity to go out and fly the flag for the county at various national events such as the Paris Air Show and Agritechnica, the world's leading trade fair for agricultural machinery. The Deputy Chief Executive of GFirst LEP indicated that the GFirst LEP may be able to assist if there were any opportunities with Miesbach – which was twinned with Tewkesbury – for instance, by providing funding for delegates to visit Gloucestershire etc. It was noted that the Chief Executive of the GFirst LEP had visited China in October for several meetings and, although nothing had come of it as yet, it was important to build bridges around the world.

- 72.6 Members were advised that the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) contained five foundations of productivity - ideas, people, infrastructure, business environment and place - and four grand challenges - ageing society, artificial intelligence (AI) and data; future mobility and clean growth. The Deputy Chief Executive of GFirst LEP had brought copies of the GFirst LEP Annual Report 2019 which contained an executive summary of the LIS that Members may find of interest. A number of meetings had been held with the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive of Tewkesbury Borough Council in order to identify priorities for the borough and 200 responses had been received during the consultation on the draft LIS in September which had been very favourable on the whole; it was noted that only the GFirst LEP had conducted a dedicated survey asking the next generation for their opinion with 5,000 responses received across the county. In response to a query regarding the level of detail, Members were informed that the LIS was around 120 pages which the government had indicated was too long and it was possible that it may be necessary to focus on one key area which was most important to the county. A Member questioned why the priorities may need to be limited and the Deputy Chief Executive of GFirst LEP explained that the feedback was that the LIS needed to be 'trimmed' so, whilst all four priorities were very important, it was possible that they would need to be scaled back. The initial brief for the LIS was that it was necessary to choose the most important sector which had been thought to be cyber, particularly given the location of GCHQ within the county; however, engagement and evidence had demonstrated that advanced engineering was also very important and the green agenda had come top in a youth survey. After the draft had been published, it had been suggested that advanced engineering and manufacturing needed to be given greater focus so that was also amended. It was now down to the government to explain what would happen next; unfortunately, the LIS had been pushed back due to Brexit and the UK Parliamentary election so it was highly unlikely that the launch would go ahead in March as originally planned. A Member questioned whether the government had indicated that the green agenda would be the issue that was likely to be removed from the LIS and the Deputy Chief Executive of GFirst LEP stressed that nothing had been decided and it was unclear how many of the priorities would need to be cut back.
- 72.7 The Deputy Chief Executive of GFirst LEP went on to advise that the GFirst LEP also ran 10 business groups, which covered the key sectors in the county, and had an education team which went into schools and offered training on CV writing, interview techniques etc. - the GFirst LEP had worked with over 2,000 students aged 11-18 in the last year and had supported over 200 business volunteers. In terms of key priorities for 2020, Members were advised that funding needed to be secured post April 2020 in order to continue to plan strategically for the next 10 to 20 years and the GFirst LEP would be looking to local MPs to lobby the government; the next tranche of growth deal funding had been secured so it would be necessary to start investing in the projects he had talked about; the LIS launch would also be a priority once it had been signed-off by the government; the Western Gateway initiative – equivalent to the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine – a strategic partnership promoting and maximising economic growth across South Wales and the west of England to create jobs, boost prosperity and support the universities and businesses of the regions; and finally, to recruit a new Chair and Vice-Chair to take over when the existing representatives stepped down in July – the Deputy Chief Executive of GFirst LEP encouraged Members to get in touch if they were aware of any business leaders they felt may be suitable candidates. In response to a query, clarification was provided that the leader of Cheltenham Borough Council was the current Vice-Chair and represented the local authorities which had one seat on the board; the leader of Gloucestershire County Council had a specific seat on the board and the leader of Stroud District Council was an observer. The board also comprised representatives from further/higher education but was predominately made up of people from the private sector which was a requirement. A Member questioned where Tewkesbury Borough was represented

and was advised that it was possible to lobby for a second local authority seat via the Joint Committee, if Members so wished. Another Member indicated that he had attended a University of Gloucestershire apprenticeship meeting recently and had been struck by the fact there was no single point of contact in the same way that UCAS administered university placements, instead it was down to individuals to use their own initiative to trawl through websites etc. The Deputy Chief Executive of GFirst LEP confirmed that, as far as he was aware, there was no such facility and a proposal to set-up an apprenticeship clearing house had not received funding in the past; notwithstanding this, he felt it may be sensible to have a single point of contact for further and higher education under one roof and he was happy to take this comment back.

72.8 The Chair thanked the Deputy Chief Executive of GFirst LEP for his presentation and it was

RESOLVED That the GFirst LEP presentation be **NOTED**.

OS.73 ENVIRO-CRIMES UPDATE

73.1 The report of the Head of Community Services, circulated at Pages No. 25-32, provided an update on progress against the Enviro-Crimes Action Plan and asked Members to agree that, as tackling enviro-crime was now fully embedded within the day to day operations of Environmental Health, no further reports would be brought unless there was any change in this position but any significant matters of information would be included on the Member Update Sheet and performance would continue to be monitored in the quarterly performance tracker.

73.2 The Head of Community Services advised that there were 15 actions contained within the action plan at Appendix 1 to the report and he was pleased to report that nine had been completed and the remaining six would be taken forward in due course. He hoped that Members would agree there had been significant improvement in the way the Council dealt with enviro-crimes in recent years which was in no small part due to interrogation and monitoring by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and tackling enviro-crime was now part of the day to day business of the Environmental Health Team. He pointed out that the Council had taken delivery of a new waste vehicle earlier in the year which had been branded with the Council's new waste aware website which was aimed at promoting the Council's approach to tackling enviro-crime and he encouraged Members to have a look following the meeting. It was now proposed that monitoring of enviro-crimes should be via the quarterly performance report as opposed to separate reports to the Committee.

73.3 A Member expressed the view that a lot of good work had been done by Officers to get to this point and the approach to enviro-crimes had improved inordinately over the last few years. The Support Member for Clean and Green Environment echoed these sentiments and extended his thanks to the team who had done a fantastic job for the whole borough. A Member drew attention to the action to introduce a schedule of Parish Council liaison meetings that would achieve contact with a minimum of 50% of Parish Councils which was due to be completed in June 2019. She noted that 14 Parish Councils had been visited to date and questioned what percentage that represented and whether the action was ongoing. The Head of Community Services advised that 14 Parish Councils equated to approximately 28% and he explained that the 50% target had been extremely ambitious; however, this would be a permanent target and Officers would continue to work with all Parish Councils going forward. A Member expressed the view that there

was a need to work together and for Borough Councillors to get out into the Parishes and speak directly to them to promote the service. It was also suggested that Officers should ensure Members were aware when they were going to the various Parishes so they could be there as well.

- 73.4 A Member noted that one of the actions involved recruiting a GIS/Systems Administrator for mapping reported enviro-crimes onto the GIS system and he queried what the timescale was for that. The Head of Community Services advised this was a shared post with the Planning team which was undertaking the recruitment and the closing date for applications was 20 January 2020. The Member went on to draw attention to the action to undertake a minimum of four joint operations with partner agencies and questioned the level of resource required for this. In response, the Head of Community Services explained that each operation was quite resource intensive and generally involved at least two Enforcement Officers from the Council as well as a number of Police Officers to stop vehicles safely and facilitate checking of documentation. Depending on what was being targeted specifically, the Environment Agency may also be involved as well as neighbouring local authorities. It was noted that four operations per year was a significant commitment as these events involved a lot of planning and liaison but it was certainly something which the team aspired to do. In response to a query as to what was meant by 'designing out' enviro-crime which was referenced in the action plan, the Head of Community Services gave an example of a car park where there was a problem with litter or anti-social behaviour and one of the solutions might be to cut back bushes to make the area more exposed etc. In response to a query as to what was intended by developing a relationship with the National Farmers' Union and how that would be achieved, Members were advised that it was important to build a better relationship around tackling fly-tipping and rural crime so that the Council could investigate and pick up intelligence across the borough. The Member indicated that, as a new Councillor, he had not fully appreciated the amount of work that had been done and what had been achieved and he was satisfied this was now business as usual. It was subsequently

RESOLVED

1. That the progress made against the enviro-crimes action plan be **NOTED**.
2. That it be **AGREED** that, as tackling enviro-crime is now fully embedded within the day to day operations of Environmental Health, no further report will be brought unless there is any change in this position but any significant matters of information will be included on the Member Update Sheet and performance will continue to be monitored in the quarterly performance tracker.

OS.74 SEPARATE BUSINESS

- 74.1 The Chair proposed, and it was

RESOLVED

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

OS.75 TRADE WASTE SERVICES

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

- 75.1 The Committee recommended to the Executive Committee that a detailed business case on the pilot proposal, building on the work that had already been undertaken as set out in Paragraphs 7 and 9 of the report, be prepared, and other third party options be presented for review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order that a recommendation on the way forward could be made by the Executive Committee.

The meeting closed at 6:55 pm