

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Tuesday, 28 March 2023 commencing at 4:30 pm

Present:

Chair
Vice Chair

Councillor J W Murphy
Councillor K Berliner

and Councillors:

C L J Carter, K J Cromwell, P A Godwin, H C McLain, P D McLain, C E Mills, J K Smith, S Thomson, M J Williams and P N Workman

OS.101 ANNOUNCEMENTS

101.1 The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was advised to those present.

OS.102 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

102.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G F Bocking, H S Munro and C Softley. There were no substitutes for the meeting.

OS.103 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

103.1 The Committee's attention was drawn to the Tewkesbury Borough Council Code of Conduct which was adopted by the Council on 24 January 2023 and took effect from 1 February 2023.

103.2 There were no declarations made on this occasion.

OS.104 MINUTES

104.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2023, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

OS.105 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTION LIST

105.1 Attention was drawn to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List, circulated at Pages No. 16-35 which gave an update on the progress of the actions identified at meetings of the Committee between 22 October 2019 and 7 February 2023. Members were asked to consider the action list.

105.2 The Corporate Services Manager advised that the majority of actions had been delivered and the remainder had been updated with comments and new target dates.

105.3 Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List be
NOTED.

OS.106 GLOUCESTERSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL UPDATE

- 106.1 Attention was drawn to the report from the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel, circulated separately, which gave an update on matters considered at the meeting held on 24 March 2023.
- 106.2 The Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel advised that a presentation had been given in relation to the improvement plan being implemented within the Force which was designed to address performance issues, including those highlighted in the last report from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary which had found that the operating model was not fit for purpose and resources had not been appropriately allocated. A lot of work was ongoing and a new Enhanced Operating Model had been agreed in October 2022; this involved a redesign of workflows which was a very complicated process but had now reached the implementation stage with 1,300 staff being allocated postings under the new structure – approximately 76% had been given their first preference posting. It was noted that 30 staff were appealing against their new postings due to the nature of the change. The Police and Crime Panel had asked about the impact of the Baroness Casey Review of the Metropolitan Police in terms of its relevance for Gloucestershire and had been advised that, although some of the findings were specific to the Metropolitan Police, there were things that needed to be seriously reflected upon for Gloucestershire. The review had identified seven areas for change on which progress should be reviewed every two years; however, the continuous improvement culture in Gloucestershire meant it was intended to look at those areas on a more regular basis with detailed reporting every 6-12 months. There had also been a discussion about morale within the Force and it was recognised that, although it had been impacted by workload and the change process, morale was now fairly good, albeit there was a continuing issue with the amount of pressure some individuals were under.
- 106.3 The Council's representative went on to advise that the Police and Crime Panel had also received a presentation on the role of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Commissioning Team which looked at gaps in performance of the Force and what others were doing in order to establish whether any lessons could be learnt. The results of any changes identified were reviewed on an 18 month cycle. The Commissioning Team also prepared the bids for central government funding and it was noted that Gloucestershire had secured two major wins, totalling £3m, under the Safer Streets Home Office initiative which highlighted the importance of a high-performing Commissioning Team. The Police and Crime Commissioner had also submitted a report on current activities which included the success of the Cheltenham Festival with action taken to address antisocial behaviour, and the recent visit of the Knife Angel to Gloucestershire Cathedral. It was also noted that a number of local authorities had signed up to the Solace multi-agency forum on tackling anti-social behaviour – Tewkesbury Borough Council was expected to join in the near future. The Police and Crime Commissioner had again mentioned his lobbying efforts to get the Police to be considered as part of the Section 106 process in local planning applications; more residents meant a bigger Police Force was needed including additional Police Stations.
- 106.4 The Council's representative on the Police and Crime Panel indicated that four questions had been raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at previous meetings which he had put to the Police and Crime Commissioner. The first related to the method used for the public survey which had been conducted and he confirmed that social media had been used to attract participants as well as engagement with local community contacts. It was intended to undertake further surveys in future and it was accepted that these needed to be better publicised as feedback had been relatively limited in terms of the overall population. With regard to the question around the treatment of injured officers who were retained in desk

jobs for long periods on higher pay, the first assumption of the Police and Crime Commissioner was that he was suggesting that Officers were being discriminated against and not being allowed to progress within the Force; the Council's representative had made clear that was not the nature of the question which was about whether they were acting as blockers for other people and if that was fair and reasonable. It was accepted that there were issues with the treatment of Officers on "adjusted or limited" duties and that had been looked at as part of the Enhanced Operating Model with the number of Officers designated as such being reduced with a series of allocations to more evenly distribute them between functions. The final two questions had related to vetting of Officers and how to restore women's confidence in the Police and, due to the seriousness of the findings of the report and the related topics, it was agreed those matters would be included for more detailed reporting at a future meeting of the Panel.

- 106.5 It was noted that a report had been submitted by the Chief Executive Officer of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in relation to the performance of the Gloucestershire Police Force and a number of questions had been raised about the increase in recorded crimes. The increase suggested there had been a change in culture around recording incidents, particularly less serious crimes such as antisocial behaviour, and cultural change was also likely to be the reason for the higher numbers of crimes such as sexual assault and domestic violence. A new standard Home Office reporting pack was expected which would bring greater comparability across Forces. It was noted that a reported jump in the number of homicides was likely to be misleading as many of the investigations were open and would subsequently be removed, resulting in negative statistics for cases in future reporting - suspicious deaths involving falls were an example of where such recategorisations occurred.
- 106.6 A Member indicated that he had previously raised concern regarding the 101 phone service and had been advised it would be improved; however, he had spoken to several people who had tried to report antisocial behaviour but had been unable to get through within a reasonable period of time which meant the perpetrators were able to leave the scene before anything could be done. In response the Council's representative explained that, whilst there would always be exceptions, on average it took 15 seconds for a 999 call to be answered and two minutes for a 101 call with performance varying depending on the amount of calls, for instance, calls increased during Cheltenham Race Week. The Police and Crime Commissioner had made a commitment to raise the headcount across the Force and some resource had been diverted to the control room to ensure that the key issues raised were being recorded – he recognised the issue had not been solved but believed that progress was being made. The Member asked whether this had been measured previously and was advised that it had not received the level of attention it should have done.
- 106.7 A Member indicated that he had noticed improvements with policing in Brockworth so he felt the Enhanced Operating Model was working. He sought clarification as to what the £3m funding received by the Commissioning Team could be spent on and was informed it was related to the Safer Streets Home Office initiative which was focused on schools and making streets safer for children and women in particular. The Member felt it was a shame the Police were having to ask for Section 106 money but he welcomed the suggestion that more Police Stations were needed as this was an important way for local residents to make contact with Police Officers. The Council's representative indicated that antisocial behaviour was recognised as a key issue – both nationally and locally – and early intervention often prevented people from going on to commit more serious crimes. He pointed out that nitrous oxide use was not always seen as a significant issue but disproportionately affected young people and underprivileged communities.

106.8 Another Member noted that Gloucestershire Police had previously looked at helping schools but there was no funding available to youth clubs specifically for girls. She asked whether the Police could do anything to support, or work with, the girls youth club in Brockworth. In response, the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel advised that the Force had access to funding via the Commissioner's fund and 20 grants under £20,000 had been given to the community – if a grant was given, the expectation was that the Police would be involved. He undertook to take the specific point away and provide a response following the meeting. A Member queried whether Police numbers were keeping pace with the increasing amount of residents within the county and was advised that the Home Office was very happy with Gloucestershire in terms of its recruitment rates which were above the national average. A Member asked if recruitment included Special Constables, as opposed to paid Officers, and was advised it was both. The number of frontline full-time Officers had been lower than originally anticipated as a lot of Officers had been put directly into areas which had been criticised, such as the control centre. The Police and Crime Commissioner was enthusiastic about the role of Special Constables so those numbers were being increased as well.

106.9 The Chair thanked the Council's representative for the informative update and it was
RESOLVED That the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel update be
NOTED.

OS.107 GLOUCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE UPDATE

107.1 Attention was drawn to the report from the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, circulated separately, which gave an update on matters considered at the meeting held on 14 March 2023.

107.2 The Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised that a report was provided on the out of hours service which looked at the response to 111 calls which should be answered within 30 seconds. There had been a lot of questions about the fact that the Care Quality Commission's annual report had identified that the service needed improvement for the fifth year. In response, the Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board had reported that new ways of working had shown improved outcomes with more of the identified issues being addressed e.g. emergency department discharges, ambulances and staffing. The second report received by the Committee was in respect of the Winter Sustainability and Surge Management Plan 2022/23 Review which was undertaken each year to show how additional demand would be managed; this year there had been an increase in respiratory disorders as well as flu and COVID. The majority of action plan items had been delivered upon and the key areas of focus were set out at Page No. 5 of the papers. The Committee had also received an update on the temporary changes to maternity services where it was noted there were currently 25 vacancies and it was intended to maintain the temporary closures until there was a stable workforce to avoid a yo-yo effect of units being reopened and then having to be closed again due to a dip in staff numbers.

107.3 In response to a query regarding Tewkesbury Hospital being used as a 10 bed short stay hospital, Members were advised this was for the purpose of assessing and providing support services required to keep patients at home without the need for an acute hospital admission. The remaining 10 beds had been used for rehabilitation. A Member indicated that it was an ongoing frustration for the residents of Tewkesbury that a new hospital had been built with 20 beds – reduced from 48 –

which were intended for the people of Tewkesbury and yet those people could not get access to them. The Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee understood this concern and noted that it was not a community hospital in the way that it used to be; community hospitals tended to be for specific uses and Tewkesbury Hospital was for the elderly and frail. Another Member noted that a key area of focus for the winter management plan was for acute hospitals to have a discharge area that could hold up to 27 patients waiting to go home in order to free up beds earlier and he asked if there were any plans to increase the discharge areas in Gloucestershire Royal Hospital. The Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised that this had not been mentioned but the discharge area seemed to be working so she felt it was likely to be retained. In response to a query as to whether there was any indication why there were staff shortages within the out of hours service, the Council's representative advised that recruitment was difficult so new approaches were being taken including running recruitment days rather than one on one interviews and looking at creating specialities within the NHS to try to counteract newly qualified doctors moving to areas such as Bristol and Birmingham which were large teaching hospitals with more opportunities for career development.

- 107.4 The Chair thanked the Council's representative for the interesting and helpful update and it was

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

OS.108 USE OF MOBILE SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT FOR FLY-TIPPING INVESTIGATIONS

- 108.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Environmental Health Manager, circulated at Pages No. 36-39, which provided an update on the outcome of a six month trial of the use of mobile surveillance equipment undertaken by the Environmental Health department with regard to fly-tipping investigations. Members were asked to recommend to the Executive Committee that the Council adopt the use of mobile surveillance equipment as a long-term measure to support fly-tipping investigations and enforcement.

- 108.2 The Environmental Health Manager advised that Members would recall that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had approved the trial in October 2021. He explained that the Committee's preferred choice had involved the use of concealed cameras at the target site with the presence of cameras advertised by signage; however, this had not been possible as the data privacy impact assessment had identified that use of covert cameras would have involved the data being stored on a memory card located in the camera itself which presented a risk to the Council in terms of data loss and potential personal data breach should the cameras be stolen or vandalised. The trial had subsequently commenced using two overt rapid deployment cameras with signage; these cameras connected wirelessly to the 4G/5G network and images were stored securely in the cloud rather than being stored on the camera itself. The trial had started in August 2022 and the cameras had been installed at two hotspot locations for approximately six weeks per location. The number of reported fly-tips at each location before and after the cameras were installed was set out at Paragraph 3.2 of the report and showed that 11 fly-tips had been reported at the first location in the previous 12 months but only one since camera installation with three being reported at the second location in the previous 12 months and none since camera installation. It was noted that the fly-tip at location one had taken place within the first few days of the cameras being installed with the camera capturing good footage of the incident. Officers felt that the combination of signage warning people of the presence of cameras and the cameras themselves had proven to be very effective. The signage itself was

inexpensive and could be erected in various locations across the borough and Officers were now skilled at setting up the cameras and capable of deploying them at short notice without the need for assistance from an external engineer. In terms of financial resources, the Council owned the cameras and associated hardware outright and the subscription to the cloud software cost £55 per month and could be stopped at any time. The Environmental Health Manager confirmed that the necessary RIPA non-direct surveillance audit had been carried out and the appropriate consultation undertaken in terms of the privacy impact assessment and GDPR compliance.

- 108.3 A Member noted that the legal implications section of the report stated that a dedicated internal policy be implemented by the Council dealing with the legal and procedural matters around the permanent use of mobile surveillance equipment in these circumstances and he asked if that policy was now in place. The Environmental Health Manager indicated that the policy had not yet been drafted but he would do this as soon as possible. The Member went on to question how Tewkesbury Borough Council compared to other local authorities in the area in terms of the number of fly-tips and whether the use of cameras within the borough was pushing fly-tipping to other places. In response, the Environmental Health Manager indicated that, whilst there was always a risk of displacement, he was not aware of any significant reports of fly-tips from the other local authorities. The Member continued to raise concern that the 13 fly-tips which had potentially been avoided within Tewkesbury Borough had still happened somewhere and the Chair indicated that, unfortunately, that was outside of the Council's control.
- 108.4 Another Member felt the results of the trial were positive and, in view of the comments at Paragraph 3.4 of the report regarding the signage being an effective deterrent, he asked if it would be possible to use signage alone without cameras. The Environmental Health Manager indicated that Officers would like to use as much signage as possible and the advice received to date was that this was possible so discussions were taking place with One Legal regarding the appropriate wording. The Member suggested it would be beneficial to move the signage so that perpetrators did not become complacent. He felt it may also be helpful to erect signage encouraging people to submit dashcam footage if they captured anyone fly-tipping and the Environmental Health Manager undertook to seek advice on this from One Legal. In response to a Member query regarding cost savings arising from the potential reduction of 13 fly-tips as a result of using the cameras, the Environmental Health Manager indicated that he would obtain this information and update Members following the meeting. The Member went on to ask whether consideration had been given to using imitation cameras along with signage as in her experienced this could be quite successful. The Environmental Health Manager recognised that dummy cameras were used by some people so that option could be viable; however, there was also potential to submit a growth bid for the purchase of additional cameras going forward.
- 108.5 A Member indicated that he was aware the Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) would shortly stop accepting tyres and he asked if that was likely to result in increased fly-tipping. The Environmental Health Manager acknowledged that was a possibility. The Waste Contracts Manager explained that the HRCs were run by Gloucestershire County Council and the reason for the change was that it was felt most people who were getting rid of tyres would be replacing them and so would be disposing of them via a garage or similar so the tyres being disposed at the HRCs were generally by taxi companies and other businesses which should not be taking them there. He provided assurance that Officers were aware of the potential for increased fly-tipping as a result of the change and would be monitoring the situation. The Corporate Services Manager indicated that the Communications team could run a campaign on social media or via the Borough News to ensure the wider message was appropriately conveyed to residents.

- 108.6 A Member asked whether there were any areas of the borough where it would be difficult to place cameras due to connectivity, given its rural nature, and the Environmental Health Manager confirmed there had been no issue with the network provider so far and it was not anticipated to be a problem. The Member felt it would be good to send a message that the Council was watching fly-tippers and he asked if there were any plans for a “wanted board” or something similar when someone had been caught in the act. The Environmental Health Manager confirmed the original plan was to obtain sufficient quality evidence to secure a custodial sentence which was something that had been achieved by other local authorities. The incident that had been captured at location one was still being investigated but he provided assurance that Officers did their best to ensure those committing fly-tipping offences were prosecuted and any successful prosecutions would be publicised.
- 108.7 A Member welcomed the proposal to adopt the use of the cameras as a long-term measure and suggested it would also be appropriate to recommend to the Executive Committee that consideration be given to increasing the number in use. It was subsequently

RESOLVED That it be **RECOMMENDED TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** that:

- i) the Council adopts the use of mobile surveillance equipment as a long-term measure to support fly-tipping investigations and enforcement; and,
- ii) consideration be given to increasing the number of cameras in use.

OS.109 DEPOT SERVICES WORKING GROUP ANNUAL REPORT

- 109.1 The report of the Waste Contracts Manager, circulated at Pages No. 40-45, provided the annual update on the work of the Depot Services Working Group. Members were asked to consider the progress made during 2022/23.
- 109.2 The Waste Contracts Manager advised that the Working Group had met on four occasions during 2022/23 with two of the main areas of consideration being the trade waste service review and the fleet procurement approach for waste and street cleansing vehicles which had subsequently been approved by the Executive Committee. Particular attention was drawn to the improvement in grass cutting standards with scores increasing from 48% in 2021/22 to 82% 2022/23.
- 109.3 A Member drew attention to Page No. 41, Paragraph 2.5 of the report in relation to the street cleansing review and asked whether the information would be available to Members, if it would include missing bins and whether similar mapping would be carried out for litter picking and fly-tipping so it would be possible to identify hotspot areas and make residents aware. In response, the Waste Contracts Manager confirmed that this was all possible via the Alloy system which was being rolled out across the Ubico contract. Street cleansing would move across to the system in quarter three of 2023/24. The Member noted from Page No. 42, Paragraph 2.5.3 of the report that bins were being collected outside of the local authority responsibility and he asked what could be done to address that. The Waste Contracts Manager explained that the main issues tended to arise where new developments were built and the developer retained responsibility for the land and employed management companies to maintain them – what tended to happen was that people reported the bins as being full and the Council started to empty them, only finding out years down the line that the bins were not the local authority’s responsibility. It was a question of identifying where that had happened and making sure the right people were emptying them. When the Council was able to demonstrate that land belonged to a particular party, there were mechanisms that could be used to force them to maintain their own land, if necessary. The Member noted that a review of

road zoning had commenced which would support the sweeper schedule and he asked if the schedule could be made available to Parish Councils. The Waste Contracts Manager confirmed it was intended to circulate the schedules once they were complete.

- 109.4 A Member drew attention to Page No. 42, Paragraph 2.9 of the report in relation to fleet procurement and asked if there would be any electric vehicles. In response, the Waste Contracts Manager indicated that it was not possible for larger vehicles to be electric due to concerns around cost and the rural nature of the borough; however, it was hoped that some of the smaller 3.5 tonne vehicles could be electric, particularly street cleansing vehicles. A Member noted the significant improvement in grass cutting and asked what had driven that given it had been problematic historically. The Waste Contracts Manager explained this was predominately due to a change in approach. Whereas previously different teams had been used to cut and then strim the same areas, there were now two main teams which covered roughly half of the borough each and completed the whole job before moving on to the next area. Grass cutting cycles were now around three weeks as opposed to five to six weeks as they had been previously. In response to a query as to whether work was still done to co-ordinate litter picking with grass cutting, the Waste Contracts Manager confirmed there was a requirement for a litter pick prior to any cutting.
- 109.5 A Member queried whether there was any further update regarding the maintenance of land on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council which was referenced at Page No. 42, Paragraph 2.8.2 of the report. The Waste Contracts Manager advised that, whilst nothing formal had been decided, there was a new climate change team at the County Council which had its own goals in terms of managing its own land, including introducing more meadow areas in verges, - this seemed to align with Tewkesbury Borough Council's ambitions which was promising. The Member asked if mapping was being undertaken of the areas which Tewkesbury Borough Council wanted to cut regularly for aesthetic purposes and the Waste Contracts Manager explained that would not be done until there was agreement on the contract; notwithstanding that, he was aware there were certain areas that Members felt needed to be treated differently and a list would be compiled once agreement had been reached. A Member asked whether each village within the borough was allocated a certain number of hours of work and was informed that areas were considered as a whole in terms of the work that needed to be carried out – some required a lot of maintenance whereas others needed very little. The Member raised concern that a lot of villages had pollinated patches so she presumed smaller vehicles needed to be used which subsequently took more time; however, the Waste Contracts Manager advised that it was very much dependent on the area.
- 109.6 In response to a query regarding the Terms of Reference for the Working Group and who was responsible for determining what should be included, the Head of Democratic Services advised that it would be down to the new Council to decide which Working Groups would be established and what their Terms of Reference would be.
- 109.7 It was
- RESOLVED** That the Depot Services Working Group Annual Report be **NOTED.**

OS.110 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

- 110.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Head of Corporate Services, circulated at Pages No. 46-56, which attached, at Appendix 1, the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24. Members were asked to approve the Work Programme.
- 110.2 The Corporate Services Manager advised that the draft Work Programme was a live programme which would remain flexible to allow for other areas of review which may emerge throughout the year. One of the standing Agenda items was the performance report and review of the performance tracker often highlighted areas for Members to explore in more detail through separate reports.
- 110.3 Accordingly, it was
- RESOLVED** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24 be **APPROVED**.

OS.111 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

- 111.1 The report of the Head of Corporate Services, circulated at Pages No. 57-81, attached, at Appendix 1, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2022/23. Members were asked to approve the report, as required by the Council's Constitution, to ensure the activities of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were promoted, both internally and externally, to reinforce transparency and accountability in the democratic process.
- 111.2 The Corporate Services Manager advised that the annual report outlined the roles and responsibilities of the Committee and highlighted the range of work carried out during the year. Members were asked to approve the report prior to its consideration by Council on 20 June 2023.
- 111.3 Accordingly, it was
- RESOLVED** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2022/23 be **APPROVED**.

The meeting closed at 5:55 pm