

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Committee held at the Council Offices,
Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Wednesday, 4 January 2023 commencing at
2:00 pm**

Present:

Chair
Vice Chair

Councillor R A Bird
Councillor J R Mason

and Councillors:

G F Blackwell, M A Gore, D J Harwood, M L Jordan, E J MacTiernan and R J Stanley

EX.69 ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

EX.70 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

70.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Dean, M G Sztymiak and R J E Vines.

EX.71 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

71.1 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.

71.2 There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

EX.72 MINUTES

72.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2022, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

EX.73 ITEMS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

73.1 There were no items from members of the public.

EX.74 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

74.1 Attention was drawn to the Committee's Forward Plan, circulated at Pages No.12-16. Members were asked to consider the Plan.

74.2 Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED: That the Executive Committee's Forward Plan be **NOTED**.

EX.75 COUNCIL PLAN PERFORMANCE TRACKER - QUARTER TWO 2022/23

- 75.1 The report of the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, circulated at Pages No. 17-79, provided the observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 2022/23 quarter two performance information and the Executive Committee was asked to respond to that review.
- 75.2 The Head of Corporate Services advised that the report considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was attached to the report as an appendix. Paragraph 2.3 of that report set out the key actions to note which included ongoing success of the Council's commercial property portfolio; the development of the new Economic Development and Tourism Strategy; the recently approved Empty Homes Strategy; the successful build and promotion of the solar canopy; the recently approved Electric Charging Point Strategy; and the deployment of cameras to deter fly-tipping. The report contained a plethora of actions and it was inevitable that some would not meet the intended timescales – those were detailed at Paragraph 2.4 of the appendix and included: several Joint Strategic Plan actions, with this in mind, the timetable was currently under further review and could be subject to change which, in turn, could result in the target dates being amended - further details would be available in the next performance tracker update; the review of the corporate website had been delayed due to issues with recruiting a new Web Developer – an offer had now been made to recruit to the post so it was hoped the project would be back on track soon, especially as the website was the gateway to a lot of the Council's services and transactions; and the Garden Town design manual had been put on hold while governance was established – however, when questions were asked by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members were reassured that the target date of March 2023 remained feasible.
- 75.3 The Key Performance Indicators where the direction of travel was down were highlighted at Paragraph 3.3 but there were also several successful Key Performance Indicators that were set out at Paragraph 3.4 of the appendix. Members were particularly pleased that 100% of planning enforcement cases had been investigated within timescale. At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, there had been a detailed discussion on the Section 106 Agreement framework with underlying concern about the money being spent, the accuracy of information, the triggers missed, and the lack of Member engagement when constructing the framework. The Head of Corporate Services advised that he had flagged that discussion to the Chief Executive who had confirmed there would be a review of the framework to make it more robust. The Head of Development Services offered reassurance that a key piece of work was to get all of the Section 106 information onto a database and this would be a priority when the new postholder took up their position – once that was complete, it would be possible to look at integrating the public facing module so that everyone could access the information. Ideally, this would be achieved in the next three months but this would be dependant on the new postholder getting up to speed. In addition, a Section 106 Officer Group was being set up to look at the various elements and ensure an overview was gained, particularly on large strategic sites.
- 75.4 The Head of Corporate Services advised that, overall, the discussion by Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members had been very positive, particularly with the work which had been done on the licensing service and the carbon literacy and green agenda.

75.5 Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED: That the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review of the quarter two performance management information be **NOTED**.

EX.76 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

76.1 The report of the Head of Finance and Asset Management, circulated at Pages No. 80-96, attached the Medium Term Financial Strategy which the Committee was asked to recommend to Council for adoption.

76.2 The Head of Finance and Asset Management explained that the Medium Term Financial Strategy provided a financial plan for the Council for the period 2023/24-2027/28 and set out the expected level of funding available to support the delivery of services, the likely cost of providing those services, the growth in service budgets that would be necessary to meet additional demands and the gap that existed between the funding available and the cost of service delivery. The Strategy concluded with the plans that the Council had to close the funding gap. The Strategy document covered the quantum of funding; funding reform – the draft settlement had confirmed a further two year delay meaning the earliest implementation would be 2025/26 which was not bad news for Tewkesbury Borough Council as it would most likely have a negative impact on it; business rates retention reset – this had also been delayed for at least two years which would allow the Council time to build its retention levels; funding guarantee – 3% Core Spending Power for the current financial year and into 2024/25 but after that the assumption had been removed; New Homes Bonus – the Council was looking for clarity within the forthcoming year about what would happen going forward; Council Tax referendum threshold; total forecast resources; aged profile of funding; and real term impact of funding forecast - in cash terms, the amount available remained the same which meant a significant reduction in funding in real terms. Applying the inflationary expectations to the current core budget allowed a forecast to be made over the medium term about levels of expenditure which were likely to be required to provide current services, at current service standards, over the next five years. In terms of growth, the cost of providing current services was set to increase significantly and, in addition, it was expected that the Council's services would need to continue to grow to meet the increasing demands upon it – this was as a result of the projected growth in the size of the Borough where the number of domestic dwellings could increase by 5,000 units in the timeframe which would be growth of approximately 11.5%. As a result, services such as waste and recycling, housing, planning, revenues and benefits could all require an increase in capacity to meet the extra demand generated.

76.3 A Member expressed the view that the Council's future seemed uncertain and she questioned whether it was safe, in response, the Head of Finance and Asset Management confirmed that it was safe in the short to medium term but in the medium to longer term things looked less stable so he hoped to see some changes in funding from the government going forward.

76.4 It was

RESOLVED: That it be **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24-2027/28 be **ADOPTED**.

EX.77 TREASURY AND CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

- 77.1 The report of the Financial Services Manager, circulated at Pages No. 97-130, attached a number of treasury and capital management strategies and statements which Members were asked to recommend to Council for adoption.
- 77.2 The Finance Manager explained that the Council was required to have regard to the Prudential Code and to set Prudential Indicators for the next three years to ensure the Council's capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable. It was also required to produce an annual Treasury Strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy setting out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to security and liquidity of those investments - the government had changed the emphasis on borrowing in advance to invest which was now prohibited. The Capital Strategy linked borrowing and how the Council undertook capital investments prudently and proportionally whilst the Investment Strategy was an oversight document to ensure when investments were made the correct policies and procedures were in place to manage the risk of security and liquidity. The recent internal audit of treasury management had been very good with the team receiving a glowing report.
- 77.3 A Member expressed thanks to the work of the Finance team and all it had done to keep the Council's finances balanced, particularly the commercial property portfolio which had been built up to help the Council's budgetary position. Another Member questioned whether the capital expenditure figure for 2023/24 in Table 1 of the Capital Strategy was £9.96million due to the funding of the Ashchurch Bridge. In response, the Head of Finance and Asset Management indicated that this was related to the bridge as well as the waste vehicle fleet replacement etc.
- 77.4 Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED: That it be **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the following be **ADOPTED:**

- The Capital Strategy 2023/24.
- The Investment Strategy 2023/24.
- Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2023/24.
- Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24.

EX.78 PILOT OF SOLACE PARTNERSHIP

- 78.1 The report of the Environmental Health Manager, circulated at Pages No. 131-134, provided information about the Solace Partnership and Members were asked to approve the joining of the Partnership for a 12 month pilot and to delegate authority to the Head of Community Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment and the Director of One Legal to enter into necessary agreements between the Council, Gloucestershire Constabulary and other Solace authorities.
- 78.2 The Head of Community Services explained that the Council had a statutory duty to deal with anti-social behaviour and to try to reduce crime in its area. Solace was currently a partnership between Gloucester City Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and Gloucestershire Police – the partnership dealt with high level and persistent anti-social behaviour with the specific objectives to reduce repeat victims of anti-social behaviour; provide a holistic approach to resolving anti-social behaviour; increase public confidence; and provide sustainable long-standing

solutions to resolving anti-social behaviour. The team had a lot of experience to offer its partners. The partnership agreement required each local authority to provide an Anti-Social Behaviour Caseworker from their existing establishment staff. In addition, the authority was also expected to make an annual contribution towards the cost of the project manager and the IT Case Management System and, in return, Gloucestershire Police would provide either a Constable or a Police Community Support Officer. If agreed, it was proposed to pilot the approach in Tewkesbury Borough with the full cost of the pilot being funded through a grant from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

- 78.3 A Member questioned whether Parish Councils knew about the project and how they could feed in. In response, the Head of Community Services advised that, if the pilot was approved, Parishes would be advised. Another Member expressed the view that the Lead Members should be Clean and Green Environment and Community and the Head of Community Services recognised that and undertook to amend the recommendation accordingly.
- 78.4 Members agreed this was a good initiative which they felt would be of great benefit to the Borough. Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED:

1. That a pilot of Solace be **APPROVED** for 12 months.
2. That authority be delegated to the Head of Community Services, in consultation with the Lead Members for Clean and Green Environment and Community, and the Director of One Legal, to enter into necessary agreements between the Council, Gloucestershire Constabulary and other Solace authorities.

EX.79 REVIEW OF CAPABILITY POLICY

- 79.1 The report of the Head of Corporate Services, circulated at Pages No. 135-170, appended the current Capability Policy, the Terms of Reference for the review of the policy, the new draft Supporting Performance Policy and the associated Supporting Performance Guidance document. Members were asked to approve the Supporting Performance Policy.
- 79.2 The Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager explained that the annual report on policies and strategies due for review in 2022/23 had been presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2022. The Capability Policy was one of those identified for review and in the supporting commentary it was indicated it would be subject to fundamental change. Given the change, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had expressed a wish to review the policy prior to consideration by the Executive Committee. Accordingly, two workshop sessions had been held with Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members and the subsequent revised policy was recommended to the Executive Committee. The sessions with Members had led to the development of the new Supporting Performance Policy with key elements which included: providing a clear framework for employee setting performance standards and within the broader picture of organisational objectives, team objectives and then personal objectives as established through the Personal and Professional Development process; emphasis on dealing with performance issues as part of normal management discussions before escalation to the formal stages, as being the most effective, and fairest, approach to supporting performance improvement; streamlined process to provide a clear and Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) guidance compliant process of escalation where this was necessary, including providing flexibility for rapid progression where the scale/impact of the issue warranted it; use of language which was appropriate to a positive approach

to effectively address performance issues, for example reflected in the policy title change from Capability Policy to Supporting Performance; and made better use of Member time by focussing Member involvement in the process to only the most senior roles within the Council.

79.3 Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED: That the Supporting Performance Policy be **APPROVED**.

EX.80 MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE POLICY

80.1 The report of the Head of Corporate Services, circulated at Pages No. 171-225, attached the current Allocations Procedure, the current Redundancy and Redeployment Policy, the draft Management of Change Policy and the draft Management of Change Toolkit. Members were asked to approve the new Management of Change Policy.

80.2 The Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager explained that the Allocations Policy and Redundancy and Redeployment Policy had been identified as being due for review in 2022/23 – they had been reviewed and a new Management of Change Policy had been developed which combined and refreshed the two policies.

80.3 The key elements of the Management of Change Policy included: providing a clear framework for identifying the extent and impact of proposed changes including a diagram to support understanding; setting out a clear process for managing the impact of change on individuals through an allocations process, including a diagram to support understanding; defined the responsibilities of those involved in organisational change; incorporated the Council's legal obligations regarding issues such as length of consultation period and protections relating to those on maternity leave into policy; provided an accompanying toolkit document for managers, including templates for a business case for significant organisational change, and staff consultation documents to ensure internal consistency, visibility of proposed changes, supporting sound decision-making and supporting good quality communications with Officers impacted by change; confirmed a redundancy calculation which remained unchanged from the previous calculation; and incorporated how the Council would manage the transfer of services into, and out of, the Council.

80.4 It was

RESOLVED: That the Management of Change Policy be **APPROVED**.

EX.81 SEPARATE BUSINESS

81.1 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.

EX.82 SEPARATE MINUTES

82.1 The separate Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2022, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The meeting closed at 3:50 pm