

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Tuesday, 12 September 2023 commencing at 4:30 pm

Present:

Chair
Vice Chair

Councillor M Dimond-Brown
Councillor C L J Carter

and Councillors:

N D Adcock, C Agg, H J Bowman, P A Godwin, G C Madle, H C McLain, C E Mills, G M Porter, E C Skelt, M J Williams and I Yates

also present:

Councillor A Hegenbarth

OS.23 ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

OS.24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

24.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T J Budge and P N Workman. There were no substitutes for the meeting.

OS.25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

25.2 There were no declarations made on this occasion.

OS.26 MINUTES

26.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2023, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

OS.27 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

27.1 Attention was drawn to the Executive Committee Forward Plan, circulated at Pages No. 19-35. 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.

- 27.2 The Director: Corporate Services advised that the Forward Plan had been updated to incorporate changes requested by the Executive Committee and now included an overview of each Agenda item, a column for the Lead Member and a column for background papers. The plan itself was reasonably well populated and remained a fluid document, although he acknowledged there were a number of items in the pending section which he would work with Officers to slot into the appropriate meeting. A Member asked whether it would be possible to produce a summary document showing dates of the Executive Committee meetings and what was being considered at each meeting; she had found it difficult to identify what the Executive Committee was working on and felt this would help members of the public to more easily understand the work of the Committee. The Director: Corporate Services explained that the Forward Plan was owned by the Executive Committee and the Members of that Committee had expressed a desire to add more detail to the plan which was reflected by the additions he had described; however, he would take this comment away for consideration.
- 27.3 A Member noted that the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy was due to be considered by the Executive Committee on 18 October 2023 and she sought clarification as to whether that would be postponed given that it was not included for consideration on today's Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda. The Head of Service: Community and Economic Development explained that, since the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, the Borough Council had been consulted on the countywide Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and it was now intended to hold a Member seminar in relation to the countywide strategy as this would influence the Borough Council's strategy. Additionally, the strategy would need to align with the emerging work on the Council Plan and the priorities within that. The item would therefore be moved to the pending section in the interim.
- 27.4 In response to a query as to why the Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefits Overpayments Debt Recovery Policy and the Equalities and Diversity Policy had both been deferred, as referenced at Page No. 33 of the report, the Director: Corporate Resources advised that the former had been included in the Forward Plan at the request of the previous Head of Service; it was anticipated that it would be removed follow a refocus of the team. The Equalities and Diversity Policy was an important policy that required a corporate group to take it forward and the supporting programme needed an action plan in order to demonstrate delivery against the policy so that item would also be removed from the Forward Plan for the time being. Another Member noted that the Volunteering Policy had been deferred from the meeting on 1 March 2023 until the new Council was in place and she asked when this was likely to be brought to the Committee. The Executive Director: Resources advised this would be taken forward by the new Associate Director: People, Culture and Performance who had taken up her post two weeks ago and he would seek a response prior to the next meeting. A Member noted that the 2024/25 budget would be considered by the Executive Committee on 7 February 2024 and asked when Members would consider a longer term budget. In response, the Executive Director: Resources clarified that the five year Medium Term Financial Strategy was due to be considered by the Executive Committee on 10 January 2024; he was hopeful this could be brought to an earlier meeting but it was currently scheduled for January.
- 27.5 It was
- RESOLVED** That the Executive Committee Forward Plan be **NOTED**.

OS.28 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

28.1 Attention was drawn to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme, circulated at Pages No. 36-45. Members were asked to consider the Work Programme and Action List.

28.2 Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24 be **NOTED**.

OS.29 COUNCIL PLAN PERFORMANCE TRACKER - QUARTER ONE 2023/24

29.1 The report of the Director: Corporate Resources, circulated at Pages No. 46-99, attached the performance management information for quarter one of 2023/24. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to review and scrutinise the information and, where appropriate, identify any issues to refer to the Executive Committee for clarification or further action to be taken.

29.2 Members were informed this was the first quarterly monitoring report for 2023/24 and represented the latest information in terms of the status of the actions set out in the Council Plan. Progress against delivering the objectives and actions for each of the six Council Plan priorities was reported through the performance tracker, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, which was a combined document that also included a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Key financial information was also reported alongside the tracker documents with a revenue budget statement attached at Appendix 2 to the report, a capital monitoring statement attached at Appendix 3 to the report and a reserves position summary attached at Appendix 4 to the report.

29.3 Key actions for the quarter were highlighted at Paragraph 2.3 of the report and included approval of the introduction of webcasting, with an Officer project group having been established to take that forward, and the reinvigoration of the Garden Town following a gateway review. Members were reminded that, due to the complex nature of the actions being delivered, it was inevitable that some would not progress as smoothly or as quickly as envisaged and the details of those actions were set out at Paragraph 2.4 of the report. In terms of KPIs, the status of each indicator was set out at Paragraph 3.2 of the report. KPIs where direction of travel was down and/or not on target, were set out at Paragraph 3.3 of the report, with KPIs that were performing well highlighted at Paragraph 3.4 of the report.

29.4 The Chair drew attention to Pages No. 48 and 51 of the report, which highlighted the positive actions achieved during the period, and invited Members to comment. A Member expressed the view that the new corporate website which had been launched on 21 July was a brilliant piece of work and offered a vastly improved customer experience.

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

Priority: Finance and Resources

Page No. 57 – Objective 2 – Action a) Ensure our Council Tax remains in the lowest quartile nationally – A Member questioned whether being in the lowest quartile had any correlation to the quality of services that could be provided by the Council.

The Executive Director: Resources advised that this was a target set by the previous Council and the authority had the eighth lowest Council Tax in the country at £40 below the lowest quartile threshold. Work had not yet commenced in relation to the setting of Council Tax for 2024/25; this was due to be approved in February along with the budget. Output would be greater with a higher Council Tax therefore services currently operated from a lower cost base – this could either be seen as being value for money, or that services could be better, depending on the individual viewpoint.

Page No. 58 – Objective 4 – Action a) Implement and deliver a project plan for the closure of the trade waste service – A Member asked what the environmental impact would be in terms of people disposing of waste in other ways.

The Director: Communities advised that, whilst there was always a risk that people would choose not to do the right thing, he did not believe that businesses that would ordinarily operate in the correct way would start flytipping as a result of the cessation of the trade waste service; however, the Environmental Health team would be monitoring the situation and he provided assurance that robust action was taken in relation to flytipping.

Priority: Economic Growth

Page No. 59 – Objective 2 – Action b) Work with partners to secure transport infrastructure improvements for the all-ways Junction 10 – A Member noted that the commentary stated that Gloucestershire County Council would continue to work closely with National Highways so that the construction of this much-needed improvement scheme worked for all users and he asked for clarification on the interface with Gloucestershire County Council on the issue of a transport route.

The Associate Director: Garden Towns advised that a bid had been made to the government for funding and they were now moving to the Development Consent Order. There would be slightly different involvement as a more formal partner in the process with a direct link for the Council to comment but there was a very structured plan in place.

Priority: Housing and Communities

Page No. 68 – Objective 3 – Action a) Adopt a revised charging schedule for the Community Infrastructure Levy – A Member asked whether this action could be delivered within the revised timeframe.

The Associate Director: Planning advised that a significant amount of work was now underway including an internal audit to ensure money was correctly allocated and to check the systems used to track that – it was anticipated this would be reported to the Audit and Governance Committee at the end of November. There was a broader piece of work to be done around identifying priorities for the use and spending of CIL and establishing governance arrangements and it was anticipated that a timeline for those elements would be available for the Audit and Governance Committee meeting.

The Chair indicated that a briefing in relation to CIL was being arranged as part of the Member Induction Programme so there would be an opportunity to ask more questions at that session.

Key performance indicators for priority: Housing and Communities

Page No. 70 – KPI 11 – Total number of homeless relief cases held at the end of the quarter – A Member noted there was an increase compared to quarter one of the previous year but that only made sense if there had been a known increase in homelessness – there may be many more people in real difficulty than had been acknowledged in which case the increase was not necessarily negative and could be a positive.

The Head of Service: Housing felt it was difficult to say whether it was positive or negative overall and he stressed that the Council did not set a target. This was only a snapshot of cases based on those who had approached the Council for assistance and did not represent all of the people in need which could not be measured. There had been an increase in the number of cases being dealt with by the Housing team and there were fewer resources and options for resolving these issues. The Director: Communities indicated that the KPIs needed to be reviewed for the new Council Plan. There was a lot of hidden homelessness, e.g. sofa surfers, so it was virtually impossible to obtain an accurate figure at any one time as the situation was constantly changing. In general terms, the Housing team was certainly busier so people were struggling more and that was a trend across the county. The Chair indicated that he had been approached by the Leader of the Council about how the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could assist with gaining a better understanding of how the Council was supporting the cost of living crisis and, if the Committee took on that work, Members could look at data which they felt would be helpful in order to gain a more accurate picture of how effective the Council was being and

identify what required greater attention.

Pages No. 71 and 72 – KPI 15 and KPI 16 – Total new affordable housing properties delivered by tenure type and new affordable housing properties delivered on JCS sites by type – A Member asked whether a percentage could be included going forward rather than just numbers.

The Head of Service: Housing advised that the numbers were taken from the returns from registered providers. He undertook to discuss this with Planning Policy Officers to establish whether percentages could be provided going forward.

Page No. 73 – KPI 19 – Percentage of major planning applications overturned at appeal – A Member asked how this could be improved and what caused timescale agreement issues on older cases, some of which seemed to go on for a significant period of time.

The Associate Director: Planning advised that he had inherited responsibility for the Development Management review, part of which was about the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning function. A number of agency staff and contractors had been brought in to address the backlog of planning applications and there was a downward trajectory in the figures he had been provided with during his first weeks in the role. The government had announced backlog funding and skills capacity funding last month and a bid had been submitted on behalf of the Council; if successful, the authority could be awarded up to £100,000 of Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) funding which could be targeted to address the backlog. As well as working on the backlog, there were new applications coming in which needed to be determined within a certain timeframe so there was a lot to be done - he hoped, in time, to be able to give robust and more precise answers to such questions.

In terms of the older cases and timescale agreement issues, he was not sure of all the reasons for Tewkesbury Borough Council's backlog but generally it was a combination of factors including technical information not arriving early enough in the process to allow a decision to be made, Officer workload and the sheer amount of applications or delays with Section 106 Agreements which may be down to Tewkesbury Borough Council or Gloucestershire County Council. There was work to be done to look into the historic over time applications and understand what could be done to clear them. The Member raised concern that these cases skewed the figures and the Associate Director: Planning confirmed that was the case which was why a targeted piece of work was needed to understand the reasons – some would be

easier to clear and some would continue to take longer to determine than Officers would like.

In response to a query as to whether there were any financial implications and if there was a level of tolerance, the Associate Director: Planning explained that this particular KPI was derived from a national performance indicator set by government and Councils which fell below the threshold ran the risk of being put into special measures whereby the government could take back responsibility for making certain planning decisions. With regard to financial implications, there would always be a cost of defending an appeal whether that was successful or not and the Inspector could award costs against the Council if it was seen to have acted unreasonably. In terms of the threshold performance tracking downwards, there were numerous other major planning appeals still to be heard and the Council had lost another major appeal the previous day; in his view, this was an area where the authority was potentially vulnerable. The Executive Director: Resources advised that, in 2022/23, the Council had spent £600,000 on appeals which had far exceeded the £60,000 budget with excess costs having to be paid from reserves – this was concerning to him and his financial colleagues.

A Member indicated that she had raised concern regarding the number of planning applications yet to be determined and had asked for a list of all of those applications over the threshold which the government would expect within the legislation in order to get an indication of the extent of the problem. Another Member sought clarification of the threshold, and how close the authority was to exceeding that, and the Associate Director: Planning explained that the government set rolling periods for the threshold for special measures which meant it was a moveable feast depending on the start and end dates.

Following a brief debate regarding how to take this matter forward, and in acknowledging that this issue was due to be discussed by the Leader and Deputy Leader with the Chief Officers Group at a meeting the following day, it was agreed that the Chair would write to the Leader of the Council to inform him of today's discussion and the concerns raised and to offer the Committee's support to help address the problem.

Key performance indicators for priority: Customer First

Page No. 84 – KPI 38 – Percentage of formal complaints answered on time – A Member asked whether there was any information on how satisfied people were with the response they received and if any work was being done in terms of the services they fell into and identification of common issues.

The Director: Corporate Resources confirmed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received an annual report which provided a breakdown of complaints by service area and type and that was due to be considered at the meeting in October.

Priority Sustainable Environment

Page No. 88 – Objective 1 – Action d) Appoint an additional Climate Change Officer to help support the declaration of a borough-wide climate emergency - A Member asked for more information on the Green Champions in terms of what they had achieved and how they could be utilised to help to deliver the Council's ambitions.

The Executive Director: Resources advised that the Green Champions had been established as a result of the Carbon Literacy Training which had been completed by more than 60 Officers. They comprised volunteers who represented their service areas and were helping to take forward some of the projects. The Chair felt it would be beneficial for the Green Champions to attend a future meeting of the Committee at an appropriate time.

Page No. 90 – Objective 2 – Action c) Carry out a review of the litter pickers scheme – A Member questioned why this did not have a smiley face.

The Director: Communities explained that there were no concerns around the litter pickers scheme itself but this action was about reviewing how the scheme was administered and that had not progressed as quickly as anticipated. The main issue was the amount of data and the need to ensure that records were accurate and up to date.

Key performance indicators for priority: Sustainable Environment

Page No. 93 – KPI 39 – Number of reported envirocrimes – A Member asked whether anything could be done to address the increase.

The Director: Communities advised that this KPI needed to be reviewed as it currently did not give any information regarding the performance of the team.

Page No. 94 – KPI 40 – Percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted – A Member pointed out that the Ubico report which had been considered at the last meeting of the Committee had stated that the target was 60% and she asked why Tewkesbury Borough Council's target was below that at 52%.

The Director: Communities advised that 60% was a national target for 2035. Whilst the Council's target was 52%, it was working to 60% as a long term goal overall. There would be changes to the percentage achieved throughout the year, for instance, there tended to be an increase during the summer when the weather was better.

Another Member asked how the figure was calculated for material that was reused and the Director: Communities advised that this information was collected by Gloucestershire County Council. He undertook to find out how this was measured and provide a response by email.

Page No. 94 – KPI 41 – Residual household waste collected per property in kilograms – A Member asked why the target was to increase residual waste.

The Director: Communities indicated this was an error which needed to be addressed as it was intended to reduce residual waste.

29.6 Turning to the financial information, the Associate Director: Finance advised that the financial budget summary for quarter one of 2023/24 showed a projected deficit of £54,595 for the full year against the approved budget; this was a positive position to be in at this stage and it was hoped the deficit would reduce throughout the year. The full year projection highlighted an underspend of £525,619 in relation to employees with the majority of the surplus being accrued by One Legal and this was matched off by a reduction in third party income. Payments to third parties showed a projected surplus of £94,444 and the Ubico contract was expected to be underspent by £45,000 due to expected savings in relation to employees and diesel. In relation to corporate expenditure, treasury activities were in line with expectations and, despite interest rates continuing to rise, borrowing costs would not be impacted as the Council's loans had a fixed interest rate and no further borrowing was expected. The quarter one report had identified that grant funding was unlikely to be spent by year end and must be ringfenced for a particular project or service – this was estimated at £126,000 and whilst it would increase year end reserves, the Council did not have any discretion as to where it could be spent so it had been excluded from the reported position to give a more realistic overview of the Council's financial position. Appendix 2 to the report provided detail of expenditure at a service level with notes on variances over £10,000. Appendix 3 to the report showed the capital budget position as at quarter one which was currently £174,000 below the profiled budget but anticipated to be spent by the end of the year. A summary of the current usage of available reserves was attached at Appendix 4 to the report.

29.7 A Member noted that there were currently 14 vacant posts within One Legal and she raised concern that this seemed to be a significant number. The Associate Director: Finance advised that, as with planning, there was a lot of private sector competition so Locums were frequently used to cover vacant posts. There had been success with recruitment drives but it was difficult for local authorities to compete. In response to a query regarding the end date for the loans taken out by the Council, Members were advised that the Council had four loans, two of which had been taken out in 2016 for 40 years at a rate of 1/2% and two 15 year loans

taken out more recently.

29.8 Having considered the information provided, it was

RESOLVED That the performance management information for quarter one of 2023/24 be **NOTED**.

OS.30 HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN MONITORING REPORT

30.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Head of Service: Housing, circulated at Pages No. 100-131, which asked Members to consider the progress made against delivery of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.

30.2 The Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing indicated that this was an inherited strategy which had been approved prior to the elections in May and he was keen for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to look at it in detail to ensure it was fulfilling its aims. The Head of Service: Housing advised that the Housing and Homelessness Strategy had been approved in 2022/23 and had been developed in consultation with partners, including Members who had attended a workshop session. The strategy contained three key priorities: increasing the supply of new homes, including affordable homes; regenerating and making best use of existing housing; and meeting the housing needs of homeless households and others with specific needs. The main achievements against those priorities during the year were set out at Paragraph 2 of the report. In terms of priority one, this included working with Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) to progress the programme of rural housing needs surveys and Members were advised that GRCC had offered to run a session for all Members in relation to rural housing so that would be arranged in due course. In terms of priority two, it was intended to help customers to understand the level of accessible properties available on the housing register by adding a rating e.g. a property rated A would be fully adaptable and wheelchair accessible whereas a property rated G would be inaccessible. In addition, the team had supported a project led by Rooftop to secure better standards for customers in terms of tenure, energy efficiency and sizes. With regard to priority three, there was an ongoing piece of work to improve knowledge within the team in order to support survivors/victims of domestic abuse; hearing from individuals with lived experience had been very impactful and had led to different approaches being adopted in some cases.

30.3 In relation to the introduction at Page No. 106 of the report, a Member noted that paragraph three stated that a key priority was addressing the challenges of climate change and went on to mention that the strategy aimed to reduce reliance on fossil fuels for new and existing homes and he asked if there were any plans to offer retrofitting to existing homes. Members were informed that the Council did not provide grants directly but this was something offered through the Warm and Well Scheme delivered by the Severn Wye Energy Agency on behalf of the authority. A Member noted that Page No. 108 of the strategy stated that the average rent per week for a two bedroom property in Tewkesbury Borough was £172 for a private sector property which she felt seemed low given that rising interest rates had reduced property values and increased average rents. In response, the Head of Service: Housing confirmed that rents had increased over the two years since the strategy had been written and there were now fewer options available to rent in the private sector. In response to a query regarding how up to date the strategy was in terms of actions and targets, the Head of Service: Housing advised that that strategy itself spanned the period 2022-26 and the objectives were set out at Page No. 111 of the report. The Director: Communities explained that the strategy had been adopted by the previous administration so the Council may decide it wished to undertake a review. He clarified that the actions within Appendix 2 to the report correlated with the actions within the strategy. In relation to Page No. 108 of the

report, a Member noted the number of new homes required during the period and asked what that figure was based on. The Head of Service: Housing explained that this was informed by the housing needs assessment which had been carried out across the county in 2019 and published in 2020. The Member asked if it was possible that people were coming from other nearby towns and the Head of Service: Housing advised that the survey took into account the whole market area across the county as opposed to it being district by district. He undertook to circulate a link to the housing needs assessment report following the meeting.

- 30.4 With regard to Page No. 112 of the report, a Member asked how Objective 3 – Seek to reduce the impact of new homes on the environment whilst increasing their resilience to climate change, was being managed and was informed there were no specific outcomes, for example, securing a better standard of build was outside of the Council's control although this was something which could be included in the review of the Joint Core Strategy. Whilst it was difficult to see measurable outcomes, it was possible to point to schemes promoted by the Council which had been built to a higher standard, for instance, where properties were rated A for energy efficiency. The Member asked what had been done in terms of working proactively and in partnership with Parish Councils to find ways to meet local housing need and was advised that, for every housing needs survey, the Council met with the Parish Council and local groups to seek their opinion on potential suitable sites. In response to a query, the Director: Communities advised that the details of the housing needs surveys that had been undertaken in the borough to date were included on the Council's website and he would update Members following the meeting.
- 30.5 A Member drew attention to Page No. 114 of the report and she asked what was meant in terms of land assembly with regard to Objective 4 – Support housing-led regeneration included a bullet point around working with registered providers and other landowners to establish opportunities for land assembly. The Head of Service: Housing explained that this was about registered providers working collectively on a scheme to get the best results for an area. The Member asked if it included assembling properties which were already built and confirmation was provided that it could do, but it was also about assembling pieces of land for regeneration. In response to a query as to whether this referred to old or new housing, Members were informed it could be both – registered providers would look at their existing stock and decide whether to bring it up to a better standard through regeneration or to dispose of the stock completely. All opportunities were assessed in order to work out the best approach. Another Member noted that the first bullet point within Objective 4 referred to supporting the housing-led regeneration of allocated brownfield sites in Tewkesbury town centre and he asked what the latest position was in respect of the MAFF site. The Executive Director: Resources advised there was no site specific update but the new Executive Director: Place would be looking at the place vision for the whole borough when he joined the authority next month. Another Member queried how successful the regeneration of brownfield sites in Tewkesbury town centre had been and the Director: Communities advised that this ambition was more planning-focused and there were other sites which needed to be considered including one in Priors Park.
- 30.6 With regard to Page No. 123 of the report, Year One Priority 2 Action a) Develop a complementary strategy to reduce the number of empty homes, making use of legal powers available, a Member noted that there were 510 empty homes in 2021 and asked how many of those had been brought back into use. In response, the Director: Communities advised that none had been brought back into use to date as the first year of the Empty Homes Strategy focused on identification of empty properties. The team was now working on identification and prioritisation with a view to starting to bring properties back into use; however, that was a difficult and time consuming task which would be challenging with the current resources in the team. The Chair requested that an email be circulated to Members setting out

what had happened to date and what was planned for the next 12 months. With regard to Page No. 123 of the report, Year One Priority 2 Action d) Work jointly with registered providers and other partners to support carbon reduction demonstration projects and procure funding to assist with carbon reduction measures, a Member asked how many projects had been supported. In response, the Head of Service: Housing advised that no projects had been supported in terms of delivering products as work in year one had focused on accessing decarbonisation funding from the government but he was not aware that any registered providers had applied. The Director: Communities advised that Officers were in the process of arranging a Member seminar with Bromford in December where that could be explored in more detail.

- 30.7 A Member drew attention to Page No. 126 of the report, Priority 3 Action d) Conclude the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment and engage with the local communities to understand their requirements, and pointed out that Parish Councils interacted with people who needed to find these type of sites and she asked how information could be provided to Parish Councils to ensure those people were not excluded from the assessment. Another Member sought clarification as to whether the assessment and the call for sites had reached a conclusion and the Head of Service: Housing advised that it was a Gloucestershire County Council project so he would provide an update following the meeting.
- 30.8 In relation to Page No. 129 of the report, Priority 2 Action a) Review the options for dealing with social rented homes that are unpopular and difficult to rent, a Member noted that Bromford had been approached to identify properties that could be considered for alternative use and she raised concern that this meant there may be vulnerable people being placed in unsuitable accommodation. The Head of Service: Housing explained that 'unpopular' and 'difficult to rent' did not mean they were in poor condition, inappropriate or in bad areas, rather that there were more popular options close by, for instance, older two bedroom flats were less popular than newer two bedroom houses. In relation to Page No. 131 of the report, Priority 3 Action c) Ensure the future needs of children and young people are considered in rural housing needs assessments, a Member asked whether it was possible to be more imaginative around involving young people as their housing desires for the future may be quite different to the assumption of what they might need. There were creative solutions out there and she would like to see this action expanded beyond the housing needs assessment. The Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing indicated that he would take this comment on board.
- 30.9 The Chair expressed the view that, whilst the Housing and Homeless Strategy was a good document which had been well researched, and there was clearly activity taking place, it was not possible to ascertain from the information presented exactly what had been achieved and how this was making a difference. He hoped that when the report came back to the Committee in six months time there would be improvements in both ambition and delivery. He indicated that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be happy to work with the Lead Member to help make the necessary improvements. The Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing thanked the Committee for the comments and suggestions and expressed the view that the landscape had changed significantly since the strategy had been written and today's discussion had given him food for thought in terms of the updates and response that was needed.

30.10 It was

RESOLVED

1. That progress against the Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan be **NOTED**.
2. That a recommendation be made to the Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing that the ambitions and delivery of the strategy be reconsidered over the next six months.

OS.31 GLOUCESTERSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL UPDATE

- 31.1 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 discussed at the last meeting held on 8 September 2023.
- 31.2 The Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel indicated that he wished to draw particular attention to the increase in shoplifting across the county and advised that the Police and Crime Commissioner would be speaking to local shopkeepers and interested parties to work out what to do. He also highlighted the antisocial use of e-scooters and advised that the policy was that if a Police Officer saw an illegal scooter they must take action; however, this relied on a Police Officer being present.
- 31.3 A Member asked what level of interaction the Police and Crime Panel had with the Police and Crime Commissioner and whether they were able to ask questions and the Council's representative confirmed that was the case. With regard to violence against women, the Member asked whether Gloucestershire Constabulary intended to visit youth clubs as raising awareness amongst young people was key in terms of prevention and was something a number of Parish Councils across the county tried to facilitate. The Council's representative advised that the Police and Crime Commissioner was looking at going to schools and youth clubs to discuss his priorities with a specific focus on violence against women and girls although he was not aware of the timeframe for that. Another Member noted that rural crime cost had reduced by 29% and she asked whether that was the cost of theft/damage or the cost to the Police. The Council's representative explained that the Minutes of the meeting included a breakdown of how much was spent on crime in Gloucestershire; the cost of crime in rural areas related to cost to society. The Member asked how it compared to the actual crime rate as rural crime seemed to be increasing in her area. In response, the Council's representative undertook to seek a response to this question. In response to a query regarding the establishment of new Police community hubs, the Council's representative confirmed that more areas would be receiving a Police station but, for operational reasons, the locations had not been disclosed – it was hoped that all of the previous Police stations would be reopened with more established.
- 31.4 A Member asked what the Council could actually do in terms of addressing crime at a borough level and the Council's representative advised that the Community Safety Partnership was the mechanism for tackling crime at a district level. The Director: Corporate Governance advised that a presentation in relation to the Community Safety Partnership and whether it was delivering against its Terms of Reference was included in the pending items section of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme and he undertook to establish when this could be delivered following the meeting. Another Member noted that this item was also intended to cover the Aston Project which was very important for Tewkesbury Borough.

31.5 The Chair asked whether the Council's representative could be given authority by the Committee to invite the Police and Crime Commissioner to attend a future meeting and the Director: Corporate Resources advised that this had been included on the Committee's Work Programme but was felt it would be better suited to an all Member seminar and Officers were liaising with the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office with regard to dates.

31.6 It was

RESOLVED That the Police and Crime Panel update be **NOTED**.

OS.32 GLOUCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE UPDATE

32.1 Attention was drawn to the report from the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee, circulated at Pages No. 132-134, which gave an update on matters discussed at the last meeting held on 20 July 2023.

32.2 The Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee advised that the meeting had largely been taken up by transport which was a Gloucestershire County Council competence as opposed to a district one. His main concern was that the County Council Officers had not known the relevant Officers to engage with at Tewkesbury Borough Council and had subsequently sent the consultation documents to Democratic Services in the hope they would reach the correct person. He had asked for a meeting with the Interim Planning Policy Manager to check that Tewkesbury Borough Council was engaging when requested as it was important that Councillors at both a Borough and Parish level had a voice and were able to tell people in their communities what was recommended and why it was needed.

32.3 In response to a query regarding funding of the bus improvement plan, the Council's representative clarified that this would be via Bus Service Improvement Plan Plus (BSIP Plus) funding. The Member indicated that he was passionate about saving local bus services and had sought the local MPs support in relation to that. He went on to raise concern that cycleways often had inappropriate surfaces, were full of debris or did not link up with roads in the right way and there was infrastructure in private ownership which was being ignored – there were heritage railways with space at the side for cycleways between different centres and that would not be difficult to achieve. In his view, that was where engagement should be focused rather than developing new ones alongside roads. Another Member felt that the bus improvement plan would benefit young people, particularly in rural areas; there were young people in her Ward who chose a college based on whether they could reach it. The Council's representative confirmed that the plan aimed to link villages with towns and towns with cities to make it as effective as possible – this was why the role of the Parish and Borough Council was so important to ensure the right messages were being received by the County Council. A Member pointed out that Brockworth had its own sustainable transport plan and suggested that the Borough Council should look into the needs and wants of residents. People were scared of using roads for cycling so they avoided them and that should not be the case. A Member asked what other forms of transport were being considered as part of the Mass Transit Project and was advised that no decisions had been made as yet and consultation was currently underway; however, buses were favoured over trains which were quite expensive.

32.4 It was
RESOLVED That the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee
update be **NOTED**.

The meeting closed at 6:50 pm

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 12 September 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No <small>(IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)</small>
5.	Executive Committee Forward Plan	Consideration to be given to producing a summary of the Executive Committee Forward Plan showing meeting dates and the items to be considered in order for members of the public to be able to easily identify the work of the Committee.	Comment by Cllr Bowman.	Director: Corporate Resources	
		Economic Development and Tourism Strategy to be moved from 18 October 2023 to pending items section to allow consultation on the countywide strategy and alignment with the new Council Plan priorities.		Democratic Services Officer	Yes
		Items to be removed from pending: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefits Overpayments Debt Recovery Policy. • Equalities and Diversity Policy. 		Democratic Services Officer	

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AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No <small>(IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)</small>
		Date to be confirmed for the Volunteering Policy to be brought to the Executive Committee (currently in pending).		Executive Director: Resources	
7.	Council Plan Performance Tracker – Quarter 1 2023/24	Page No. 68 – Objective 3 – Action a) Adopt a revised charging schedule for the Community Infrastructure Levy – CIL briefing to be arranged for all Members.	Introduction to CIL and Section 106 Arrangements Member Briefing originally scheduled to be held on 12 July but subsequently postponed.	Associate Director: Planning	
		Pages No. 71 and 72 – KPI 15 and KPI 16 – Total new affordable housing properties delivered by tenure type and New affordable housing properties delivered on JCS sites by type – Consideration to be given as to whether percentages can be provided as well as numbers going forward.		Head of Services: Housing	

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AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No <small>(IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)</small>
		Page No. 73 – KPI 19 – Percentage of major planning applications overturned at appeal – Chair to write to the Leader of the Council to inform him of the discussions and concerns and to offer the Committee’s support to help address the problem.	Chair emailed Leader on 12 September 2023.	Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee via Democratic Services Officer	Yes
		Page No. 88 – Objective d) – Green Champions to attend a future meeting of the Committee as and when appropriate.	Added to pending items section of the Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Yes
		Page No. 93 – KPI 39 – Number of reported envirocrimes – KPI to be reviewed as it does not currently give any information about performance of the team.		Director: Communities	
		Page No. 94 – KPI 40 – Percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted – Members to be advised how the percentage of reused material is calculated.		Director: Communities	

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AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No (IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)
		Page No. 94 – KPI 41 – Residual household waste collected per property in kilograms – Target should be to reduce residual waste (typo or error to be addressed).		Director: Communities	
8.	Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan Monitoring Report	Gloucestershire Rural Community Council to run a session on rural housing.	Added to Member training programme – date to be agreed.	Democratic Services Officer	Yes
Link to housing needs assessment report to be circulated to Members.			Head of Service: Housing		
Members to be advised of the housing needs surveys that had been undertaken in the borough to date.			Director: Communities		

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 12 September 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No (IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)
		<p>P123 – Year One Priority 2 Action a) Develop a complementary strategy to reduce the number of empty homes, making use of legal powers available – Email to be sent to Members setting out what had happened during the first year of the Empty Homes Strategy and what was planned for the next 12 months.</p>		Director: Communities	
		<p>Date to be confirmed for Member seminar with Bromford.</p>	<p>Already included in Member training programme. PAs liaising with Bromford regarding availability.</p>	Democratic Services Officer	

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 12 September 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No (IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)
		<p>P126 – Year One Priority 3 Action d) – Conclude the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment and engage with the local communities to understand their requirements - Members to be provided with information in relation to the assessment and the call for sites, including whether this had reached a conclusion.</p>		<p>Head of Service: Housing</p>	
		<p>P131 – Year Two Priority 3 Action c) Ensure the future needs of children and young people are considered in rural housing needs assessments – Consideration to be given to being more imaginative in terms of the involvement of young people in shaping future housing, action to be expanded beyond the housing needs assessment.</p>	<p>Noted by the Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing.</p>	<p>Head of Service: Housing</p>	

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 12 September 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No <small>(IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)</small>
		Recommendation to Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing that the ambitions and delivery of the strategy be reconsidered over the next six months.	Chair emailed the Lead Member on 12 September 2023 to summarise the comments made by the Committee and advise of the recommendation.	Director: Communities / Head of Service: Housing	Yes – will be assessed when the report comes back to O&S in March 2024.
9.	Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel Update	Members to be advised how rural crime cost compared to the overall crime rate.	Raised by Cllr Madle who indicated that rural crime seemed to be increasing in her area.	Cllr Porter via Democratic Services Officer.	
		Date to be established for the presentation on the Community Safety Partnership/Aston Project to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	Currently in pending items.	Director: Corporate Governance	

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 12 September 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No (IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)
		Date to be confirmed for Member seminar with Police and Crime Commissioner.	Already included in Member training programme. PAs liaising with Police and Crime Commissioner's Office regarding availability.	Democratic Services Officer	