

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Tuesday, 5 December 2023 commencing at 4:30 pm

Present:

Chair	Councillor M Dimond-Brown
Vice Chair	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, E C Skelt, M J Williams, P N Workman and I Yates

OS.42 ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

OS.43 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

43.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T J Budge and G M Porter. There were no substitutes for the meeting.

OS.44 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

44.1 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.

44.2 There were no declarations made on this occasion.

OS.45 MINUTES

45.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2023, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record, subject to an amendment to reflect that Councillor G C Madle was not present at the meeting, and signed by the Chair.

OS.46 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

46.1 Attention was drawn to the Executive Committee Forward Plan, circulated at Pages No. 9-20. 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.

46.2 A Member questioned when the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, currently in the pending items section of the Forward Plan, would be coming forward and raised concern that a decision had been made by the Executive Committee to close Winchcombe Tourist Information Centre, despite increased visitor numbers, without any strategy. The Director: Communities confirmed that a draft strategy was in development and would be ready by the end of the financial year; it had been

delayed pending the outcome of the Gloucestershire strategy and the new Council Plan. He advised that this did not impact the closure of Winchcombe Tourist Information Centre and work in relation to tourism would continue unaffected.

- 46.3 Another Member noted that a report on the new waste depot had been due to be considered at the meeting on 29 November 2023 but had been delayed and, given this was a fundamental project for the Council, she asked whether there was a revised date or if it was still dependent on another authority. In response, the Director: Communities advised that this was a partnership project with Cheltenham Borough Council, and potentially Gloucestershire County Council, and Officers were now in a position to meet and discuss high level timescales – there had been nobody at Cheltenham Borough Council to own the project until three weeks ago. He stressed this was a long term project in the region of six to eight years therefore a short delay at the start of the project should make little difference to the overall period.
- 46.4 A Member noted that the Equalities and Diversity Policy was originally moved from 5 October 2022 and she questioned why it remained in the pending items section for over a year. The Chair indicated that he would raise this with the Executive Committee on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 46.5 It was
RESOLVED That the Executive Committee Forward Plan be **NOTED**.

OS.47 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

- 47.1 Attention was drawn to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme, circulated at Pages No. 21-27, which Members were asked to consider.
- 47.2 The Director: Corporate Resources advised that the Aston Project Presentation had been moved from pending items and would now be brought to the meeting on 16 January 2024. It had previously been agreed that the seminar with the Police and Crime Commissioner would be beneficial to the wider membership and therefore should be removed from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme and that seminar had now been arranged for 31 January 2024 with an invite being sent to Members shortly. The Chair indicated that the Leader of the Council had suggested a potential scrutiny item around the cost of living crisis and he would be meeting with him and relevant Officers to discuss how best to take this item forward.
- 47.3 A Member noted that the Committee was due to receive a report on the Active Gloucestershire 'We Can Move' project at its next meeting and expressed the view it would be beneficial to know what had been discussed previously in order to ensure the debate remained focused on scrutiny rather than becoming an information gathering exercise. It was therefore agreed that the previous presentation be circulated to Members ahead of the meeting on 16 January 2024.
- 47.4 It was
RESOLVED That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24 be **NOTED**.

OS.48 COUNCIL PLAN PERFORMANCE TRACKER - QUARTER TWO 2023/24

- 48.1 The report of the Director: Corporate Resources, circulated at Pages No. 28-102, attached the performance management information for quarter two 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.

- 48.2 Members were informed this was the second 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. Appendix 5 to the report included a number of finance KPIs which was part of the financial management code approved by the Audit and Governance Committee and Appendices 6 and 7 were a recurring addition to the quarterly financial reports in accordance with the requirements of the CIPFA Prudential Code and Treasury Management Code of Practice.
- 48.3 Key actions for the quarter were highlighted at Paragraph 2.3 of the report and included drafting of the Medium Term Financial Strategy which had been considered by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 29 November and would be recommended to Council at its meeting next week, approval of the Strategic and Local Plan (SLP) consultation document by Council, support to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) via advice and grants, in-cab technology for waste and recycling going live in October and preparation of the tender for webcasting. 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.
- 48.4 The Chair felt there was a discussion to be had regarding the Committee's role in financial scrutiny and how to maximise its effectiveness in that area and he would be looking to follow this up with Officers outside of the meeting. He expressed the view that there had been strong improvement regarding the way the Council dealt with its customers and positive work around the Garden Town; however, he was concerned that further action was needed in relation to planning and the Development Management Continuous Improvement Programme. An all Member seminar was planned for the New Year to bring them up to date on progress of the programme and he felt there was potentially a role for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to play in terms of finding ways to help move some of that forward.
- 48.5 The Chair drew attention to Pages No. 30 and 34 of the report, which highlighted the positive actions achieved during the period, and invited Members to comment. A Member noted that many of the positive actions involved the use of IT to simplify and automate processes and she congratulated Officers on this.
- 48.6 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. 40 – Objective 2 – Action a) Ensure our Council Tax remains in the lowest quartile nationally – A Member questioned whether this should be a target or if it would be better focused on providing good value for money for residents.

The Chair advised that the current Council Plan had been inherited from the previous administration and a plan for the next four years was currently in the process of being produced which would include a new set of objectives and KPIs. Whilst the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could make the point to the Executive Committee that it was unhappy with this objective, it would stand for the next six months. The Executive Director: Resources confirmed this was the case and advised that a number of workshops had been carried out regarding the new Council Plan; that work was ongoing with the intention of a new plan being brought to Council for approval in April. The current Council Plan would remain in place until June. In terms of Council Tax in general, the limit imposed by the government on raising Council Tax meant that it would remain one of the lowest in the country regardless of what the Council decided to do with its Council Tax.

Page No. 40-41 – Objective 3 – Action a) Update the Council's asset management plan – A Member noted there were several target dates for this action which had been crossed out and she asked if that was because it had been delivered or if it was ongoing.

The Executive Director: Resources advised this had been deferred throughout the year due to resourcing issues within the team and other projects taking precedence; however, the Head of Service: Asset Management would be returning to work full-time in the New Year and a draft plan had already been completed. Once this plan had been approved, there would be a number of further asset management plans for individual assets brought forward over the following three to four months.

Page No. 41 – Objective 4 – Action a) Implement and deliver a project plan for the closure of the trade waste service – A Member asked why this was showing an unhappy face as it appeared the action had almost been delivered with the final collection scheduled for mid-December.

The Director: Communities advised that this was due to the target date being delayed from November 2023 to the end of January 2024 and he confirmed that the last collection day would be this week.

Priority: Economic Growth

Page No. 43 – Objective 2 – Action a) Deliver employment land through allocating land in the Strategic and Local Plan (SLP) – A Member raised concern that an adopted SLP would not be in place until well into 2027 and something needed to be done in the meantime to ensure employment land was delivered between now and 2027.

The Executive Director: Place shared this concern and agreed that the timescales related to the SLP had some protraction; however, this did not preclude short and medium term economic growth in terms of what was allocated in the previous Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and there were already applications in the system in that respect. All of this information was available and needed to be consolidated to provide confidence to the Committee in the absence of the SLP. The Member indicated that the commentary around this action made it appear that the only solution was the long term one and he would like to have an indication of the short and medium term which could be monitored over the next two quarters. The Executive Director: Place advised that this document was limited by its previous intention with the SLP seen as a key instrument but he would discuss with the Director: Corporate Services how best to incorporate this into future reporting.

Page No. 44 – Objective 2 – Action b) Work with partners to secure transport infrastructure improvements for the all-ways Junction 10 – A Member asked whether the Council could push for inclusion of active travel facilities; from his experience, the County Council was good at intra-settlement active transport but not inter-settlement and felt there would be an opportunity to consider how people could travel between one settlement and the next using active travel modes as part of the junction redesign.

The Executive Director: Place undertook to look into this following the meeting.

Page No. 45 – Objective 4 – Action a) Work with Cotswold Tourism and Visit Gloucestershire to promote the borough – A Member queried whether the list included in the commentary were things that would be happening or a wishlist of things Cotswold Tourism was hoping to develop.

The Director: Communities indicated that his understanding was that the events listed would be happening.

Key performance indicators for priority: Economic Growth

Page No. 46 – KPI 2 – Claimant unemployment rate – A Member asked if there was a breakdown of the age group and type of employment in the borough.

The Director: Communities undertook to seek a response to this query following the meeting.

Page No. 47 – KPI 6 – Number of visitors to Winchcombe Tourist Information Centre (TIC) – A Member asked what was being done to replace the physical presence at the TIC given that visitor numbers were up and not everyone could access information digitally.

The Director: Communities advised that there was no plan to put in place any physical presence; however, the authority already worked closely with Cotswold Tourism and it may be possible to arrange drop-in events or something similar. It was clear from the figures that something was needed and he would update Members once a plan was in place. He indicated that a Tourism Officer was currently being recruited by the Council and would act as a point of liaison going forward.

Page No. 47 – KPI 7 – Number of visitors entering the Growth Hub – A Member noted that figures were lower than the last quarter and questioned whether more events were planned.

The Director: Communities confirmed that was the case and explained that visitor numbers naturally tailed off during the summer. The Corporate Director: Resources indicated that the Committee had previously requested a list of events being run by the Growth Hub be provided to Members and that was due to come forward imminently.

A Member asked whether other events and workshops were run in the borough away from the Growth Hub and was advised that until recently that was not the case but Officers were now starting to do more outreach work outside of the Growth Hub, with a recent event in Bishop's Cleeve, and it was hoped to extend that across the borough.

Priority: Housing and Communities

Page No. 49 – Objective 1 – Action b) Increase the temporary housing accommodation supply – A Member noted that the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol placements had been increased across the county and asked if information could be made available to Members regarding what could be done to support rough sleepers.

The Head of Service: Housing undertook to circulate this following the meeting.

In response to a further query regarding the temporary housing accommodation supply, the Director: Communities advised that there were five houses available for that purpose. A variety of options were being considered across the county in terms of increasing the supply and Officers continued to work closely with registered providers.

Page No. 50 – Objective 2 – Action a) Ensure adequate land is allocated within the SLP – A Member indicated that he had already raised concern regarding employment land and indicated that the Council was currently unable to demonstrate a five year housing land supply so asked what was being done in the short and medium term to reduce that shortfall rather than waiting for allocation of land as part of the SLP.

The Associate Director: Garden Communities advised that the JCS had allocated sufficient employment land up to 2031 and that was being delivered, albeit that information would be updated by the SLP. In terms of the five year housing land supply issue, land might come forward through the SLP to meet overall need but currently this was down to the planning process. The Member raised concern that the only action in the tracker regarding the housing land supply position was this one which suggested that land would be found via the SLP, not the JCS, and his concern was what was being done in the short and medium term to reduce the deficit. The Associate Director: Garden Communities advised that, unfortunately, the allocation of land must be via the local plan process; however, planning applications could help in terms of a five year housing land supply. The Executive Director: Place indicated that, as with the earlier query on employment land, he would take advice from colleagues as to how the short and medium term could be reflected going forward.

Page No. 51 – Objective 3 – Action a) Work with partners, infrastructure providers and developers to progress the delivery of key sites – A Member questioned why Fiddington was not referenced in the commentary.

The Associate Director: Garden Communities advised that the action related to allocations in the JCS; Fiddington was a speculative development granted via the appeal process.

Page No. 53 – Objective c)
Work with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) to access funding to deliver improved community facilities – A Member questioned whether this included the Section 106 payments received by communities.

The Executive Director: Place advised that this action related specifically to various grants; Section 106 was a separate issue. It was important not to confuse the two and he undertook to take this away to give more thought as to how this could be reported.

It was noted that a Section 106 workshop was planned for Members in the New Year.

Key performance indicators for priority: Housing and Communities

Pages No. 55-56 – KPIs 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 in relation to applications on the housing register, homeless applications/relief/prevention cases, temporary accommodation and affordable housing – A Member indicated that he could not tell from these KPIs what it meant for the Council and how it was performing, for example, how demand was being met in relation to KPI 15 regarding delivery of new affordable housing.

The Director: Communities indicated he had been discussing this with the Head of Service: Housing and both agreed that the KPIs did not give any indication of performance. He provided assurance this would be taken into consideration in the formulation of the new housing KPIs.

Pages No. 57-59 – KPIs 17, 18, 19 and 20 in relation to determination of planning applications and applications overturned at appeal – A Member raised concern that it had been published today that Tewkesbury Borough Council was 310th out of 324 authorities across England in terms of determination of major planning applications and 267th in determining non-major planning applications. This was the reason for the Development Management Continuous Improvement Programme; however, he had considerable concerns about its progress.

The Executive Director: Place acknowledged these concerns and indicated that they could be picked up as part of the Member briefing on the second year of the Development Management Continuous Improvement Programme which was being arranged for January.

Another Member asked whether Parish Council questions and requests for information was a reason for delay in the determination of applications and the Executive Director: Place undertook to produce an analysis of the reasons for requests for extensions of time.

Pages No. 58-59 - KPI 19 and KPI 20 – Percentage of major and non-major planning applications overturned at appeal – A Member indicated it would have been useful for the percentages to have been included alongside the figures.

The Executive Director: Place undertook to feed this back to the relevant Officers following the meeting.

Another Member indicated that it would be helpful to know the cost of planning appeals given that there could be significant financial implications for the Council if it was seen as being unreasonable in its reasoning for refusing applications. The Monitoring Officer pointed out that the successful appeals reflected the fact that decisions had been taken at a time when the Planning Committee was under the impression there was a five year housing land supply. Without a supply, the recommendations to the Planning Committee would be different and the decisions being made should reflect that which should bring the authority back to an appropriate level of success at appeal.

Key performance indicators for priority: Customer First

Page No. 62 – Objective 1 – Action a) Continue to improve the proactive homelessness programme – A Member indicated that it was impossible to know if this action would be achieved by the target date of March without knowing what the programme was and he raised concern that 'continue to improve' was very subjective.

The Head of Service: Housing explained that so much had changed over the lifetime of the plan and the Housing team was now involved in so much more than it had anticipated – the fact the team was able to do the day job as well as putting key measures in place was a credit to them. The aspiration was for continuous improvement but he accepted the point raised and undertook to include more detail regarding the activities being undertaken going forward.

Page No. 63 – Objective 1 – Action c) – In partnership with Ubico deliver the in-cab technology project – A Member questioned what was meant by 'street cleansing and grounds maintenance work is now underway'.

The Director: Communities advised that the Alloy in-cab technology system was being deployed in phases; waste and recycling was a huge undertaking which was complete and operating well so attention would now move to street cleansing and grounds maintenance which it was hoped would be up and running in the next few weeks.

Page No. 63 – Objective 1 – Action d) Review the Section 106 process – A Member noted that an audit was mentioned in the commentary

The Director: Corporate Services advised that the audit had only started a few weeks ago and was at the draft report stage. Another Member asked whether the Member training session which had been due to be delivered

and asked when this had commenced and the progress made to date.

as part of the Member Induction Programme in the summer but had been postponed would be provided as part of this and the Executive Director: Place provided assurance that would be the case.

Page No. 64 – Objective 2 – Action b) Deliver an improved planning validation experience for customers – A Member raised concern that the target date had changed from March 2024 to November 2024 and asked for an explanation in relation to this.

The Associate Director: Transformation explained that the internal project plan was aligned to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) milestones which was the reason for the change and she stressed there was no internal issue. In response to a query, she confirmed there had been a successful bid for additional funding of £300,000 to deliver this so no resources had been lost.

Key performance indicators for priority: Customer First

Page No. 68 – KPI 36 – Food establishment hygiene ratings – A Member queried whether anything was being done about the 2.21% of establishments with a food hygiene rating score of two or below.

The Director: Communities advised that the Council's role was to inspect premises and provide advice, particularly to those with lower ratings. It could, and did, take enforcement action against premises which fell below standards. He pointed out there was no legal requirement for establishments to display the rating in their window.

A Member asked if it would be appropriate to approach the Police and Crime Commissioner to enlist the Special Constabulary team to assist with operations and the Director: Communities advised that the Council's Environmental Health Officers and Food Safety Officers were more qualified than Police Officers who would not be permitted to carry out inspections in terms of food standards.

In response to a query as to what rating would require an establishment to close, the Director: Communities explained that the ratings were indicative – a premises with a score of five could still be closed if there were found to be improper practices when inspected.

Priority: Garden Communities

Page No. 70 - Objective 1 – Delivery of the Tewkesbury Garden Town – A Member asked how active travel had been considered in respect of the Garden Town, and the Junction 9 and A46 improvements which were part of that.

The Executive Director: Place advised that he would produce a response in consultation with County Highways following the meeting.

Page No. 72 – Objective 1 – Action d) Produce an integrated stakeholder and community engagement strategy for the delivery of the Garden Town – A Member questioned what was being done in terms of youth engagement.

The Executive Director: Place advised that there was a commitment to a specific youth engagement exercise, not just in terms of the Garden Town but in development of the Council Plan as well. Homes England funding had been secured until the end of the financial year and Officers had been waiting until it received that confirmation to initiate a response on that front which could now be provided outside of the meeting.

Priority: Sustainable Environment

Page No. 74 – Objective 1 – Action a) In conjunction with the Climate Change and Ecology Management Group, develop and deliver the year four carbon reduction plan – A Member asked whether the carbon reduction plan had been circulated to Members.

The Executive Director: Resources confirmed that the plan was on the Council's website both within the Executive Committee Agenda pages and the climate change page.

Page No. 75 – Objective 1 – Action e) Install publicly accessible Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points in our car parks – A Member noted this had been discussed for some time and asked if it would actually be achieved by the target date of March 2024.

The Executive Director: Resources confirmed Officers were very hopeful it would be in place by that deadline. The tender had gone out and there were a number of interested parties so an appointment would be made shortly.

A Member raised concern there was no indication as to which car parks the EV points would be installed in or how many there would be. In response, the Executive Director: Resources advised that this could not be established until the contractor had been appointed as not all car parks would be suitable for EV points. This was the first phase of the roll out of EV points and was supported by UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) funding; the second phase would involve wider roll-out across the borough.

Page No. 77 – Objective 2 – Action c) Carry out a review of our litter pickers scheme – A Member asked if June 2024 was an achievable target date given that this action had been delayed a number of

The Director: Communities recognised this was taking a long time and had not been the highest priority; however, Officers were working alongside the Business Transformation Team on this issue and he was hopeful the June 2024 target date could be achieved. When work had started, it had

times.

become clear that the backlog of data was vast in terms of the number of volunteer litter pickers. This information was currently contained within a spreadsheet and Officers had needed to determine which people were current volunteers and cleanse the data accordingly; this had taken up a lot of time with Officers completing this task alongside their other commitments.

Page No. 77 – Objective 2 – Action d) Work with the Integrated Locality Partnership (ILP) to build community resilience within the borough and reduce health inequalities – A Member questioned what Tewkesbury Borough Council's part was and whether it had played it fully.

The Director: Communities advised that the ILP had a number of partners, including health services and the Community Development team, and was chaired by the Chief Executive. His feeling was there would be a theme around health and wellbeing in the new Council Plan which would enable Members to see the work of the ILP more clearly. He indicated that there had been presentations from the ILP in the past and that was something which could be arranged for the Committee, if Members so wished. The Chair welcomed this suggestion and asked that the presentation set out whether the Council was meeting its commitment in terms of its role on the partnership.

48.7

Turning to the financial information, the Executive Director: Resources advised that the financial budget summary for quarter two showed a projected surplus of £257,681 for the full year against the approved budget. The table at Page No. 34, Paragraph 4.1 highlighted the forecast outturn position for service provision, the net position on corporate income and expenditure and the resulting surplus. The full year projection for employees highlighted a potential gross surplus of £529,006; however, there was a target to save £209,000 from employment costs across the Council therefore the net position was a surplus against target of £315,000. It was noted that the majority of the surplus was being accrued by One Legal which was matched off by a reduction in third party income. The national pay award had now been agreed, although it had not been at the time of calculating the quarter two forecast; therefore, a 4% pay increase had been included in the forecast. The pay award was in excess of 4% across the board but there were reserves in place to cover the excess so there would be no difference in the forecast at year end when it was included in quarter three. Payments to third parties highlighted a projected deficit of £48,645 with the Ubico contract predicted to be overspent by £73,000, mainly due to the pay award being reflected in its forecast. Emergency homeless accommodation was anticipated to be £52,000 over budget due to the increased demand in temporary housing and the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) gate fee was expected to be £233,000 over budget due to a significant increase in the gate fee per tonne being paid as a result in the declining value of recycling. The overspend was offset by some savings from the cessation of the trade waste service and Swindon Road Depot running costs were estimated to be £108,000 less than expected. Income was expected to be below budget by £398,000 mainly due to the cessation of the trade waste service and a reduced management fee for Tewkesbury Leisure Centre. Due to vacant space in the council offices, rental income was predicted to be £39,000 below budget. In relation to corporate expenditure, there was an estimated surplus of £498,722 for the financial year due to treasury activities performing above expectations. The overall projected position on retained business rates was currently showing a positive position due to the tariff

paid to central government being reduced from what had originally been calculated. It had been identified that external grant funding ringfenced for specific projects or services was unlikely to be spent in year; this was in the reserves ready to spend at the appropriate time but was excluded from the reported position. Bringing together both the deficit on net service expenditure and surplus on net corporate expenditure resulted in an overall budget surplus projection of £258,000 for the year. Appendix 3 to the report showed the capital budget as at quarter two which was currently £296,000 below the profiled budget due to no vehicles being purchased in this half of the year. The reserves position was attached at Appendix 4 to the report and highlighted a spend of £1.1m mainly consisting of expenditure relating to the digitalisation team, temporary posts in Revenues and Benefits, community support grants, Borough election costs and the second quarter costs of the Garden Town team. As part of the financial management code, approved by the Audit and Governance Committee, the report now also included a number of KPIs; the table at Appendix 5 to the report showed the level of bad debt for each service area. Furthermore, the revised CIPFA Prudential Code and Treasury Management Code of Practice required prudential indicators, approved as part of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, to be reported quarterly as part of the financial updates and, accordingly, these were included at Appendices 6 and 7 to the report. The Executive Director: Resources noted the comments made by the Chair at the start of this item regarding the Committee's role in financial scrutiny and indicated that he would be happy to provide a training session on the financial report in the New Year.

48.8 A Member queried whether all of the properties within the Council's commercial portfolio had been let and was advised there was one tenant moving out this month; however, this was an old lease and it was considered that it would be possible to bring in a better tenant for an increased rent. There were two empty units on the second floor of the Council offices which was due to the lack of interest in office space currently. It was intended to market these aggressively in the New Year before looking at alternative uses for that space. A Member asked whether there was any other office accommodation within the Council's commercial property portfolio and was informed there were two other office units the first of which had been purchased when there was a lack of office space in the area so it was in high demand; this had since been re-let without any issue and there were now three long-term tenants. The second had been occupied by a solicitor's firm since 1993 and had no intention of leaving. Another Member raised concern that the Ubico budget was again overspent, this time as a result of the pay award. In response, the Executive Director: Resources indicated that he sympathised with Ubico which was subject to the same pay award as the Council; whilst Ubico had anticipated a reasonable amount, due to the national living wage and the pressures at that end of the pay scale, this had been higher than expected.

48.9 With regard to Page No. 34, Paragraph 4.1 of the report, a Member questioned where the money went in relation to capital expenditure. The Executive Director: Resources advised that local government had different rules and regulations which meant that revenue and capital were kept completely separate. Page No. 34 of the report set out the revenue position and the day to day running cost of supplies and services whereas capital was invested into assets with a useful life – the only way to get income for capital was by selling something or from a government grant. Revenue could be used for capital expenditure but was not included at Page No. 34 as it was released at year end and the only area it would be used was vehicle fleet procurement with £837,000 set aside each year to purchase new vehicles every seven years. This effectively came out of the day to day budget under 'use of reserves' in the table.

48.10 The Chair welcomed the opportunity for the Committee to look in more detail at the financial report and it was subsequently

RESOLVED That the performance management information for quarter two

of 2023/24 be **NOTED**.

OS.49 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN ANNUAL REVIEW

- 49.1 The report of the Communications and Customer Experience Manager, circulated at Pages No. 103-122, provided an update on progress against the 2022/23 actions within the Communication Strategy Action Plan. Members were asked to consider the report.
- 49.2 The Associate Director: Transformation advised that the current Communication Strategy was launched in 2020 and this was its final year, as such, new targets had not been included in this report as they would form part of the new strategy due to come forward in the early part of next year. During the last year, the Communications Team had supported major Council projects including the Garden Town programme, promoted cost of living support, delivered timely communications on adverse weather emergencies as well as continuing to deliver day to day internal and external communications work. Pages No. 104-105, Paragraph 2.2. of the report highlighted key actions which had been completed in 2022 such as improving social media campaigns, supporting the launch of the new corporate website, delivering media training for Members and Chief Officers, introducing Alistair's Update – a bi-weekly video update from the Chief Executive to staff - a range of work by the Council's graphic designer and ensuring that communication campaigns were accessible, engaging and professional. Of the 21 actions, four had not been achieved and these were set out at Page No. 105, Paragraph 2.3 of the report; these actions would be transferred to the 2024 action plan that would accompany the new Communications Strategy. The new strategy would be aligned to the new Council Plan and the Council's ambition to become a high performing organisation. The actions would be aimed at raising and protecting the Council's reputation and, personally, she would like to think about how the strategy could be delivered in a live way to ensure it was not a static document which remained for three years.
- 49.3 The Chair expressed the view that the Council's communications were fantastic; however, there had been things the team was unable to achieve and he asked whether the action plan was reflective of the resources available to deliver it and what had been learnt from this strategy to put into the next one. The Associate Director: Transformation advised that the team was technically larger than it had ever been with there soon to be two full-time Communication Officers, nevertheless, demand on the team was significant and, going forward, it was intended to align the communication priorities with those of the Council – the team could easily be swamped with ad hoc requests, for instance, the need to promote an event which was not known about, and it may be necessary for the Communications and Customer Experience Manager to push back on occasions where the information was not provided in a timely or helpful manner. The Communications and Customer Experience Manager commented that the team would soon be fully resourced so he was confident they would be in a position to make real progress.
- 49.4 A Member noted that one of the actions that had not been achieved was in relation to the promotion of Council achievements and she asked whether that would be addressed when the new member of staff came on board. The Associate Director: Transformation confirmed that would be the case and provided assurance this action was in relation to promoting achievements in local government and service-specific publications which was not the same as reaching out to local media and promotion on social media; this action required a one to one relationship to be built

with the publication.

- 49.5 A Member queried the diversity of the Citizens' Panel and the Associate Director: Transformation indicated that this question had been raised about a year ago so she undertook to recirculate that response. The Member noted that communication with Parish Councils had not been as good as it could have been and she asked how that was being improved. In response, the Associate Director: Transformation advised that the regular Town and Parish Council newsletter, 'Parish Matters', had stopped during the pandemic creating a gap in the Council's ability to fulfil its duty to communicate with Town and Parish Councils; the newsletter had now been reintroduced and Officers were committed to sticking to its production. The governance arrangements for the Garden Town meant that Town and Parish Councils were involved and engaged and it was intended that practice would be repeated with other key pieces of work such as the Strategic and Local Plan (SLP). A Member indicated that she produced a monthly Borough Councillor report for her Parish Council which set out in general terms what had been done over the last four weeks; however, she was not always aware of what the Parish Council issues were and asked if there was any way of knowing what issues they had raised with the Borough Council so she could ensure they were addressed. In response, the Associate Director: Transformation indicated that would not be straightforward as these would not be in a central place within the authority. The Community Development team was best placed to know what was happening within communities. The Chair indicated that the wider issue appeared to be around effective engagement between the work of Tewkesbury Borough Council, Borough Councillors and their Parishes and he had noted that the current Communication Strategy, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, was generally around how the Council would broadcast, as opposed to how it would listen. One of the frequent complaints from stakeholders was that the Council did not listen or engage successfully and he would like to see this addressed in the new strategy. The Associate Director: Transformation agreed but indicated that having a small team meant there was a need to prioritise and the team was not currently a Communications and Engagement team with engagement sitting within the individual services. This was being reviewed via the Garden Town programme to an extent and a request for funding for consultation software had been submitted which would further assist. There were a number of other tools to help with engagement, for instance, social listening enabled technology to understand what discussions were taking place about the Council and AI may have a further role in terms of making suggestions as to what could be done differently to change perceptions; however, she was clear that this was not currently available and had not been the focus of the team. A brief discussion ensued as to whether it would be beneficial to have a Member Working Group on the new Communications Strategy but was agreed that an Overview and Scrutiny Committee workshop would be more appropriate to be held before the end of the financial year.

- 49.6 It was

RESOLVED That progress against the 2022/23 actions within the Communication Strategy Action Plan be **NOTED**.

OS.50 GLOUCESTERSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL UPDATE

- 50.1 Attention was drawn to the report from the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel, circulated at Pages No. 121-122, which gave an update on matters discussed at the last meeting held on 24 November 2023.
- 50.2 In the absence of the Council's representative, the Chair advised that a response would be sought to any questions and circulated following the meeting. A Member indicated that he had recently tried to contact the Police Wildlife Officer and was

waiting for a call back; he understood there had been a change in personnel and questioned whether there was an Officer in post currently. With regard to the Chief Executive's report, a Member noted that funding over £1m had been made available to Gloucestershire Safer Streets and she asked whether that was through a grant programme. Another Member expressed the view that the update report identified five significant areas of concern which appeared to be easily dismissed as having been dealt with and he questioned if it was a case of the Council's representative being succinct in his reporting or whether the Panel did not engage sufficiently with those matters.

50.3 It was

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

OS.51 GLOUCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE UPDATE

51.1 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 discussed at the last meeting held on 28 November 2023.

51.2 The Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee gave a summary of the information provided within the update report and invited any questions from Members. A Member noted the response to the question she had asked previously and was surprised to hear there was no cancer-specific specialist paediatric team in Gloucestershire to provide psychological support leading to many young people having to be referred to Bristol Royal Infirmary. She was also disappointed that it was not possible to answer the question around how Gloucestershire compared nationally in terms of provision. The Chair expressed the view that the information contained within the update report would be beneficial to all Members and it was agreed that reports from Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel and Gloucestershire Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee would all be included in the Member Update Sheet going forward.

51.3 It was

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

OS.52 SEPARATE BUSINESS

52.1 The Chair proposed and it was

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

OS.53 SEPARATE MINUTES

53.1 The separate Minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2023, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The meeting closed at 7:15 pm

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 5 December 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No (IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)
5.	Executive Committee Forward Plan	Members to be advised why the Equalities and Diversity Policy had been delayed by over a year having originally been due for consideration in October 2022 and remaining in the pending items section.	Chair to raise with the Executive Committee.	Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	No.
		Economic Development and Tourism Strategy to be moved from pending to 20 March 2024.	Members advised this would be ready by the end of the financial year. Forward Plan updated.	Democratic Services Officer	Yes
6.	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24	Potential cost of living crisis item for scrutiny – discussion to take place between Leader, Chair of O&S and relevant Officers as to how this could best be taken forward.	Added to pending items section of Work Programme.	Director: Corporate Services	

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 5 December 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No (IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)
		Presentation on Active Gloucestershire 'We Can Move' project given at O&S Committee on 17 January 2023 to be circulated ahead of the report on 16 January 2024 to ensure debate remained scrutiny focused as opposed to information gathering.	Email attaching presentation with link to presentation and Minutes of the meeting on the website circulated on 4 January 2024.	Democratic Services Officer	Yes
7.	Performance Tracker Quarter Two 2023/24	Page No. 40 – Objective 2 – Action a) Ensure our Council Tax remains in the lowest quartile nationally - Executive Committee to be made aware that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was unhappy about this objective which ought to be focused on value for money for residents.	Chair to raise with the Executive Committee.	Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
		Page No. 43 – Objective 2 – Action a) Deliver employment land through allocating land in the Strategic and Local Plan (SLP) – Consideration to be give as to how best to report short and medium term delivery alongside long term delivery via the SLP.	Concern raised by the Chair around an adopted SLP not being in place until 2027.	Executive Director: Place	

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 5 December 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No (IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)
		Page No. 44 – Objective 2 – Action b) Work with partners to secure transport infrastructure improvements for the all-ways Junction 10 – Consideration to be given as to how active travel between settlements can be incorporated into the redesign of the junction.	Raised by Cllr Adcock.	Executive Director: Place	
		Page No. 46 – KPI 2 – Claimant unemployment rate – Breakdown of age group and type of employment to be provided to Members.		Director: Communities	
		Page No. 47 – KPI 6 – Number of visitors to Winchcombe Tourist Information Centre – Members to be updated on what was being done to replace the physical presence when the TIC closed given that visitor numbers were increasing and not everyone could access information digitally.		Director: Communities	

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 5 December 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No (IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)
		Page No. 47 – KPI 7 – Number of visitors entering the Growth Hub – Members to be provided with a list of events being run by the Growth Hub.	Similar request raised by Executive Committee.	Director: Corporate Resources	
		Page No. 49 – Objective 1 – Action b) Increase the temporary housing accommodation supply – Members to be provided with information on what could be done to support rough sleepers.	Email circulated to O&S Committee on 6 January 2024.	Head of Service: Housing	Yes
		Page No. 50 – Objective 2 – Action a) Ensure adequate land is allocated within the SLP - Consideration to be given as to how best to report short and medium term delivery alongside long term delivery via the SLP.		Executive Director: Place	

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 5 December 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No (IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)
		<p>Page No. 53 – Objective c) Work with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) to access funding to deliver improved community facilities – Consideration to be given as to how Section 106 payments received by communities could be reported.</p>		<p>Executive Director: Place</p>	
		<p>Pages No. 55-56 – KPIs 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 in relation to applications on the housing register, homeless applications / relief / prevention cases, temporary accommodation and affordable housing – New housing KPIs need to reflect the Council's performance.</p>		<p>Director: Communities</p>	

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 5 December 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No (IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)
		<p>Pages No. 57-59 – KPIs 17, 18, 19 and 20 in relation to determination of planning applications and applications overturned at appeal –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns about the delay in determining applications and progress of the Development Management Continuous Improvement Programme to be addressed at a Member briefing in January 	<p>Member briefing arranged for Thursday 18 January 2024 at 6pm on Teams.</p>	<p>Democratic Services Officer</p>	<p>Yes</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of the reasons for requests for extensions of time to be produced. 		<p>Executive Director: Place</p>	
		<p>Pages No. 58-59 - KPI 19 and KPI 20 – Percentage of major and non major planning applications overturned at appeal – Percentages to be included alongside figures going forward.</p>		<p>Executive Director: Place</p>	

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 5 December 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No (IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)
		Page No. 62 – Objective 1 – Action a) Continue to improve the proactive homelessness programme – More detail about the programme and what was being achieved to be included going forward.		Head of Service: Housing	
		Page No. 63 – Objective 1 – Action d) Review the Section 106 process – Date to be set for Section 106/CIL Member session which was postponed from the Member Induction Programme.		Executive Director: Place	
		Page No. 70 - Objective 1 – Delivery of the Tewkesbury Garden Town – Response to be provided in consultation with County Highways as to how active travel has been considered as part of the Garden Town and Junction 9 and A46 improvements which were part of that.		Executive Director: Place	

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 5 December 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No (IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)
		Page No. 72 – Objective 1 – Action d) Produce an integrated stakeholder and community engagement strategy for the delivery of the Garden Town – Members to be provided with details of the specific youth engagement strategy.		Executive Director: Place	
		Page No. 77 – Objective 2 – Action d) Work with the Integrated Locality Partnership (ILP) to build community resilience within the borough and reduce health inequalities – Presentation from the ILP to a future meeting of the Committee to be arranged (to include whether the Council is fulfilling its role on the partnership).		Director: Communities	
		Training session on the finance report to be provided to the Committee in the New Year.		Executive Director: Resources	

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 5 December 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No (IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)
8.	Communications Strategy Action Plan Annual Review	Information on diversity of Citizens' Panel to be circulated to Members.		Associate Director: Transformation	
		O&S Workshop to be held in relation to the new Communication Strategy by the end of the financial year.		Associate Director: Transformation	
9.	Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel Update	Members to be advised as to whether there is currently a Police Wildlife Officer in post and, if so, their name and contact information.	Question raised by Cllr Adcock.	Cllr Porter via Democratic Services Officer	No.
		Members to be advised as to whether the £1m awarded to Gloucestershire Safer Streets was through a grant programme.	Question raised by Cllr Madle.	Cllr Porter via Democratic Services Officer	No.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 5 December 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No (IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)
		Members to be advised whether the Panel had not engaged sufficiently in terms of providing adequate explanations for the significant areas of concern identified in the update report which appeared to have been easily dismissed, or whether this was due to the Council's representative being succinct in his reporting.	Question raised by Cllr Yates.	Cllr Porter via Democratic Services Officer	No.
10.	Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Update	Reports from Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel and Gloucestershire Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be included in the Member Update Sheet going forward.	Included in Member Update Sheet for week commencing 11 December 2023.	Democratic Services Officer	Yes.