

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the
Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Tuesday, 8 September 2015
commencing at 4:30 pm**

Present:

Chairman

Councillor P W Awford

and Councillors:

G J Bocking, K J Cromwell, R D East, Mrs R M Hatton, Mrs H C McLain, T A Spencer,
Mrs P E Stokes, P D Surman, M G Sztymiak, H A E Turbyfield and M J Williams

OS.29 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 29.1 The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was taken as read.
- 29.2 The Chairman welcomed Inspector Dave Goga, from Gloucestershire Police Service to the meeting and advised that he was in attendance for Agenda Item 8, Scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership. In addition, Councillor R E Garnham, the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel, would be providing an update on the last meeting of the Panel at Agenda Item 7. Bearing in mind the attendance of the Police, the Chairman announced his intention to vary the order of the Agenda so that Item 8, Scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership, was taken at Item 6 after the consideration of the Executive Committee Forward Plan. This would enable the Police representative to leave the meeting in a timely fashion.

OS.30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

- 30.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs G F Blackwell (Vice-Chairman) and D T Foyle. Councillor K J Cromwell had indicated that he would be late. There were no substitutions for the meeting.

OS.31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 31.1 The Committee's attention was drawn to the Tewkesbury Borough Council Code of Conduct which was adopted by the Council on 26 June 2012 and took effect from 1 July 2012.
- 31.2 There were no declarations made on this occasion.

OS.32 MINUTES

- 32.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2015, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OS.33 CONSIDERATION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

- 33.1 Attention was drawn to the Executive Committee Forward Plan, circulated at Pages

No. 14-17. 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.

33.2 A Member questioned what the Executive Committee would be considering in terms of the lease of facilities at Cold Pool Lane. In response, he was advised that the Council was due to take over the facilities. There was a longstanding action to lease the facilities from Bloor Homes and this needed to be agreed by the Executive Committee in order to commence the tender process.

33.3 In respect of the 'Review of the Safeguarding Children Policy', the Environmental and Housing Services Group Manager indicated that, due to potential changes at a County level, there may be a need to change the date that this was considered by the Executive Committee. She would know more in due course. In addition, she indicated that she had recently organised some Safeguarding Training which was provided by an external trainer. She had been disappointed with the level of interest shown by Members through the attendance numbers. She hoped in future Members would be more willing to engage.

33.4 Accordingly, it was

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

OS.34 SCRUTINY OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

34.1 The Environmental and Housing Services Group Manager introduced a presentation which set out details about the Borough's Community Safety Partnership. The key points were provided as follows:

- Current Model – This was not working very well and had not done for some time. It had been agreed by the previous Chairman that things needed to change to ensure the Partnership was more effective and the current Chairman had indicated that she was happy to continue this work and explore the changes. Currently the Neighbourhood Watch organisations received information but there was no particular involvement with the Community Safety Partnership. There was an Anti-Social Behaviour meeting every six weeks at which operational issues were discussed and shared by a number of agencies that were in attendance; this was a particularly successful meeting that worked really well and was a model that Officers would like to replicate if possible.
- Proposed Structure – The same groups would be involved (Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators; Neighbourhood Coordination Group Chairs; Anti-Social Behaviour Meeting; Statutory Members; and Registered Providers) but they would all link into the Community Safety Partnership rather than only to each other. The Community Safety Partnership would work in partnership with all agencies for projects to be delivered on the ground to address emerging issues of anti-social behaviour in an effort to increase public perception.
- Involving Communities – Help to relaunch Neighbourhood Coordination Groups; encourage attendance and community leadership; better advertising; and use available money to tackle issues in communities. Local

area contact through Community Development Officers. Address emerging issues through Anti-Social Behaviour Meetings; there was money available to tackle issues in communities. Use the Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators; the eyes and ears 'on the ground'.

- Funding – Bid submitted to Police Crime Commissioner which targeted six priorities (Accessibility and Accountability; Older but not Overlooked; Young People becoming Adults; Safe Days and Nights for All; Safe and Social Driving; and Safer Cyber), currently had £20,000 to spend on four of those priorities (Older but Not Overlooked; Young People becoming Adults; Safe Days and Nights for All; and Safer Cyber).
- What's Next – Arrange workshop to share the structure and receive feedback from partners; understand the new policing model and impact; and decide launch date.

34.2 In making his presentation, Inspector Goga explained that he had been in Tewkesbury since May 2014. A new Police operating model had been in place since July with most Officers now working in a pattern of two early shifts; two late shifts and two night shifts. This ensured everyone was doing their fair share of working during peak demand times. Over 100 shift patterns had been in place prior to the reorganisation. For Tewkesbury there had been a big impact in two ways, firstly there were more Officers available to meet demand and, secondly, Tewkesbury was quite unique as it touched every other local policing area in the County. Prior to July, Cheltenham and Gloucester had its own incident response teams but now they were all working out of Bamfurlong which was within the Tewkesbury Local Policing Area. Part of Tewkesbury Local Policing Area was in the middle of Cheltenham/Gloucester and the reconfigured response teams would go from Bamfurlong to those areas. Tewkesbury had its own response team to respond to incidents in the north and central areas of the Local Policing Area. This new approach had created capacity for Tewkesbury which meant Officers could start being proactive in dealing with community priorities at a local level. He felt that the reorganisation had been successful with all of the Community Sergeants having given a positive response and indicating that they were happy to have additional capacity to deal with concerns. Street Safe had been reintroduced for Friday and Saturday evenings and the Pubwatch Scheme had been reinvigorated with local licensees; both of which had been very positive. Since July, the numbers of crimes and incidents had begun to drop which it was felt was due to more Officers being on duty at the right time. In Tewkesbury particularly, mobile working had had a big impact on Officers time as they could deal with incidents out in the patch rather than having to go back to the Police Station to fill in forms etc. He hoped the current momentum would continue and he felt that improving the Community Safety Partnership would have a very positive impact in the future.

34.3 During the discussion which ensued, a Member indicated that he had thought the Neighbourhood Watch had been disbanded. In response, the Environmental and Housing Services Group Manager advised that this was not the case. Some Coordinators had left and the Neighbourhood Watch organisation was in the process of being reorganised; it was now up and running across most areas. It was hoped that joining it more with the Community Safety Partnership would help reinforce the work it did. In respect of 'Rural Watch' a Member advised that, as a Coordinator, he used to receive texts and calls to update him on crimes in the area; however, he had now had no contact for five/six months and he questioned why this was. Inspector Goga indicated that there was an Officer who was an integral part of Rural Watch; he understood that this year she had had a strategic role supporting the Themeis Operation but Rural Watch should still be running. He undertook to try and establish where the missing link was in the chain as this was a scheme that was really important in the rural areas. In terms of Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators, he agreed that there had been difficulties in recruitment but

they were extremely important and this was a priority for the Police.

- 34.4 Referring to the Crime Performance Indicators, the Chairman indicated that the 12 month rolling programme had confirmed an increase in crime of 8%; he questioned why this was the case when Inspector Goga had noted a 10% reduction in crime. In response, Inspector Goga explained that the Tewkesbury Local Policing Area had seen a spike in crime last year but since mid-July this had fallen rapidly and was now resting at a lower rate. A Member questioned whether those figures included crimes investigated by the Military and, in response; the Inspector explained that this was something that he was investigating. Currently the crime statistics received from the Military were quite sparse and he had asked his Sergeants in Churchdown to improve links in that area as the Police statistics should include the Military.
- 34.5 In terms of the funding for the Police Crime Commissioner's priorities, a Member questioned how much could be used on anti-social behaviour. In response, the Environmental and Housing Services Group Manager explained that the bid had been for addressing emerging issues around the four priorities identified (Older but Not Overlooked; Young People becoming Adults; Safe Days and Nights for All; and Safer Cyber). When people looked at percentages of incidents, anti-social behaviour looked quite high but, in actual figures, the incidents were extremely low compared to other Districts. Inspector Goga offered reassurance that community priorities were in place and the Anti-Social Behaviour Group was a really well organised Group that had a real understanding of anti-social behaviour issues in the area. He was sure the funding available would go to the right places. The Environmental and Housing Services Group Manager advised that funding was allocated in order of priority and Officers would look for Groups to come up with bids for the projects they were running which would include information on objectives, outcomes and how the project was creating sustainability. In terms of anti-social behaviour, the Chief Executive expressed the view that partnership was absolutely essential and he felt that having the Police based at the Council Offices really helped to enforce that link.
- 34.6 One Member indicated that the Police used to attend Parish Council meetings in his area which he had always found very useful. This had ceased in recent times and he questioned why this was. Inspector Goga explained that the reorganisation of the Local Policing Areas meant that there were Officers identified for each area and this was something he would look into. He indicated that his Officers would not always be able to attend Parish Council meetings but there needed to be a link established so that they knew when they were and then could accept or decline invitations as appropriate.
- 34.7 Members thanked Inspector Goga for his time and it was
- RESOLVED** That the presentation provided on the Community Safety Partnership and new policing review be **NOTED**.

OS.35 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16

35.1 Attention was draw to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2015/16, circulated at Pages No.18-19, which Members were asked to consider.

35.2 The Corporate Services Group Manager took the opportunity to remind Members of the training which was being facilitated by South West Councils the following Monday and he indicated that he hoped as many Members of the Committee would be able to attend as possible.

35.3 Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2015/16 be **NOTED**.

OS.36 GLOUCESTERSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL UPDATE

36.1 Members received an update from Councillor R E Garnham, the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel, on matters discussed at the last meeting of the Panel held on 8 September 2015.

36.2 Councillor Garnham advised that the Police and Crime Commissioner had indicated that he would be happy to come and talk to the Committee rather than just providing written answers to the questions posed by the Committee at its last meeting. However, Councillor Garnham had felt that written responses were important and as such he had pushed for them. They had now been circulated by Democratic Services. In terms of the meeting on 8 September, he advised that the main agenda items had focussed around a presentation from the Chief Constable on the Constabulary's "New Operating Model". There had also been a presentation regarding various schemes that were aimed at meeting the Commissioner's Safe and Social Driving objective. Although the "Finance Update" had appeared as Agenda Item 8 this had been a verbal report only as the Commissioner had stated that the papers were still confidential until the Constabulary had met later that week. Therefore no finance data was actually tabled. It had been highlighted that the minutes of the meeting on 16 July had included a recommendation from the Police and Crime Panel to the Police and Crime Commissioner that he redraft his Annual Report to include "relevant statistics" and reissue the report. The statistics that had been requested were around the levels of crime in the County. The Commissioner had stated that he was not prepared to include this data and therefore the Annual Report would remain unchanged.

36.3 The meeting had received a short report from the Chief Executive and it was clear that the Constabulary was still awaiting various reports from the Inspector of Constabularies on Effectiveness and Legitimacy, Custody Centre Operations and the Constabulary's approach to Domestic Violence, Child Exploitation and Safeguarding. In terms of the new operating model, the Chief Constable, and Superintendent Richard Cooper, had given a very informative presentation. The slides were available on the County Council's Police and Crime Panel website and he urged Members to read them - <http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/b11117/New%20Operating%20Model%20presentation%20Tuesday%2001-Sep-2015%2010.00%20Police%20and%20Crime%20Panel.pdf?T=9> Reassurances had been provided over the importance the Constabulary attached to maintaining neighbourhood policing and the number of Officers devoted to this task had increased from 84 to 95. The main focus of neighbourhood policing would be "tackling harm and vulnerability". Local Policing Officers would be assigned to one of three core roles: Incident Resolution (IR - previously known as "Response");

Local Investigation; and Neighbourhood Policing. It was stressed that flexibility was inherent in those roles as Officers may perform all three roles depending on local and County priorities. Incident Response Officers for Gloucester and Cheltenham would be based in Bamfurlong, whilst for rural areas including the Forest of Dean, the Cotswolds, Stroud and Tewkesbury, Incident Response would remain local to those areas. Whilst named local Neighbourhood Policing Officers would remain it was expected that there would be a reduction in their attendance at formal meetings and events.

- 36.4 Members had also received an update on mobile frontline policing. The presentation had included a brief update on this, along with a list of “what success will look like” factors. These included Officers remaining on patrol and not having to return to base for more briefings, completion of forms whilst out on patrol, using GPS, mapping and cameras and spending more time with victims and investigating crimes and patrolling. The topic of safe and social driving was one of the Commissioner’s main aims and priorities and the Panel received an excellent presentation from Louise White, the Commissioner’s Safe and Social Driving Coordinator. The presentation could be found on the County Council’s website <http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/b11118/Safe%20and%20Social%20Driving%20presentation%20Tuesday%2001-Sep-2015%2010.00%20Police%20and%20Crime%20Panel.pdf?T=9> and Councillor Garnham urged Members to take a look. Of particular note were the three schemes aimed to help young people improve their driving skills: Drive IQ Gloucestershire; IAM Courses; and the Pathfinder Programme, all of which he felt were excellent.
- 36.5 The Police and Crime Commissioner had given a brief verbal update explaining that no financial information could be tabled as papers were still confidential at this stage and would need to be debated internally by the Constabulary at a meeting later that week. The Commissioner had highlighted that the forthcoming crime service review at the end of the year would lead to more budget cuts and financial challenges; perhaps as much as between £15m to £20m. Changes were also being made to the Policing Funding Formula and these changes were subject to ongoing consultation. The Panel restated its wish to support the Commissioner and, at a forthcoming work planning meeting, discussions would be held over what documentation/data was needed for the Panel to achieve that aim. The next meeting of the Panel would be 5 November and a work planning session with the Constabulary would be held on 22 September 2015. Councillor Garnham invited any questions from Members before 5 November and he could then ask them at the Panel meeting.
- 36.6 The Chief Executive explained that, in terms of local management of the police units in Tewkesbury Borough, he felt Inspector Goga was working well in partnership with Borough Council Officers and other partner organisations in the area. The Chief Executive shared concerns about neighbourhood policing and the risks had been pointed out. The Police and the Police Constable had put forward a management system which they felt would work and he was sure the Police and Crime Panel would monitor this carefully, as would Borough Council Officers locally. Inspector Goga had indicated that he was committed to working hard with partners locally to ensure the system worked and the Borough Council would do its best to try and get the best local outcomes for its Parishes. A Member commented that the Chief Executive had previously undertaken to provide Members with a contact telephone number for the Local Policing Team and, in response, the Chief Executive indicated that Inspector Goga had only just returned from leave but he would speak to him and get something to circulate to Members.

36.7 Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED That the feedback from the last meeting of the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel be **NOTED**.

OS.37 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT - QUARTER 1 2015/16

- 37.1 The report of the Corporate Services Group Manager, circulated at Pages No. 20-73, attached performance management information for quarter 1 of 2015/16. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to review and scrutinise performance information and, where appropriate, identify any issues to refer to the Executive Committee for clarification or further action to be taken.
- 37.2 The performance management report comprised the Council Plan Performance Tracker, the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) set, the Revenue Budget Summary Statement, the Capital Monitoring Statement and the Reserves Position Summary. The majority of information within the Performance Tracker, attached at Appendix 1, reflected the progress of Council Plan actions as at the time of writing the report. Paragraph 2.3 of the report highlighted a number of achievements since the last update. Members were informed that business transformation savings of £171,000 had been included within the 2015/16 budget and a total of 2016m² office space had been made available for rental. In terms of service reviews, the Customer Service review was now complete; the review of Development and Environmental Health had commenced and, following the success of the Revenues and Benefits review, the team had successfully been shortlisted for the prestigious Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation (IRRV) award. Ongoing partnership work was taking place with Cotswold Tourism, which was now a standalone company, which was excellent news for the Borough. Development of projects such as the Heritage Walks and Interpretation was taking place with the Tewkesbury Town Centre Partnership and this was working well. The governance arrangements to support the £1.4million LEADER project were being formalised and a Tewkesbury Borough Local Action Group had been formed. The client monitoring framework for the Ubico contract had been implemented and a monitoring report was due to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee. In terms of the Volunteer Litter Pickers Scheme, an additional 26 people had now joined which took the total to 180. The Repair and Renew Grant Scheme had closed at the end of June and a total of £572,000 had been awarded to residents with flood affected properties. A new Community Funding Officer had been appointed and she would be able to signpost communities to funding sources other than the Borough Council. In addition, the new leisure centre remained on target for completion by July 2016 and a new Tewkesbury Parkrun had been established which attracted over 100 weekly runners and 30 volunteers.
- 37.3 The Corporate Services Group Manager advised that the complex nature of the actions being delivered meant that some may not progress as smoothly or quickly as envisaged and those were set out in the table at Paragraph 2.3. Particular attention was drawn to the fact that a partner to rent the vacant top floor of the Council Offices building had not been confirmed; this meant that the target of £75,000 income in 2015/16 was unlikely to be achieved. The Internal Audit report on the handling and learning from complaints had not got the sense that the Council was learning from complaints received; with this in mind it was intended that a fundamental review of the complaints framework would be undertaken. In terms of the business grant scheme, no grants had been awarded in quarter 1 as the Scheme had been put on hold for a number of reasons and would now be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of its review of the Economic and Tourism Strategy. In terms of Key Performance Indicators, the Corporate Services Group Manager explained that it was early days for the data reported currently and a clearer picture would emerge at the end of quarter 2. However, Key Indicators of interest at this stage included KPI 5 – number of overall crime incidents – the 12

month rolling total confirmed an increase of 8.44% overall but it was anticipated that as the new operating model was embedded this would reduce; KPI 11 – average number of sick days – the outturn of 1.23 days was a significant improvement on the previous year and it was currently anticipated that the target would be met; KPI 15 and 16 – Average time to process benefit applications – processing times were at their best ever level and showed continued improvement from 2014/15, this confirmed that the improvement programme was really working and was becoming embedded into the service; and KPI 26 – Number of reported enviro-crimes – looked like they could be on the same level as reported in 2014/15.

37.4 During the discussion which ensued, the Chairman offered the Committee's congratulations to the Revenues and Benefits Teams who had been shortlisted for an award. It was felt that this was an excellent achievement and a great recognition of the improvement work undertaken. In terms of the answering of telephone calls, a Member expressed the view that, whilst some departments were excellent at picking up calls for each other, others were not so good and this was frustrating for Members and the public. In response, the Corporate Services Manager explained that Customer Services now fell within his remit and he would be considering this issue. Everything that the Council did was about good customer service and if he was aware that service was slipping he would ensure good customer service was championed throughout the teams in the Council. It was his intention that standards for voicemail would be introduced so that people knew when staff would be available if they were not answering their telephone at a certain time. In respect of tourist attractions, a Member indicated that an initiative was underway in Down Hatherley Churchyard to restore the Gwinnett family tomb which dated from the 18th Century. He felt that this could be a really good tourist attraction for the Borough and he wondered whether it was something that the Borough Council would contribute to. In response, the Economic and Community Development Manager explained that he would discuss this with the Member outside of the meeting. He felt sure there would be funding streams that could be accessed to help with the project. In response to a query regarding the LEADER funding, the Economic and Community Development Manager explained that the funding was for rural growth so could not be used in all areas of the Borough. It was about generating growth and creating new jobs in rural areas i.e. farm diversification by the creation of a farm shop which would create employment and encourage local producers. If there were any particular projects that Members were aware of they should advise the Programme Manager, Neil Batt, who would meet with the relevant people. Neil worked for both Tewkesbury Borough Council and the Forest of Dean District Council and he was meeting with people now so he was ready when the money came in from Defra.

37.5 In terms of the Council's financial position as at the end of June, the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager referred to Page No. 24 – Table one, which showed the overall position. There was a surplus of £109,849 for this quarter which was mainly as a result of income from the Planning, Garden Waste and One Legal Services. It was hoped that this could be carried forward into the second quarter. Paragraph 4.3, and Appendix 3, showed the position for each Group Manager with notes against any significant variances. He explained that, although the Group Managers position appeared to be significantly underspent, the budget report also recognised the need to achieve savings from the base budget in terms of salaries and procurement savings. Those savings targets were currently held on the corporate budget codes on the ledger. No savings were recognised against those plans as they accumulated through the year within service groupings. The potential impact of appeals on business rates also needed to be taken into account. A spike in applications had been seen in March as a result of changes in Government Policy on backdating appeals. The impact of appeals was uncertain as it remained with the Valuation Office to process them; although an estimated impact of successful appeals had been allowed for. The first quarter position for business rates retention

was in line with expected levels of income following the Virgin Media reassessments in 2014/15. A full year deficit of £110,000 was currently predicted. Paragraph 5, and Appendix 4, showed the capital position as at the end of quarter 1. This currently showed an overspend against the profiled budget of £182,672. Community grants were underspent due to slippages in approved schemes, however, monitoring by the Working Group highlighted that all schemes were continuing and budgets were expected to be spent. In addition, the overspend on housing and business grants was due to the fact that the grants had been awarded for flood relief but the Council had not yet recovered the money from central Government; this was due to be received in quarter 2. Paragraph 3.1, and Appendix 5, showed a summary of the current usage of available reserves. At present the reserves were beginning to be utilised and only showed the actual payments made. The information contained within the Appendix did not take account of reserves which had been committed but not yet paid. As at the end of the first quarter, £485,853 had been expended against the opening reserves of £10,567,814. Details of significant movements were contained within the notes on the Appendix.

37.6 During the brief discussion which ensued, a Member questioned what the planning obligation reserve was. In response, the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager advised that Section 106 money was funding which was received from developers. As a development progressed there were trigger points at which time funds were released and they were then held in the planning obligation reserve awaiting expenditure. In addition, the Deputy Chief Executive explained that the details of a Section 106 Agreement was negotiated with the developer based on the needs of a community and the mitigation of a development. Each negotiation was different, as were the triggers for funding. A Member queried whether it was correct that there had been £5million of Section 106 monies for development in Longford. In response, the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager indicated that he was unsure but would check and respond to the Member accordingly.

37.7 Having considered the information provided, it was

RESOLVED That the performance management information for quarter 1 of 2015/16 be **NOTED**.

The meeting closed at 6:00 pm