

## Questions raised by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at meeting held on 23 February 2016

Questions raised by Overview and Scrutiny	Response from officers
<b>Performance Tracker:</b>	
<p><b>Use resources effectively and efficiently:</b> A Member questioned why it was taking such a long time to rent out the office space which was available within the Public Services Centre.</p>	<p>The Deputy Chief Executive explained that negotiations were ongoing with a group of partners but they were confidential at this stage. Ideally the space would be occupied by public services partners in order to grow the public service hub for Tewkesbury Borough. In terms of timescales, there were some set milestones but these were dependent on the other organisations and their consultation processes. Other factors also needed to be taken into consideration, for instance, if the expansion of One Legal went ahead the additional staff would need to be accommodated within the building. It was anticipated that a clearer steer would be gained over the next couple of months and Members would be kept informed as things progressed.</p>
<p><b>Promote economic development:</b> – A Member sought clarification regarding the update on environment and resources efficiency.</p>	<p>The Economic and Community Development Manager explained that the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) had been awarded European funding and there were now opportunities for organisations to bid for projects of an environmental nature.</p>
<p><b>Improve recycling and care for the environment:</b> A Member raised concern that reports of enviro-crimes, particularly fly-tipping, seemed to be increasing and she questioned whether there was a need for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Review Working Group to be resurrected.</p>	<p>The Environmental and Housing Services Group Manager advised that fly-tipping had been raised as an issue at the Joint Waste Committee and she explained that it was a national problem. Work had been carried out over the previous summer with one particular Officer and they had now been brought back to do a pilot scheme on work around fly-tipping. It was hoped that this would generate information to help to make a decision as to whether additional resources were required to tackle the problem.</p>

**Key Performance Indicators:**

**KPI 12 to 14:** A Member noted that the planning systems review was now complete but he had not seen any changes to the service provided, particularly in respect of communications and customer care, and he questioned when Members would be presented with the review report.

The Deputy Chief Executive clarified that the systems review had been led by the Planning team itself with external support from ICE Creates which had helped to capture the data and identify where improvements could be made. Whilst that part of the project was complete, changes to the way work was carried out within the department would be ongoing, as they had been within Revenues and Benefits which had just recorded its best ever performance in terms of housing benefit applications a year after the systems review had finished. It was important to recognise that the number of planning applications being received was at a record high which inevitably had an impact upon the performance figures, however, Officers had been making improvements and would continue to do so. One of the interesting things which had been identified in both Planning and Environmental Health was the amount of time Officers spent 'feeding' a computer system. This was not unusual in old, inefficient systems and part of the second phase would be to reduce reliance upon the computer system to allow Officers to spend more time dealing directly with customers. The review report itself would be presented to the Transform Working Group at its meeting the following day but it could also be brought to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee if Members so wished.

The Communications and Policy Manager indicated that the introduction of the Customer Care Strategy, which included Customer Care Standards for communicating with customers, would help to address the concerns around answering telephone calls etc. This would be discussed in more detail under the next Agenda Item.