

# TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Tuesday, 2 May 2017 commencing at 4:30 pm**

## **Present:**

Vice Chair, in the chair

Councillor Mrs G F Blackwell

## **and Councillors:**

G J Bocking, K J Cromwell, Mrs J E Day, R D East, D T Foyle, 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

## **also present:**

Councillors Mrs J Greening and Mrs E J MacTiernan

## **OS.95 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

95.2 The Vice-Chair in the chair welcomed Trevor Askew, Managing Director of Ubico, and Nick Firkins, Ubico Operations Manager for the Tewkesbury Borough area, and Rachel Capon and Julie Davies from the Joint Waste Team to the meeting and indicated that they were in attendance for Item 11 – Annual Review of Ubico, which would be now taken after Agenda Item 6. Councillors Mrs E J MacTiernan and Mrs J M Greening were also present as observers.

## **OS.96 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

96.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P W Awford (Chair) and Mrs R M Hatton. There were no substitutions for the meeting.

## **OS.97 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

97.1 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.

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

## **OS.98 MINUTES**

98.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2017, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **OS.99 CONSIDERATION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN**

- 99.1 Attention was drawn to the Executive Committee Forward Plan, circulated at Pages No. 16-21. 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.
- 99.2 A Member drew attention to the 'Driving Licence, Insurance and MOT Checks Policy', due to be considered at the Executive Committee meeting on 7 June 2017 and sought clarification as to what this would cover. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the Council had a responsibility to make sure that all essential and casual car users were adequately insured and taxed. This policy would put in place the necessary checks and balances to ensure that all staff complied with road traffic legislation. With regard to the Joint Core Strategy Strategic Allocation Sites: Allocation of Affordable Housing item, also due to be taken to the meeting on 7 June 2017, a Member questioned what changes were being considered for affordable housing. In response, the Head of Community Services explained that this related to the way strategic housing was allocated for affordable housing on the boundaries of Tewkesbury Borough. The proposal from Gloucester City and Cheltenham Borough Councils was considered to be unfair from a Tewkesbury Borough perspective and a further report would be taken to the Executive Committee on an evidence-based way of looking at that housing in order to protect the interests of Tewkesbury Borough Council.
- 99.3 It was  
**RESOLVED** That the Executive Committee Forward Plan be **NOTED**.

#### **OS.100 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18**

- 100.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Head of Corporate Services, circulated at Pages No. 22-33, which attached, at Appendix 1, the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2017/18. Members were asked to approve the Work Programme.
- 100.2 The Head of Corporate Services advised that there were a number of pending items which would be brought into the work programme during the year. The list of corporate strategies and policies for potential review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be considered at the next meeting and would further help to inform the 2017/18 programme.
- 100.3 A Member noted that the Tewkesbury Borough News Review Report was due to be taken to the meeting on 18 July 2017 and he questioned how the latest edition of the publication had ended up being delivered with an election leaflet inside. The Communications and Policy Manager explained that the candidate who had produced the leaflet had contacted Royal Mail separately to the Council and it had never been intended for the leaflet to be delivered with the Tewkesbury Borough News; whilst it was something they were discouraged from doing, individual postmen did occasionally place leaflets inside to make their rounds easier and this had resulted in a few copies of the Borough News being delivered with the leaflet. The Borough Solicitor had investigated, and Royal Mail was taking it up with to the postman. A Member felt that it was important to ensure this did not happen in future and the only way in which that could be guaranteed was to stop distributing the Tewkesbury Borough News during election periods; he asked that the Working Group take this on board in the review. The Head of Corporate Services agreed that it was an unfortunate incident which could not have been foreseen, however, he provided assurance that any steps that could be taken to prevent this happening in future would certainly be taken.
- 100.4 Having considered the information provided, it was  
**RESOLVED** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

2017/18 be **APPROVED**.

**OS.101 ANNUAL REVIEW OF UBICO**

- 101.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Head of Community Services, circulated at Pages No. 96-104, which provided an update on the Ubico contract for the waste and recycling service, street cleansing and grounds maintenance services following transfer of the services to Ubico in April 2015. Members were asked to consider the 12 month update on the services provided by Ubico and to agree that the annual report for 2017/18 be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2018 in order to align with the financial year.
- 101.2 The Head of Community Services explained that this was a high-level report looking at overall performance and, whilst there had been some operational issues, he provided assurance that they were being addressed. It was intended to hold a seminar in June to afford Members an opportunity to discuss the problems with Ubico in more depth and the date would be confirmed later in the month. Rachel Capon, the Contracts Manager (Collection and Street Scene West) from the Joint Waste Team, reminded Members that contract monitoring was split between two different parties: the Joint Waste Team, for monitoring waste and recycling and street cleansing, and Tewkesbury Borough Council for grounds maintenance. The Joint Waste Team held six weekly contract monitoring meetings with Ubico on behalf of the Council to monitor against contract specification, targets and legal compliance; resolve complaints and service delivery issues; develop communications with residents if opportunities arose from information on the ground; and to review health and safety compliance and implement best practice across the contract. The Joint Waste Team was also responsible for carrying out health and safety checks on the waste, recycling and street cleansing crews with any issues identified being reported back to the Ubico supervisors. Health and safety information was then reported quarterly to the Council's 'Keep Safe, Stay Healthy' Group to ensure a closed-loop process was in place. In addition, fortnightly meetings were held between the Council's Customer Services Team and Ubico to resolve day to day issues and make continual improvements to the Achieve system (Report It online) which was used to log service requests; this helped to improve customer service and communication with residents. There was also an Environmental Services Partnership Board - which met on a quarterly basis and included representatives from the Council, Joint Waste Team and Ubico - to look at performance and development on a strategic level.
- 101.3 In terms of performance, Members were informed that there were only six performance indicators within the Ubico contract - which were standard across all Ubico contracts - the details of which were attached at Appendix 1 to the report. In November 2016, the Council's Internal Audit team had recommended that the performance indicators be reviewed to ensure they were fit for purpose and measurable for service delivery and a Working Group had been set up to develop a standard set of performance indicators across all contracts with the intention of putting them in place by July 2017. The Joint Waste Committee had delegated responsibility for diverting waste from landfill and it worked in partnership with Ubico to deliver campaigns to reduce waste and improve recycling performance. She confirmed that the figures for 2016/17 had now been received and showed 411kg of residual household waste per month which was a reduction from 2015/16 and in line with the projected outturn for the year. The food waste sticker campaign, which had been implemented over the full year, had had a positive impact on these figures. In terms of the percentage of household waste reused, recycling and composted, the projected outturn for 2016/17 was 53% which was an increase of almost 3% compared to 2015/16 and was positive given the backdrop of declining recycling rates nationally. The contract set a target of 99% household collections completed on schedule and it was noted that the Overview and Scrutiny

Committee had previously discussed the possibility of increasing this target given that it was being achieved month on month; this was being considered as part of the review of performance indicators. It was recognised that there had been some issues as a result of changes to the collection rounds, new drivers and new crews and, whilst some of those issues did come down to Ubico, others were a result of residents not reacting to the information which they had been sent. The majority of repeat missed bin collections were due to a smaller vehicle not having enough capacity and this had been resolved by moving properties which did not need to be serviced by that vehicle back to a larger vehicle. In terms of general service delivery issues, there had been improvements in bin delivery and bulky waste collections over the last year, largely due to the increased number of properties and promotion of the scheme. Waiting times had also been reduced as a result of system redesign which created more delivery slots whilst maintaining existing resource levels. Members were advised that new health and safety guidance had been published in respect of highway cleansing which had implications for Ubico when carrying out litter picking on high speed roads and on roads where there was less than 1.2m of clearance from the roadside; this had meant that some roads could not be litter-picked without road closures in place. Ubico had identified the affected roads and was developing a proposal for a safe system of work to present to all shareholders. She reiterated that the Joint Waste Team was not responsible for grounds maintenance and different local authorities had different arrangements in place for managing and monitoring that particular aspect. The Head of Community Services had identified a shortfall in that area and was developing an action plan to ensure that it was monitored more effectively.

- 101.4 The Environment and Waste Policy Officer, Julie Davies, drew attention to Page No. 100, Paragraph 4.5 of the report, which related to formal complaints. The table set out the complaint type and the number of complaints received. During 2016/17 there had been six complaints regarding the attitude of a member of staff, for example, if litter was left around a bin when it was emptied; 14 complaints regarding the standard of a service e.g. repeat missed bin collections; 15 complaints about failure to provide a service, for instance, there had been issues with stock control and bulky waste collection and bin delivery waiting times; and three complaints in respect of damage e.g. spillages, or if a vehicle clipped another car. In terms of health and safety performance, waste and recycling and grounds maintenance services were significant risks and, in the last 12 months, Ubico had demonstrated a commitment to work to high standards through: developing a Health and Safety Strategy and Policy; Contractors Health and Safety Assessment Scheme (CHAS) and EXOR accreditation; all managers and supervisors attending a four day Institute of Safety and Health (IOSH) training course; and a trial of on-board vehicle cameras which monitored the perimeter of the vehicle to allow hazard spotting – it was noted that this technology had been specified for the new Tewkesbury Borough vehicle fleet. All health and safety statistics were reported to the six weekly meetings and quarterly board meetings where any accidents or near misses were discussed.
- 101.5 In relation to financial performance, the Contracts Manager explained that Ubico had delivered the targeted efficiency savings in 2015/16 and there had been an underspend of £71,000, largely due to the drop in fuel prices. In the original business plan, the second year efficiency savings were to be delivered by standardising the terms and conditions of all staff; however, due to the complexities of this process, this had been delayed until 1 April 2017 and was not expected to deliver the original savings that had been identified. As such, Ubico had tried to deliver the savings through other means and the quarter three forecast showed a £28,000 overspend. The Environment and Waste Policy Officer advised that a waste services review had been carried out in November 2015 and a report had been taken to the Executive Committee in February 2016 in relation to the procurement of a new vehicle fleet; Ubico had been involved throughout the whole

process and the fleet had now been purchased. On 14 April 2017, Ubico had taken on a transfer facility arrangement for the new Material Recovery Facility (MRF) contract and she had received an update earlier that day that there had been a seamless transition and it was working well. More projects had been started in 2016/17 which would continue throughout the year.

- 101.6 A Member indicated that she had concerns regarding crews not wearing gloves and the Interim Managing Director of Ubico assured Members that health and safety was a priority for Ubico. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including gloves, was issued to staff and the Environment and Waste Policy Officer confirmed that crews were wearing the PPE when inspections were carried out. The Ubico Operations Manager recognised that this had been a particular problem in the past but there had been a lot more handling of waste at that time; since the recycling had changed from boxes to bins this was not such an issue. Notwithstanding this, he reiterated that surprise inspections were carried out throughout the month and PPE was very high on the agenda for checking. In response to a query regarding assisted bin collections and the potential for misuse, Members were informed that the Joint Waste Team was working with Ubico to develop a new assisted collection list which would be reviewed periodically. Family or neighbours tended to report when someone using the service passed away but sometimes new residents did not realise they should be putting their bins on the street rather than the crews coming down driveways to collect them. A Member queried whether drivers received adequate training before going out with a team and he referred to an incident where a driver who was unfamiliar with his route had reversed into a wall. The Interim Managing Director of Ubico explained that Ubico had struggled to recruit drivers for large vehicles and this was a problem experienced nationally; however, following work with colleagues in Human Resources, a recent recruitment exercise had been successful and in-depth training had been provided for all new drivers, particularly in terms of the new rounds and the new vehicles - the vehicle manufacturer had worked with Ubico for a period to ensure that drivers were familiar with the vehicles. The Ubico Operations Manager pointed out that in-house drivers tended to have a lot of experience and training; however, this was not always the case with agency drivers and nothing was taken at face value in those instances. In line with the introduction of the new contract on 1 April, agency staff had been brought in for an induction which had covered health and safety, site rules etc. Supervisors were licensed Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) drivers and were also assessed.
- 101.7 With regard to Appendix 1, a Member pointed out that the target for the number of service complaints received against weekly collection was 1% which, for 86,000 collections per week, equated to 44,720 complaints over the year and he felt this needed to be reviewed and made into a realistic target. He also expressed concern regarding the lack of detail in terms of financial performance and requested that a breakdown be provided so that Members could establish what the issues actually were. The Contracts Manager indicated that this information was included as part of the financial report which was taken to the Executive Committee and it could be included in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee update in future. Another Member raised concern over the level of detail within Appendices 1 and 2 and she drew particular attention to the annual targets for performance indicators 1-3 which stated 'target to be set following baseline'. Another Member questioned why the notes against certain sections of Appendix 2 stated 'Tewkesbury data not available in this format'. Members were advised that Appendix 1 was taken directly from the contract originally formulated with Ubico and it was accepted that there was a lot of work to be done to improve that. Appendix 2 was the template taken from Ubico as the standard performance management report and other local authorities had different reporting mechanisms, for instance, Cheltenham Borough Council categorised things differently from Tewkesbury Borough Council. There were concerns that sufficient data was not being captured

and a project was underway to make it more realistic and achievable. The new template would contain all of the data for Tewkesbury Borough. The Member questioned when the revised performance indicators would be brought back to the Committee and was informed that, once they had been implemented, it would be necessary to have a period of data-gathering in order for the information to be meaningful, as such, the report recommended that the annual update for 2017/18 be brought to the Committee in July 2018 when a full year of data would be available. Several Members expressed the view that this was too long and it was suggested that six months was enough time to establish and react to trends. The Contracts Manager indicated that the Joint Waste Team had an idea of which performance indicators worked better than those in the contract and reiterated that there was a meeting the following day to determine how data could be collected. Performance meetings were held on a quarterly basis and the next one was later in the month so, although the performance indicators were likely to be in place by the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in June, there would only be one month of data to report on and it would be more beneficial to bring an annual performance report to Members. In terms of the baseline targets relating to residual household waste per household, recycling and collections, included at Appendix 1, this would be addressed in the report received by the Joint Waste Committee report in October; however, it was not down to Ubico to drive that forward. This only left the indicator in relation to improved street and environmental cleanliness, a national indicator which had now been scrapped - monitoring of this indicator had taken a disproportionate amount of Officer time so it was not intended to bring this back; notwithstanding this, assurance was provided that work was being carried out on street cleansing over the next six months. In response to a query regarding the legislation around street cleansing, the Ubico Operations Manager explained that the regulations were very new and the proposal being developed by Ubico would provide a number of alternative delivery models to address this. In terms of the cost implications, the various options would be put forward for the Joint Waste Team to consider.

- 101.8 With regard to grounds maintenance, a Member drew attention to Paragraph 4.4.4 of the report which stated that this was not managed or monitored by the Joint Waste Team and was delivered by Ubico. Whilst she noted that an action plan was being developed, she pointed out that this was not acceptable to members of the public who wanted an efficient response to complaints such as long grass that needed cutting. The Head of Community Services provided assurance that this was a priority for him; the Officer responsible for monitoring this element of the contract was not currently at work and he intended to carry out a service review of the area to develop a plan for more effective monitoring. He accepted that the Council was currently being reactive rather than proactive and that was something which must be addressed.
- 101.9 A Member raised concern that there was a lot of flexibility in the report in terms of target dates. She indicated that she would like to see expected deadlines for meetings, decisions and agreements so that they could be scrutinised by Members and it was established that this would be addressed within the next month. Another Member continued to express the view that it was unacceptable to wait until the July 2018 meeting for the next Ubico report. In response, the Head of Community Services agreed that he would be happy to produce an interim report to bring back to the Committee as a "one-off" due to the issues that were currently being faced. It was subsequently

**RESOLVED**

1. That the 12 month update on the services provided by Ubico be **NOTED**.

2. That an interim report be brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 5 September 2017 on a one-off basis, with the annual report being taken to the meeting in July 2018 in order to align with the financial year.

## **OS.102 ANNUAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT 2016/17**

- 102.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Head of Corporate Services, circulated at Pages No. 34-57. Members were asked to approve the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17 attached at Appendix 1 to the report.
- 102.2 The Head of Corporate Services advised that it was a requirement of the Council's Constitution to report the activities of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis and the 2016/17 annual report was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. Throughout the year, the Committee had considered progress reports on the delivery of key strategies and policies, quarterly performance management reports and various presentations from officers and external organisations. In addition Working Groups had been established to review the Scheme of Public Participation at Planning Committee and the Housing Strategy. General areas of review had included complaints, Ubico and enviro-crimes. Following approval, the annual report would be presented to Council by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 May 2017 and published on the Council's website.
- 102.3 A Member noted that the annual report did not make reference to the work of the Flood Risk Management Group. The Head of Corporate Services apologised for this omission and undertook to include an additional section to cover this work. Accordingly, it was

**RESOLVED** That the Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report 2016/17 be **APPROVED**, subject to an amendment to make reference to the work of the Flood Risk Management Group.

## **OS.103 CUSTOMER CARE STRATEGY**

- 103.1 The report of the Communications and Policy Manager, circulated at Pages No. 58-64, asked Members to consider the progress made in relation to the actions contained within the Customer Care Strategy Action Plan 2016/17 and to endorse the action plan for 2017/18.
- 103.2 Members were reminded that the Customer Care Strategy and Action Plan had been developed by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee workshop in January 2016 and had been formally approved by the Executive Committee. Appendix 1 to the report set out the specific action, a brief description of the work that had been carried out and its current status. The majority of actions had been completed; any that were not had been included in the action plan for 2017/18. It was noted that the action to carry out a residents' satisfaction survey and use feedback to improve future service delivery had been removed from the action plan and replaced with a new action, requested by the Lead Member for Customer Focus, that the website and the Council's Citizens' Advice Panel be used for feedback. The full list of actions for 2017/18 was set out at Appendix 2 to the report.
- 103.3 A Member drew attention to Page No. 64 of the report which referred to the importance of customer service within the planning service and he queried whether the Planning team was now fully staffed. The Head of Development Services

explained that there was currently a vacant technical administrator post as well as 2.6 full-time equivalent posts at senior planning officer grade; one of those posts had only become vacant on Friday as a result of someone leaving the authority.

103.4 Having considered the information provided, it was

**RESOLVED** That the progress made in relation to the actions contained within the Customer Care Strategy Action Plan 2016/17 be **NOTED** and the action plan for 2017/18 be **ENDORSED**.

#### **OS.104 REVIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2014-16**

104.1 The report of the Corporate Services Group Manager, circulated at Pages No. 65-77, set out an overview of the actions for the final year of the Communications Strategy. Members were asked to consider the progress made in delivering the Communications Strategy Action Plan 2014-16.

104.2 The Communications and Policy Manager explained that the Communications Strategy had been approved by the Executive Committee in 2014 and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received an annual report to consider the progress made against the actions. This report provided an update for the final year of the strategy and it was noted that, out of the 11 actions, two had not been completed and would be carried forward, as set out at Page No. 67, Paragraph 2.2. of the report. The overarching action plan was attached at Appendix 2 to the report. A new Communications Strategy and accompanying action plan for 2017-20 was being developed and would be presented to the Executive Committee at its meeting in June. It was anticipated that the new strategy would closely reflect the current one, with an emphasis on supporting the Council's Digital Strategy whilst ensuring more traditional communication methods remained available.

104.3 It was

**RESOLVED** That the progress made in delivering the Communications Strategy Action Plan 2014-16 be **NOTED**.

#### **OS.105 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM STRATEGY REVIEW REPORT**

105.1 The report of the Head of Development Services, circulated at Pages No. 78-95, outlined the progress of the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy Working Group. Members were asked to endorse the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and recommend it to the Executive Committee for adoption.

105.2 The Head of Development Services explained that an update had been provided at the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress of the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and she was now delighted to be able to present the final strategy for endorsement. The Economic and Community Development Manager advised that the previous Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 'Regenerating and Growing the Economy' had reached the end of its lifespan and the Council needed a new strategy to reflect the changing nature of the local economy and the impact on businesses. In June 2015, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had established a Working Group to develop the new strategy. The Working Group had been chaired by the Lead Member for Economic Development/Promotion, Councillor R A Bird, and a number of meetings had been held to consider various issues and opportunities including the national focus on growth; the economic potential of Tewkesbury Borough through the M5 Growth Zone, Network Business Growth Hub etc.; analysis of tourism and economy data; and presentations from key partners, including the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The Working Group had also met at Gloucestershire Airport where it had received a presentation and tour from the Managing Director. A key element for the Working Group was the commissioning and development of an employment



land review, economic assessment and business survey; this work had been carried out by Bruton Knowles and funded through the Large Sites Infrastructure Fund. The study had been fundamental in the development of the strategy and the formulation of key recommendations for the Borough Council to take forward.

- 105.3 The Economic and Community Development Manager went on to give a short presentation which covered the following key points
- Tewkesbury Borough Economy – 43,000 jobs; unemployment 1% (approximately 500 people); value of goods and services produced £2.23 billion per year; 3,915 enterprises (including 3,445 micro-businesses); strong business survival rate; £125M annual tourism related spend in the borough; 1.8M day visits.
  - Context – location; transport links; demand for employment land; diverse economy; established centre for high quality manufacturing/world class high-tech aero-engineering; opportunity for growth; Cotswolds sixth most popular tourist destination; major tourist attractions e.g. Tewkesbury Abbey, Sudeley Castle, Gloucestershire-Warwickshire Railway, FlyUp417, Jet Age Museum.
  - What the strategy will do – provide practical support for businesses in the borough; promote the area to attract investment and visitors; deliver effective strategic planning to facilitate economic prosperity; take the lead in influencing partner public sector organisations, and act as a key co-ordinator, to facilitate economic growth; be proactive in seeking external funding for the area.
  - Strategy – Four year strategy 2017-21; five priorities, each with a number of objectives: 1. Employment land planning, 2. Transport infrastructure improvement, 3. Business growth support, 4. Promoting Tewkesbury Borough, 5. Employability, education and training; annual delivery plan.
  - Selection of Key Objectives – 1b) Delivering sufficient employment land to meet the needs of the strategic plan; 2b) Air – Support Gloucestershire Airport business expansion and highway access improvements; 3c) Stimulate business start-ups and enterprise growth rates, incorporating the development of a growth hub; 4b) Promote Tewkesbury Borough to visitors, work with Cotswold Tourism and other partners, including neighbouring tourist destinations; 5a) Promote initiatives to improve education and training relevant to local employment.
- 105.4 Members were shown a promotional video regarding inward investment in Tewkesbury - it was noted that the video had been funded through external flood support money and, as such, was focused on Tewkesbury; however, it was intended to produce something similar which was borough-wide.
- 105.5 A Member expressed the view that this was a great piece of work but she raised concern about the amount of work involved and questioned how the strategy would be implemented. The Community and Economic Development Manager confirmed that resources had been considered by the Working Group; it was recognised that the Economic Development and Tourism team was very small and the strategy should be seen as a corporate priority given the fundamental importance of economic development for the Council. He stressed that it would not be possible to achieve everything that was included in the year one action plan as there were some extremely big projects which could not be delivered overnight, such as making Junction 10 of the M5 four-way. A Member questioned what was meant by 'supporting Gloucestershire Airport business expansion' and whether this involved investment from the local authority. In response, the Head of Development Services explained that this was more about the strategic promotion of the airport from an economic development point of view. A Member expressed the view that the airport was a very important part of the borough and the Jet Age Museum was a significant tourist attraction. Another Member drew attention to Page No. 93 of

the strategy and queried what the acronym LEADER stood for. The Economic and Community Development Manager advised that it was a French term which related to grass roots improvement and he undertook to circulate the full wording to Members following the meeting.

105.6 Having considered the information provided, it was

**RESOLVED** That the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy be **ENDORSED** and that it be **RECOMMENDED TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** that the strategy be **ADOPTED**.

## **OS.106 REVIEW OF ENVIRO-CRIMES**

106.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Head of Community Services, circulated at Pages No. 105-111, and the revised Appendix 1 - Enviro-Crime Action Plan, circulated separately, which updated Members on the Council's current activity and planned future actions for dealing with enviro-crime. Members were asked to consider the current position in respect of enviro-crime, particularly fly-tipping, and the actions being taken by the Environmental Health section to tackle the issue; and to consider the proposed action plan and approach to tackling enviro-crime within the borough and beyond.

106.2 The Head of Community Services explained that, in February 2017, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered a report regarding the Council's approach to tackling enviro-crime within the borough and Members had asked for a further update to be presented as an action plan for the Committee. Enviro-crime affected the borough substantially and, whilst the situation was not as bad as in some other places, it was a significant problem. Work to date had been reactive and a pro-active plan had now been put together to ensure that Officers had the full toolkit of enforcement provisions to address enviro-crimes e.g. issuing fixed penalty notices, deploying CCTV cameras, working in partnership with the Police. He wished to draw particular attention to section six of the action plan which related to communications and involving local residents which was important as they were the ones most affected. The volunteer litter picker scheme was a great example of working with communities and he would like to see it extended to help with tackling enviro-crime.

106.3 A Member noted that positive steps had been made recently with a number of prosecutions relating to fly-tipping and he stressed the importance of publicising these prosecutions. The Head of Community Services provided assurance that this would form part of the Communication Strategy. A Member expressed the view that, once fly-tips had been reported, they should be cleared as soon as possible as they could be very dangerous. The Head of Community Services indicated that he was in complete agreement and he intended to introduce a performance indicator to ensure that, once they had been checked for evidence, fly-tips were removed as quickly as possible. A Member queried how many CCTV cameras were available within the borough and was informed that the Council had access to three covert cameras. In response to a query as to how they were monitored, Members were advised that the footage recorded on the cameras was downloaded and reviewed by Officers. It was possible to bid to the Police and Crime Commissioner for additional cameras but it was resource intensive to deploy the cameras and get the footage back; there was smarter kit available which worked using 4G technology but obviously there was a cost associated with this.

106.4 A Member indicated that there was a particular problem with abandoned vehicles in his area and he made reference to one vehicle which had been left for a number of days and had subsequently been set on fire. He was of the view that they needed

to be disposed of more quickly and should be a bigger priority to prevent vandalism of this nature. The Head of Community Services recognised that abandoned vehicles were a problem, however, Officers were restricted to some extent by legislation. He undertook to take this away as an action to see if anything further could be done.

106.5 A Member sought clarification as to what a Public Space Protection Order was for and was informed that it was a mechanism by which Fixed Penalty Notices could be issued for dog-fouling etc. Information was currently being gathered on dog-fouling hotspots and, once this had been mapped and subject to public consultation, these areas could be declared. It was not the simplest process but the Head of Community Services felt that it was necessary to ensure Officers were able to carry out their roles effectively.

106.6 A Member sought an update on the latest position with the Environmental Warden and was advised that this had been put to the Executive Committee at the end of 2016. Since taking up his post, the Head of Community Services had been keen to consult Parish Councils to see if this was something they were still interested in. The next stage would be to put in place the required governance arrangements and ensure that the person recruited to the role was able to use the powers which were available. A Member questioned what would happen if Parish Councils did not want to contribute and was advised that they would not benefit from the Environmental Warden. The Head of Community Services confirmed that, whilst the Council had no legal duty to provide this service to all parishes, this would not be the only way of tackling enviro-crime - the Environmental Health team would still have a responsibility and enforcement action would continue to be taken if the necessary evidence could be provided. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that, as part of the review, it was intended to equip more Council Officers with the skills and tools to be able to deal with enviro-crimes, for example, Enforcement Officers who were already out in the field could potentially act as a deterrent if they could be identified and they may be able to provide valuable evidence to enable action to be taken against people committing these crimes. A Member queried when the Environmental Warden role was expected to commence and was advised that it was anticipated that they would be in post by August, although it may be possible to recruit sooner if the person had the relevant experience and qualifications.

106.7 It was

**RESOLVED**

1. That the current position in respect of enviro-crimes, particularly fly-tipping, and the actions being taken by the Environmental Health section to tackle the issue, be **NOTED**.
2. That the proposed action plan and approach to tackling enviro-crimes within the borough and beyond be **NOTED** and a further update be provided to the Committee in six months time.

**OS.107 DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS REVIEW MONITORING REPORT**

107.1 The report of the Head of Community Services, circulated at Pages No. 112-119, provided an update on progress against actions arising from the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) Review. Members were asked to consider the report.

107.2 Members were advised that Disabled Facilities Grants helped toward the cost of essential adaptations to homes to enable applicants to live more independently. Delivery of DFGs was a mandatory service administered by the Council's Environmental Health section. The Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group was responsible for the funding of DFGs through the Better Care Fund - a programme spanning the NHS and local government which sought to join up health and care services. The Council had delivered 71 DFGs in the last year which meant that 71 people had been helped to remain in their homes. The maximum value of a DFG was £30,000 per applicant and examples included providing ramps to allow a person to get in and out of their house; stairlifts; level access showers and installation of wetrooms. A review of DFGs had been undertaken by an Overview and Scrutiny Working Group in 2015/16 to ensure the scheme was fit for purpose and effective. The table at Appendix 1 to the report showed the updated progress against actions contained within the original review report. Members were advised that all outstanding actions were intrinsically connected to the funding and delivery of DFGs which was under review both by central government and the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group. The contract to deliver the Gloucestershire "Safe At Home" Home Improvement Agency service - which assisted elderly people with improving, repairing and adapting their homes - would come to an end in July 2017 when the services within it would be decommissioned. This meant that approximately 20% of DFG applicants would have to find their own way through the process; the Council could provide support but this was very time consuming. A countywide project was underway to explore a co-ordinated delivery model for DFGs and an update was expected in August 2017.

107.3 In response to a Member query, the Head of Community Services explained that there had been changes to funding which meant that the Council had been allocated significantly more money for 2017/18; just over £1M compared to £497,000 in 2016. He was currently in the process of establishing why this had been increased so much and he undertook to update Members once these figures had been bottomed out. It was

**RESOLVED** That the progress made against the recommendations arising from the Disabled Facilities Grants Review be **NOTED**.

The meeting closed at 6:30 pm