

A close-up photograph of a magnifying glass with a green handle resting on a document. The document features a blue bar chart and a table with numerical data. A black pen is also visible on the document. The text 'Overview and Scrutiny committee annual report 2017-18' is overlaid on the image in a white box.

Overview and Scrutiny committee annual report 2017-18

April 2018

Message from the chair of Overview and Scrutiny committee, Councillor Phil Awford



I am pleased to present the annual report of Tewkesbury Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2017-18. I have chaired the committee since May 2015, supported by Councillor Ron Allen as vice chair, and by a very able and committed group of councillors.

This has been another good year for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a variety of topics examined. The committee has once again been at the heart of the council's decision making process acting as a critical friend to the Executive Committee helping shape and inform council decisions, providing support to key areas and facilitating the delivery of new strategies- such as the Economic development and tourism strategy.

The committee review of the water supply outage is reaching a conclusion. This is a high profile piece of work, undertaken by all members of the committee. The incident in December 2017 had a significant impact upon residents and businesses, with around 10,000 people in the Tewkesbury area affected. The culmination of the work, is a public hearing on 24 April where the committee will ask questions of all agencies involved in the incident, particularly Severn Trent Water authority. The outcome will be for the committee to receive a future report and action plan that highlights the lessons to be learnt

from the incident, to help lessen the impact should a water supply issue occur again.

We continue to monitor the process of important activities such as formal complaints, Ubico performance, flood risk management, enviro-crimes and more.

The committee also continues to receive on a quarterly basis a wealth of performance information on the delivery of the Council Plan (2016-2020).

To build up our knowledge and understanding of how our partners help deliver our priorities the committee also received presentations from key bodies such as Gloucestershire County Council's Public Health and Citizen's Advice Bureau.

Looking ahead, there is a great opportunity for Overview and Scrutiny to support the council through its future challenges and I am positive the committee will add even greater value through the work it carries out to help our communities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the committee members for their contributions and continued support.

Best wishes,

Councillor Phil Awford

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The role of overview and scrutiny

The role of Overview and Scrutiny is an important one in the council's governance structure, in providing challenge and driving improvement. It is often referred to as the "critical friend" of the council and can hold a magnifying glass over any area of the council's activities.

Tewkesbury Borough Council has a single overarching Overview and Scrutiny Committee that examines all areas of the council's business.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a number of roles within the council. These include:

- Holding the Executive Committee to account by thoroughly scrutinising their decisions to ensure that the council continues to provide the best services possible for our residents.
- As part of this role, the committee has the power to 'call-in' decisions made by the Executive Committee and request that they consider them again, taking into account the issues raised by the committee. Alternatively, the committee can ask Full Council to review or scrutinise the decision or ask Full Council to decide whether or not to recommend the decision be

reconsidered. There have been no call-ins made this year.

- Acting as a 'critical friend' to the Executive Committee by reviewing council policies and strategy, making recommendations where appropriate.
- Overview of work areas or topics of interest to the committee and members of the council - including feedback from the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel and the Gloucestershire County Council Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Performance and financial monitoring, to ensure services are being delivered effectively.
- Commissioning reviews of services that impact on the council or on the lives of Tewkesbury Borough residents.
- Complaints - on an annual basis a report is received summarising customer complaints and the Local Government Ombudsman. This helps to identify trends and potential opportunities to learn from the complaints made.
- Setting up task and finish groups to focus on specific reviews and recommend ways to improve existing practices within the council. A flow chart on how to consider potential scrutiny reviews can be found at Appendix A (page 10).

Overview and scrutiny activity during 2017-18

Scrutiny reviews of policy and strategy

Review of Economic Development and Tourism Strategy

2 May 2017

Following a review by an Overview and scrutiny working group, a new Economic development and tourism strategy was adopted by Executive committee on 7 June 2017. A report highlighted the intensive work carried out by the working group. An employment land review, economic and business survey carried out by Bruton Knowles was commissioned by the group and proved fundamental in the development of the strategy. With economic development being one of the council's main priorities in the Council Plan, the new strategy provides the primary focus and direction for the work and activities of Tewkesbury Borough Council, to achieve these objectives.

Tewkesbury Borough Council Waste and recycling collection services policy and procedures.

17 October 2017

Head of Community Services presented the new waste and recycling collection services [policy](#) to the committee. The policy set out the standards that could be expected from the

Council as a waste and recycling collection service including the frequency of collections, how to present waste and recycling for collection. Members recommended the policy to be adopted by the Executive committee and it subsequently was on 22 November 2017.

Presentations made to overview and scrutiny

Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) and financial inclusion

13 June 2017

The bureau manager gave an annual presentation to the committee giving a brief overview with case studies of the work CAB carried out to help support the borough's residents. The council granted the bureau £53k.

Head of Revenues and Benefits provided an update on the financial inclusion. Key points of the presentation included background information, demographic composition, the Financial Inclusion Group, Key tasks during 2016/17, job fair and developing tasks 2017/18 which included Universal Credit. Members raised concerns over the welfare of vulnerable people and the need to ensure this vulnerability is adequately managed and supported.

More details can be found [here](#)

Public Health for Gloucestershire County Council

18 July 2017

Director of Public Health for Gloucestershire County Council presented a two year report covering periods 2014/15 and 2015/16. The report contained a snapshot of health and wellbeing in the county. The report identified Gloucestershire as being predominantly healthy and wealthy with a good quality of life and above average life expectancy. Case studies were provided to show how the public health grants received had supported people in Gloucestershire.

More details can be found [here](#).

Development Services review

18 July 2017

Following on from the planning review in 2016 the Head of Development Services gave an update on the current planning service review. The presentation highlighted three main strands; Planning Advice Service (PAS) data capture, procedure review and customer service improvement. This has now culminated in a formal review and action plan approved by Council on 17 April 2018.

More details can be found [here](#).

Gloucestershire Families First update

9 January 2018

The committee has received a number of reports on the progress of the scheme since it commenced in 2012. An update on the work undertaken was given and it was reiterated how successful the programme had been within the borough. One of the reasons being the number of agencies working together within the Public Services Centre. The committee agreed to remove the updates from the Overview and scrutiny work programme, as work being carried out by the scheme is now 'business as usual'.

More details can be found [here](#).

Aston project and Gloucestershire Great Expectations

9 January 2018

The committee received an informative presentation from the Aston Project Co-ordinator.

The project identifies vulnerable children at risk of causing anti-social behavior. The presentation raised key points on the Aston project and the next stage; Great Expectations. These included background information, caseloads, volunteers, referral process, Great Expectation programme and childhood experiences having an effect on people growing up.

More details can be found [here](#).

Overview and scrutiny working groups

Tewkesbury Borough News working group

A working group reviewed [Tewkesbury Borough News](#) following the feedback from a member communications workshop. The high profile communication tool for the Council, generated lots of discussion around costs, quality, regularity of production and format. The working group looked at three options; to retain Tewkesbury Borough News in its current format, change to a magazine format and reduce circulation, or, to stop producing Tewkesbury Borough News. It was agreed to be in a magazine format and produced twice a year instead of three. This made an annual saving of £4,066. A report will be brought in February 2019 to provide feedback on the new format.

Outcome of the review can be found [here](#).

Review of Water supply outage

In December 2017 10,000 homes were left without water and numerous businesses effected in the run-up to Christmas, along with two other outages earlier in the year affecting parts of the borough. The scale of the incident was large and national coverage hit the media. Due to the significance of the incident and the impact on our community, the community overview and scrutiny set up a working group to [review the water supply outage](#). The culmination of this work, is a public hearing on 24 April when the committee will ask questions of all agencies involved in the incident, particularly Severn Trent Water Authority. The outcome will be for the committee to receive a report and action plan that highlights the lessons to be learnt from the incident, to help lessen the impact should a water supply outage occur again.

Other general areas of review

Performance management (quarterly report)

The committee has an important role in scrutinising the delivery of the council's priorities. To achieve this, on a quarterly basis, the committee received a Council Plan Performance Tracker. This provides a wealth of information in relation to the overall progress of the Council Plan's actions. The committee reviews and scrutinizes the information including missed target dates, progression of key projects and outcomes, and where appropriate, refer for a response or action from the Executive Committee. During the year, the committee has consistently challenged areas such as planning performance, level of environmental crimes and sickness absence. An absence management workshop was undertaken to members on 28 February 2018, providing members an overview of how sickness is managed in accordance with the council's absence management policy.

Review of Ubico (12 month update)

20 May 2017, 5 September 2017 and 20 March 2018

The council's waste and recycling, street clearing and ground maintenance services have a direct impact upon our communities. Delivered by Ubico, a local authority management company, the performance of Ubico has regularly been challenged during the

year. Members were concerned that aspects of the contract were not being delivered effectively. This has resulted in improved monitoring of the contract and improved working practice by Ubico.

The most recent review can be found [here](#).

Review of communications strategy (12 month update)

2 May 2017

Members were updated with the progress of the action plan for year three of the [communications strategy](#). It provides the framework to promote and protect the reputation of the council. Being the final year of the strategy, the committee received an overview of the whole action plan for 2014-16 where the majority of the actions had been completed. A new communications strategy for 2017-2019 was approved at Executive Committee in June 2017.

Flood risk management (12 month update)

20 March 2018

The Flood Risk Management Group (FRMG) oversees delivery of the council's flood risk management projects and contributes to the future development of flood risk management policies. Their work is reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Various works have been carried out during 2017-18 which included maintenance works to banks and watercourses running through council owned land. The action plan also included a schedule of proposed works for 2018-19, live capital projects and existing schemes.

Review of complaints (12 month update)

5 September 2017

Complaints are an important indicator as to how well the council is performing. Following a new complaints framework going live in April 2016 it was agreed a report would be brought to Overview and scrutiny committee on an annual basis. A report was brought to the committee on [5 September 2017](#). This included a breakdown of how many complaints were received and type by service along with any resulting improvements. The report also included details of those investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman.

Customer care strategy (annual review)

2 May 2017

Members were given an update to consider the progress made in relation to the actions contained within the [Customer Care Strategy and action plan](#). Both had been developed by an overview and scrutiny committee workshop in January 2016. Customer Focus is a council priority and the Customer Care Strategy details how we plan to deliver our customer care and outlines the council's commitments we make to our customers.

Review of Enviro-crimes (six monthly update)

2 May 2017 & 17 October 2017

The committee received reports on [2 May 2017](#) and [17 October 2017](#) on the current level of enviro-crimes, proposed action plan requested by the committee and the approach to tackling enviro-crimes within the borough. Members were given an update on fly tipping and details of a fixed penalty policy for environmental offences. This policy enables officers to issue fixed penalty notices for a range of offences including fly tipping and littering. This was approved at Executive Committee on 11 October 2017. Continued review of enviro crimes has resulted in a proactive approach such as a new Public Space Protection Order- Dog fouling, approved by Council on 17 April 2018.

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) review monitoring report (six monthly update)

2 May 2017 & 28 November 2017

An update to the committee was given on 2 May 2017 and 28 November 2017 on the progress against the recommendations arising from the DFG review in 2016. Members were advised the outstanding recommendations were intrinsically connected to the funding and delivery of DFG's which was under review by both central government and the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group.

Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee (GJWC) 2017/18 Business and action plan update

17 October 2017

Members were updated on the progress made in relation to the [Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee action plan for 2017/18](#). Actions were noted by the committee and key achievements were highlighted such as; reviewing bulky waste, creating a new waste policy and procedures, reviewing garden waste and the procurement of a materials recycling facility.

More details can be found [here](#).

Housing, renewal and homelessness strategy review monitoring report

17 October 2017

The committee was involved in the development of the strategy which was approved by the Council in January 2017. A report was provided giving an update on the progress made against the action plan over the last nine months. The housing services Manager highlighted areas where there has been significant changes such as the impact of Universal Credit and the peer review conducted by Department for Communities and Local Government in July 2017.

More details can be found [here](#).

Planning enforcement plan

9 January 2018

The National Planning Policy Framework advised all local planning authorities should consider publishing a local enforcement plan setting out how they would monitor the implementation of planning permissions, investigate alleged cases of unauthorised development and take action where it was appropriate to do so. Head of Development Services presented the new [Planning Enforcement Plan](#) to the committee. Members raised questions on timescales for implementation, resources and how the plan would progress. As a result, amendments to the plan were made prior to consideration by Executive Committee in January 2018.

Community safety partnership update

6 February 2018

The local [Community Safety Partnership](#) is subject to a countywide review. As a result the committee was updated on the status of the review. Given that committee safety is important to our communities the committee are keen to see this review concluded and to consider recommendations on the new arrangements. As a result this will be brought back to committee.

Annual review of the effectiveness of the council's involvement in the Gloucestershire health and care overview and scrutiny committee

6 February 2018

As a member of the Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, members felt it was important that Tewkesbury Borough Council continued to be represented on the committee. Members authorised officers to make the payment of £2,500 as its contribution to the Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Gloucestershire County Council updates

The committee receives regular updates from Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel. These updates provide the committee with information on any issues arising and where the council can act as advocates for both community safety and for health and well-being.

For further details on both, Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel see links below to Gloucestershire County Council's website:

- [Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#)
- [Police and Crime Panel](#)

Looking forward

The committee has an exciting work programme for the forthcoming year. The review of water supply outage and the hard work of the working group will come to its end in the early part of 2018-19.

Other works scheduled in the committee's work programme include the reviews of key strategies and policies such as the Customer care strategy, Economic Development and Tourism strategy. On-going scrutiny of key performance areas such as the Council Plan, enviro crimes and Ubico. The programme is flexible so any new areas for review can be added. The 2018-19 work programme can be found in Appendix B (page 11).

The committee also looks forward to challenging its effectiveness and ensuring it continues to play an important role in help deliver successful outcomes for both the council and its communities. A national review of overview and scrutiny has been undertaken and recommendations from this will be considered to see if they can be applied to the workings of the committee.

Members of the Overview and scrutiny Committee 2017-18



Chair
Councillor Phil Awford



Vice Chair
Councillor Ron Allen



Councillor Graham
Bocking



Councillor Kevin
Cromwell



Councillor Janet
Day



Councillor David
Foyle



Councillor Pauline
Godwin



Councillor Ruth
Hatton



Councillor Heather
McLain



Councillor Terence
Spencer



Councillor Pearl
Stokes



Councillor Philip
Surman



Councillor Mike
Sztymiak

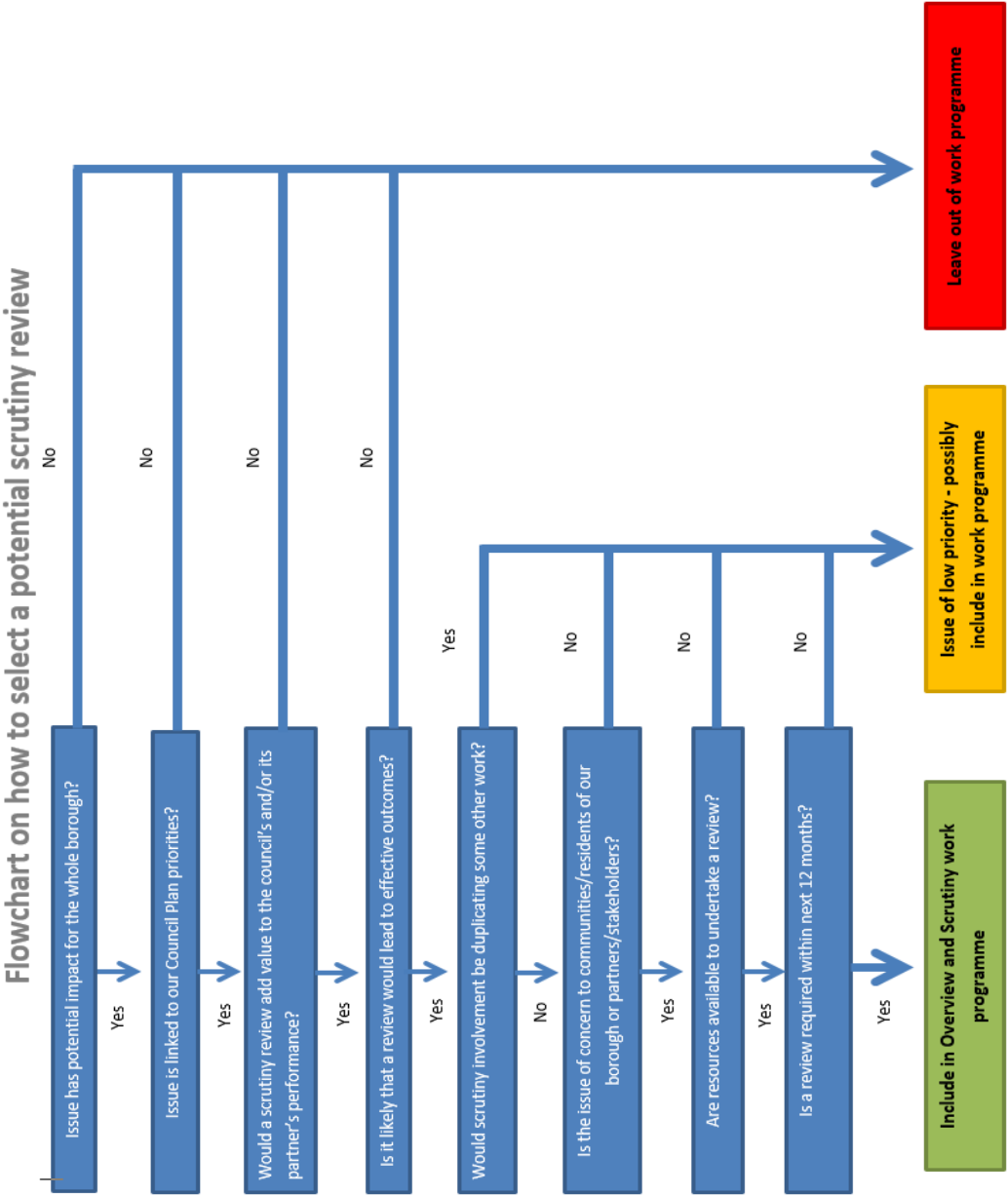


Councillor Harry
Turbfield



Councillor Mark
Williams

Appendix A- How to select a potential Scrutiny review



Appendix B- 2018-19 Draft workplan

To follow