

# TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Tuesday, 12 June 2018 commencing at 4:30 pm**

## **Present:**

Chair  
Vice Chair

Councillor P W Awford  
Councillor R E Allen

## **and Councillors:**

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

## **also present:**

Councillors R A Bird and J Greening

## **OS.5 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- 5.1 The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was advised to those present.
- 5.2 The Chair welcomed the Bureau Manager for the Gloucester and District Citizens' Advice Bureau to the meeting and indicated that he was in attendance for Agenda Item 8 – Citizens' Advice Bureau Presentation. It was noted that the Leader of the Council / Lead Member for Economic Development/Promotion was present for Agenda Item 10 – Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and the Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing was also present as an observer.
- 5.3 The Chair issued a reminder in respect of the National Review of Scrutiny Workshop that was being held on Thursday 28 June at 1:00pm to which all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been invited. He suggested that the invitation be extended to the Executive Committee and it was agreed that would be appropriate.

## **OS.6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 There were no declarations made on this occasion.

## **OS.7 MINUTES**

- 7.1 The Minutes of the meetings held on 24 April 2018 (Special), 1 May and 15 May 2018, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as correct records and signed by the Chair.

**OS.8 CONSIDERATION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN**

- 8.1 Attention was drawn to the Executive Committee Forward Plan, circulated at Pages No. 26-33. 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.
- 8.2 A Member understood that, at its meeting on 6 June 2018, the Executive Committee had approved an improvement action plan in respect of grass cutting and had agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitor its delivery. In view of that decision, he sought clarification as to when this report would be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and how frequently it would be considered. The Head of Community Services advised that the first monitoring report would be brought to the Committee within the next quarter and he would be suggesting it be considered on a quarterly basis initially. It should be borne in mind that the action plan included several large pieces of work which may take a number of months to deliver. Another Member indicated that grass cutting had been highlighted as a potential issue by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a number of occasions previously, and he was aware of problems dating back to 2015 which he did not feel had been adequately addressed at the time and had subsequently worsened over the years. He expressed his disappointment that it had required an Executive Committee decision to prompt action to be taken and felt this was something which could have been escalated at an earlier stage through the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In response, the Head of Community Services expressed the view that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been useful in terms of focusing attention on specific areas, particularly in terms of other services provided by Ubico. Over the last six months, the Property Team had been carrying out a lot of work around grass cutting and had advertised for an additional Officer in order to conduct a further review of the service. Following two rounds of unsuccessful recruitment he was pleased to report that the post had recently been filled. Officers had always been mindful of the Committee's concerns regarding Ubico and had taken this very seriously but, unfortunately, resources did not allow them to do everything. The new Officer would be starting work on Monday and this would allow the action plan to be put in place. The Member understood the issue with resources; however, he felt that lessons should have been learnt from previous years in order to prevent the problem from escalating. The Head of Community Services indicated that he could not comment on what had happened before he had joined the authority but reiterated that the resources to carry out the review had been put in place and he provided assurance that the Council would not be in this position next year.
- 8.3 It was  
**RESOLVED** That the Executive Committee Forward Plan be **NOTED**.

**OS.9 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19**

- 9.1 Attention was drawn to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2018/19, circulated at Pages No. 34-43, which Members were asked to consider.
- 9.2 The Head of Corporate Services advised that the Work Programme for 2018/19 had been approved at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 1 May 2018 and the pending items section had been updated to include a presentation from Gloucestershire Healthwatch which had been requested at that meeting – this would be incorporated into the Work Programme at a suitable point once he had made contact with the appropriate representatives. In addition, as discussed under the previous Agenda Item, the Executive Committee had tasked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with monitoring the grass cutting improvement action plan and this would need to be added to the Work Programme.

9.3 It was

**RESOLVED**

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2018/19 be **NOTED**.
2. That monitoring of the grass cutting improvement action plan be added to the Work Programme in accordance with the decision made by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 6 June 2018.

**OS.10 GLOUCESTERSHIRE HEALTH AND CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE UPDATE**

- 10.1 Members received an update from the Council's reserve representative on the Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee on matters discussed at its last meeting held on 8 May 2018.
- 10.2 Members were informed that the non-emergency patient transport service was run by Arriva Transport Solutions and the National Head of Service Development had attended the meeting to present a paper with the Lead Commissioner for the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (GCCG). Arriva had held the contract since December 2013 and provided 8,500 journeys per month with dialysis patients taking a 52% share. An eligibility review was being introduced by the GCCG to focus on patients with the greatest medical needs and a Patient Transport Advice Centre had been established where NHS staff, working from a script, would decide if a patient met the new criteria for acceptance. Arriva was working with Gloucestershire County Council to see if there was a possibility of using the local authority's transport fleet during quiet periods; similar dedicated renal routes had been implemented in other areas and this had gone live in Gloucestershire at the beginning of May.
- 10.3 The Committee had also received the annual report on the Health and Wellbeing of Children and their Families in Gloucestershire from the Director of Public Health. Members had liked the clarity of the report which had stated the intention to drive system-wide changes to improve outcomes for all of the county's children and young people. The Director had highlighted the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) work being led by the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board and it was noted that this initiative fed into the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy as it developed enhanced community input for closer focus on the population's future health. A recent peer review had emphasised a need to review the strategy to ensure it remained fit for purpose; this was accepted by the Board which would now formulate a plan to deliver the recommendations. It was noted that the Director had announced the creation of a five year multi-supplier framework agreement for providing specialist domestic abuse services. In addition, the Armed Forces Covenant now sat in the Prevention, Wellbeing and Communities Commissioning Hub under the leadership of the Director of Public Health and e-learning opportunities would be developed for county and district staff with Councils eventually being able to earn a 'Forces Friendly' mark.
- 10.4 The Committee had requested an update on the financial position of the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Members had been disappointed to note the deficit of £27.8M against a planned deficit £14.6M in February 2018, the last reported forecast for the year. This was said to arise from reduced income in three main areas: reduced demand for services; loss of operational capacity following the introduction of a new electronic patient record system; and, loss of income resulting from deployment of the system as a consequence of being unable to capture and record all activity taking place. Mitigation of risk was promised for the new financial year and Members were assured that services to patients would not be cut as a result of the Trust's financial

position. It was also noted that Gloucestershire's Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) was progressing, with key schemes being embedded and delivered. A particular target was type two diabetes and a GP Clinical Champion would be appointed during the year to raise awareness of the need for diabetes prevention within general practice.

10.5 A Member failed to see how patient care would be unaffected as a result of Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's financial position. The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, who had also attended the meeting, advised that the new strategic lead for NHS Gloucestershire was convinced that it was possible to deliver what was needed without affecting frontline services. The Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee reiterated that there had been an issue with the new computer system which had meant that activity was not recorded properly and money could not be collected; however, time would tell.

10.6 The Chair thanked the representative for his report and it was

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

## **OS.11 CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAU PRESENTATION**

11.1 The Chair welcomed the Bureau Manager for the Gloucester and District Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB), to the meeting. Members were reminded that Tewkesbury Borough Council had had a relationship with the CAB for a number of years and gave it a grant on an annual basis. The Committee received an annual presentation which provided Members with information about the work of the CAB and a flavour of what was happening within the Borough. The CAB had a four year Service Level Agreement with the Borough and currently performance against that was reported on a quarterly basis through the performance tracker.

11.2 The Bureau Manager for the Gloucester and District CAB was invited to make his presentation to the Committee. The presentation covered the following key points:

- Aims – To provide advice people need for the problems they face; to improve policies and practices that affect people's lives.
- Principles - The CAB service provided free, confident and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It valued diversity, promoted equality and challenged discrimination.
- Locations – Tewkesbury Public Service Centre; Prior's Park; Bishop's Cleeve; Winchcombe – by appointment; Brockworth – by appointment; Cheltenham Town Centre; Gloucester City Centre.
- How advice is requested – Majority still wanted face to face, approximately 75% of all contact; would like to do more by telephone or email but not practical.
- Employment Status - Employed - 33.4% (35.8% previous year); self-employed – 5.1% (3.9% previous year); carers – 7.7% (9.8% previous year); retired – 21.7% (18.6% previous year); unemployed – 14.7% (13.7% previous year); and permanently sick – 17.4% (13.7% previous year).
- Disposable Monthly Income – Under £999 – 52.7% (54.7% previous year); £1,000-£1,499 – 23.8% (24.1% previous year); £1,500-£1,999 – 12.8% (8.2% previous year); and over £2,000 – 10.7% (12.9% previous year).
- Disabilities - Physical disability – 8.7% (12.6% previous year); mental illness – 9.1% (9.1% previous year); long term health issues – 22.2% (21% previous year).

- Issues dealt with – 3,002 in 2017/18 and 2,885 in 2016/17. Welfare benefits – 837 (862 previous year); debt – 668 (720 previous year); employment – 321 (284 previous year); relationships – 282 (219 previous year); and housing – 242 (204 previous year).
- Significant issues during the year – Tribunal hearings; housing – repairs to private lettings; impact of rent caps and Universal Credit; employment practices; increase in complex cases.
- Case Study A – 31 year old single mother with a child under 10. Disabled (flat foot syndrome), obese and suffering from anxiety and stress. Debts of £16,417, no money for gas and electricity, used blankets through the day to stay warm, constant chasing by creditors added to anxiety and stress. Actions taken included: debt relief order, charitable donation, Employment Support Allowance claim and Personal Independence Payment, smart metre fitted.
- Case Study B – 55 year old unemployed single man with angina and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) claiming Universal Credit including housing element (room rate for shared house). Difficulty meeting conditionality requirements, difficulty budgeting, exhausted Food Bank entitlement, no hot water or toilet facilities within accommodation. Action taken: claimed Employment Support Allowance (awaiting work capability assessment), successfully claimed Personal Independence Payment, charitable donation, Tewkesbury Borough Council Environmental Health visit, alternative accommodation sourced.
- Future Plans – possible merger with Forest of Dean CAB – purely for administrative/management purposes with no detriment to the service being provided; outreach opening in Churchdown in July at the GL3 Hub (appointment only); outreach at Northway Community Centre in Autumn; bid to Nationwide housing project; healthy homes project with Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (GCCG); other projects.
- Definitions - financial capability – knowledge, skill, motivation, awareness and confidence in relation to money management. Financial exclusion – individuals cannot access the financial products and services they need which means those that could least afford to do so would end up paying more for their basic needs. Financial inclusion – access to appropriate financial products and services allowing people to effectively manage their money, regardless of their level of income or social status.

11.3 A Member noted that the number of welfare and benefits issues dealt with by the CAB had reduced in 2017/18 and he questioned whether this was as a result of other agencies offering help and assistance e.g. Job Centre. The Bureau Manager for the Gloucester and District CAB clarified that there had been a reduction of 25 compared to 2016/17. The CAB had assisted 30 people with Universal Credit queries during the year but this was expected to increase over time. Overall, he did not feel there was a downturn in the number of people approaching the CAB for assistance. He explained that people might approach the CAB initially in respect of debt problems but this was often linked to a number of other issues, e.g. unemployment or relationship breakdown, which may not be reflected in the figures. Another Member queried whether customers were asked to provide feedback to ensure the service continued to be valuable. Confirmation was provided that regular surveys were undertaken and the results from previous years could be provided following the meeting.

- 11.4 A Member noted that the CAB had dealt with 3,002 issues in 2017/18 – across seven centres this equated to approximately 60 per week, or 10 per centre, which was the equivalent of two every five days – and he questioned whether there was a lot of downtime. The Bureau Manager for the Gloucester and District CAB explained that the CAB services in Winchcombe and Brockworth were by appointment only; whilst there may only be one or two customers in Winchcombe each month the other locations were much busier and Tewkesbury Borough residents tended to also use the Gloucester City Centre CAB given its close proximity to the local authority boundary.
- 11.5 A Member indicated that there had been a reduction in the number of people using the Prior's Park Neighbourhood Project since the departure of the previous Manager. The Bureau Manager for the Gloucester and District CAB confirmed that there was a new Manager in place and, whilst there had been a reduction, this was no reflection on the level of advice being offered; the previous Manager had been fluent in Polish and it was possible that some customers were now using the Gloucester CAB where that language ability was available.
- 11.6 A Member was pleased to see that the CAB was working with Nationwide in respect of housing to step in before crisis point was reached and questioned if anything similar was being done in other areas. The Bureau Manager for the Gloucester and District CAB advised that, sadly, 40-50% of customers were pre-crisis or in crisis and the CAB always looked for opportunities to link with other partners, for example, the Healthy Homes project with the GCCG which had been referenced in the presentation and another project around debt with the Money Advice Service.
- 11.7 Members expressed their thanks to the Bureau Manager for the Gloucester and District CAB. The Chair of the Committee indicated that the CAB presentation was currently made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis and sought a view as to whether this was still appropriate. Members generally felt the presentation provided was extremely interesting and that an annual presentation kept them up-to-date with what was happening with the CAB. Accordingly, it was
- RESOLVED** That the Citizens' Advice Bureau presentation be **NOTED** and that an update continue to be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.

## **OS.12 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT - QUARTER 4 AND FULL YEAR 2017/18**

- 12.1 The report of the Head of Corporate Services, circulated at Pages No. 44-89, attached performance management information for quarter 4 of 2017/18. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to review and scrutinise the performance information and, where appropriate, identify any issues to refer to the Executive Committee for clarification or further action to be taken.
- 12.2 Members were advised that this was the fourth quarterly monitoring report for 2017/18 and progress against delivering the objectives and actions for each of the Council Plan priorities was reported through the Performance Tracker, attached at Appendix 1 to the report. Key actions for the quarter were highlighted at Paragraph 2.3 of the report and included the Council's commercial property portfolio which was now worth £31.09M and generated £1.1M of net income to support the Council's budget in 2018/19; appointment of a Growth and Enterprise Manager in readiness for the introduction of the Growth Hub within the Public Service Centre; delivery of 233 affordable homes in 2017/18 above the annual target of 150; 227 homeless prevention cases meaning more households had been assisted to avoid homelessness than ever before; adoption of the Public Space Protection Order which was a key aspect of the Enviro-Crime Action Plan; and the garden waste project which was now in the final stages with almost 16,500 sticker

licences sold, generating in excess of £742,000. As always, due to the complex nature of the actions being delivered, it was inevitable that some would not progress as smoothly or quickly as envisaged and the details of these were set out at Paragraph 2.4 of the report. Particular reference was made to the minor slippage in respect of the launch of the Growth Hub and letting out the top floor of the Public Service Centre. With regard to the latter, it was noted that, since the report had been written, heads of terms had been agreed for a five year lease of one third of the remaining space on the top floor. In terms of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Members were informed that the status of each indicator was set out at Paragraph 3.2 of the report. Of the 15 indicators with targets, four had not been achieved as at the end of quarter 4. Areas of interest included KPI 13 in relation to the percentage of 'major' planning applications determined within 13 weeks (or an alternative period agreed with the applicant) where the 2017/18 target and the 2016/17 outturn had been exceeded with 89.58% of applications being determined within the agreed timescales; KPI 19 which showed a significant reduction in the number of reported enviro-crimes compared to the previous year; KPI 28 which showed an increasing number of days being lost due to staff sickness – 10.5 days had been lost per full-time employee during the year which exceeded the previous year's outturn and the seven day target set for 2017/18, however the figures had been impacted by a number of staff with critical illness who were on long-term sick leave; and KPIs 30 and 31 which showed that less residual waste had been collected than the previous year and the recycling rate had increased to 54.55% compared to 53.29% in the previous year – this was particularly positive given that many authorities had seen a downturn.

12.3 During the debate which ensued, the following queries and comments were made in relation to the Performance Tracker:

**Priority: Finance and Resources**

P56 – Objective 3 – Action b)  
– Undertake a review of the discretionary trade waste service to ensure that it is operating on a viable commercial level – A Member raised concern that this action had been delayed and he questioned why it was not being prioritised given that this had been highlighted as a potential opportunity to generate money for the Council. He also questioned why the results of the marketing exercise had not been brought to Members so they could at least see what had been done to date.

The Head of Community Services explained that, whilst waiting for the final Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) report that had been commissioned by the Council, it had been intended to do some initial marketing to try to uplift the amount of trade waste contractors; unfortunately, this had been delayed by an Officer going on maternity leave, which obviously could not be planned for. Notwithstanding this, a different report had been commissioned by Ubico on behalf of the Joint Waste Team and it was felt that it may be advantageous to see if there were opportunities for joint working. One of the partners was looking at the potential for a county-wide service and conversations were taking place with them to establish if this would be more beneficial than Tewkesbury Borough Council running its own service. He advised that the garden waste project was now in its final stages so there would be additional resources available for the trade waste project and he confirmed that the results would be brought back to Members when the required information was available.

P57 – Objective 4 – Action b) Deliver the Council’s asset plan – A Member noted that the MAFF and Prior’s Park garage sites were included in the list of items within the plan but neither had been delivered and therefore he did not feel a happy face was justified.

The Head of Finance and Asset Management explained that, overall, delivery of the asset plan was on track. A report on the MAFF site would be considered by the Executive Committee in July and there was ongoing engagement and discussion with Severn Vale Housing Society in relation to the Prior’s Park garage sites which could be brought back to Members as it developed.

### **Priority: Economic Development**

Page No. 62 – Objective 4 – Action a) Develop a regeneration plan for Tewkesbury Town – A Member noted that the target date had been amended and questioned the significance of the new September date.

The Head of Development Services advised that this was in line with the Tewkesbury Town Regeneration Partnership meeting. She explained that there was a draft plan which had been shared with the Partnership but it was important to ensure it was right before it was made public.

Page No. 62 – Objective 4 – Action b) Deliver a programme with partners to progress Healings Mill and other key sites to support the regeneration of Tewkesbury – A Member raised concern that it was taking some time to draw up a programme of action and sought clarification as to why.

The Head of Development Services explained that the action plan was constantly moving and a number of conversations were taking place with various parties including the owner, Homes England, the Environment Agency and Historic England etc. The Council’s new Conservation Officer had been tasked with looking at the conservation and heritage aspect of the programme. Unfortunately, a lot of things were out of the Council’s control but she provided assurance that Officers would continue to drive the project forwards.

### **Priority: Housing**

P67 – Objective 3 – Action b) Work with partners, infrastructure providers and developers to progress the delivery of key sites – A Member questioned why there was a happy face against the progress when the comments section stated that the JCS transport strategy (May 2017) had identified requirements for strategic allocations but funding had not been secured for the A38/A40 link road which was a key piece of infrastructure.

The Head of Development Services advised that this action was multi-faceted and covered several different sites. There had been positive discussions in respect of other sites which was the reason it was considered to be performing well and Officers continued to look at other opportunities for funding across the board. The Member was of the view that the happy face was not appropriate given that the link road was a major piece of infrastructure which would affect three of the strategic allocations. The Deputy Chief Executive took this point and indicated that the action could be split up and she undertook to ensure this was reflected in future reports.



P68 – Objective 4 – Action b) Deliver 150 affordable homes each year – Whilst it was commendable that 233 affordable homes had been delivered, a Member questioned whether the target had been set too low.

The Head of Community Services advised that the target that had been set was a realistic one based on what it was thought could be delivered. Officers were reviewing the target to reflect what the Council could deliver with its partners. The Chief Executive indicated that this was something which had also been picked up by the Executive Committee. It was accepted that the target needed to be refined to split up the different housing types and tenures so that it was more meaningful for Members.

#### **Priority: Customer Focused Services**

P74 – Objective 1 – Action c) Review garden waste arrangements to improve the renewal and payment process – A Member noted that the new garden waste project had generated over £722,000 and she questioned how much it had cost to implement.

The Head of Community Services indicated that he did not have that information to hand but he would update Members following the meeting.

#### **Key Performance Indicators for Priority: Customer Focused Services**

P84 – KPI 29 – Percentage of waste recycled or composted – A Member noted that progress was being made with the construction of the 'Energy from Waste' plant at Javelin Park and he queried how this would affect the Council's performance.

Another Member indicated that supermarkets had made a commitment to reduce the amount of packaging used by 40% by 2020 and, although the percentage was less than the previous year, the amount of waste which could be recycled was also less so the fact the target for the year had been exceeded was very positive.

The Head of Community Services advised that there had been a reduction in recycling rates where 'Energy from Waste' plants had been set up in other parts of the country. Nevertheless, the Council would continue to promote and encourage recycling. He reminded Members that recycling was only one part of the waste hierarchy – the first option was to either not use or re-use; therefore, in an ideal situation there would be no waste to recycle or take to landfill. It was noted that 'Energy from Waste' would reduce landfill to zero.

12.4 Turning to the financial information, the Head of Finance and Asset Management was pleased to report a final outturn position of £1.5M surplus on the general fund. This could be attributed to a strong performance in treasury and commercial activities, additional business rates retention and substantial external grant funding being received. A summary of performance was set out in the table at Paragraph 4.4 of the report. Income was shown at £894,361 over the budgeted provision

which was mainly due to external grant funding; the Council had received a number of new burdens grants from the government but had also attracted significant service specific grants, particularly in relation to the delivery of the requirements for infrastructure and the Joint Core Strategy. The overall service total showed a surplus of £1,080,281 for the year. Members were advised that treasury activity showed a surplus of £190,359, the main reason being the investment in the CCLA pooled property fund in May 2017 which was currently generating income returns of 4.67%. Short-term borrowing rates had remained low and the Council had made savings as a result of maintaining all borrowing on a short term structure. In addition, a further three commercial investment properties had been acquired in quarter three which was earlier than anticipated. For the first time in four years, the Council was also able to report a positive position on the retained business rates scheme which showed a £636,515 surplus with additional income being generated through underlying growth; identification of renewable energy installations where business rates were retained locally; and, payment of additional grant from the government in respect of amendments to the business rate multiplier cap. The table concluded with the budgeted transfer to reserves of £57,383 and the actual transfer totalling £1.5M which represented a budget variance of 2,611%. Further information could be found at Appendix 1 to the report.

- 12.5 The summarised capital programme was set out at Appendix 3 to the report. The level of capital expenditure incurred in 2017/18 totalled £15.93M with the bulk of this spent on the purchase of further investment properties and refurbishment of the Public Service Centre. The Council had spent £15.93M on capital projects using £1.70M of capital reserves, £510,000 of capital grants, £90,000 of revenue contributions and £13.64M from borrowing. The balance of capital reserves had reduced to £1.98M as at 31 March 2018. The final element of the report related to earmarked reserves and a breakdown was shown at Appendix 4 to the report. The increase in overall revenue reserves totalled £2.56M and was the result of a number of factors including the in-year surplus within the general fund and developer contributions, expenditure against contributions already received and expenditure on existing reserves of £1.01M.
- 12.6 A Member noted that savings had been made on transport across Council services and asked for an explanation as to how that had been achieved. He also queried whether the Council was exploring the use of pool cars and the use of electric vehicles. In response, the Head of Finance and Asset Management advised that the main reason for the reduction was that less business mileage was being incurred and fewer essential car user payments were being made. Pool cars were on the agenda for the forthcoming year and electric vehicles could be part of that exercise. Consideration would also be given to the provision of vehicle charging points for the Council's assets at various locations across the borough during the second half of the year.
- 12.7 Having considered the information provided, it was
- RESOLVED** That the performance management information for quarter 4 of 2017/18 be **NOTED**.

## **OS.13 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM STRATEGY**

- 13.1 The report of the Community and Economic Development Manager, circulated at Pages No. 90-111, provided an update on the delivery of the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2017-21. Members were asked to consider the progress made during year one and the actions identified for 2018/19.

- 13.2 The Community and Economic Development Manager advised that the Executive Committee had adopted the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy in June 2017 following its development by an Overview and Scrutiny Review Working Group. A key element for the Working Group was the commissioning and development of an employment land review, economic assessment and business survey which had been carried out by Bruton Knowles. A number of key actions from the strategy had been fulfilled over the last 12 months and examples were set out at Paragraph 2.1 of the report. Several actions had subsequently been developed for 2018/19 and notable priorities were set out at Paragraph 3.1 of the report. The full action plan was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. The Community and Economic Development Manager explained that it was very much a corporate strategy reflecting the Council Plan and Officers across the organisation had contributed to its success.
- 13.3 In terms of the work in 2017/18, the Growth and Enterprise Manager advised that the LEADeR programme had funded 15 schemes to date worth £500,000. These included a shop and workshop for Café au Chocolat in Tewkesbury Town Centre and equipment for the Spray Booth on Tewkesbury Business Park. Members were encouraged to let Officers know if they were aware of any potential projects which may be suitable for funding during 2018/19. She went on to refer to two business events that had been held during the year: the launch of Tewkesbury branding at the Porsche showroom in June 2017 and a Business Breakfast at Tewkesbury Park Hotel in May 2018. Both events had attracted over 100 people and had been excellent opportunities to showcase the positive work that was being done. In 2018/19 it was intended to move these events to Brockworth, Staverton or Winchcombe. Regular one to one sessions were held with businesses through the year and there had been interest from a company which was currently located in Cotswold District which was looking to move to Tewkesbury Borough so Officers across various departments, including Planning and Environmental Health, would be working with them to find premises and make the process as smooth as possible. One significant project was the development of the Growth Hub at the Public Service Centre which was on target to complete by the end of the month. It was intended to have a soft opening in July/August 2018, when businesses could make appointments to use the Hub, with an official launch in September when the refurbishment of the Committee Suite and reception area had been completed. In terms of service delivery, operational plans were in place to ensure that added value was provided by the Council, for example, key service areas would have Officer Champions and there would be multi-agency meetings to prevent businesses being passed around to a number of different departments.
- 13.4 The Leader of the Council stressed that the Growth Hub would be a really positive addition to the Council and the Growth and Enterprise Manager had an essential role to play as the face of the authority in terms of dealing with businesses. He felt this was one of the most exciting projects the Council had embarked upon; this would be the first Growth Hub to be located in a local authority which demonstrated how well the Council engaged with businesses. He noted that the Working Group which had developed the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy had been set up by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and he thanked everyone who had been involved as this hard work was now paying dividends. He went on to explain that other individual actions would develop throughout the year but made specific reference to the importance of transport infrastructure – rail strategy ideas were being developed and consideration was being given to the potential opportunities at Gloucestershire Airport.

13.5 A Member indicated that Gwinnett's Tomb in Down Hatherley was the borough's newest tourist attraction and had been used to launch the Gloucestershire History Festival. He felt this should be incorporated into the strategy and used to promote the borough. The Community and Economic Development Manager confirmed that contact had previously been made with the Parish Council and he was happy to follow this up again to offer support - he undertook to discuss this further with the Member outside of the meeting. A Member noted that all of the activities referenced were in Tewkesbury town and she questioned if there were any examples of work in other parts of the borough. The Growth and Enterprise Manager reiterated that she was currently working with businesses in Winchcombe and had met with a start-up business the previous day to consider a funding plan and how support could be offered through the Growth Hub. Work was also being carried out with a company on Gloucester Business Park and it was planned to hold an event at Gloucestershire Airport later in the year. There were other Growth Hubs available across the borough and, whilst the main one would be at the Public Service Centre, there were Hubs in Bishop's Cleeve and Tewkesbury libraries; notwithstanding this, she was very keen to make sure the main Growth Hub was successful in supporting businesses across the borough. A Member questioned how Officers had been successful in encouraging the business in Cotswold District to relocate and was advised that the cosmetics company was currently based in Moreton-in-Marsh but was looking to relocate to Junction 9 of the M5 in order to set up a national training centre; this contact had been made through the Growth Hub. In terms of marketing and branding, the Community and Economic Development Manager explained that prospectuses had been produced and Members would already have seen the promotional video for Tewkesbury; it was hoped that these materials would help to attract businesses.

13.6 Several Members expressed the view that the work being carried out was very impressive and congratulated the Officers involved. It was subsequently

**RESOLVED** That the progress made against the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy during year one, and the actions identified for 2018/19, be **NOTED**.

#### **OS.14 ENVIRO-CRIME REPORT**

14.1 The report of the Head of Community Services, circulated at Pages No. 112-131, provided an update on the current activity and actions being taken by the Council in respect of enviro-crimes. Members were asked to consider the update and to agree that future reporting to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be via an annual report in June – detailing the types, quantities and effectiveness of the Council's approach to enviro-crimes – and a six monthly update which also set out the forward plan for the forthcoming year.

14.2 The Head of Community Services explained that, at its meeting on 2 May 2017, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered a report regarding the Council's approach to tackling enviro-crime within the borough which had included an action plan. Since that time, six monthly updates had been provided to the Committee on progress against that plan, attached at Appendix 1 to the report. It was noted that enviro-crimes had previously been dealt with on an ad-hoc basis but there were now proper procedures and processes in place which would be refined on an ongoing basis to reflect regulatory requirements and efficient working practices. As such, it was proposed to continue to report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a six monthly basis but to focus more on outcomes, such as number of fly-tips reported, number of fixed penalties issued etc. The six month report would therefore be an interim report on the basic metrics, and any particular issues that

had arisen, and the annual report - which was proposed to be brought to the Committee in June - would provide a more detailed review of the achievements and outcomes of the previous year.

- 14.3 The table at Paragraph 2.5 of the report provided a summary of the metrics that were currently collected: noise; dog fouling; fly-tipping; and abandoned vehicles. The successful enforcement action taken during 2017/18 was detailed at Paragraph 2.7 of the report. It was noted there had been six successful prosecutions for fly-tipping and failure to have the appropriate documentation relating to the transfer of waste, and 24 fixed penalty notices had been served for a range of offences. Members were advised that new legislation had been introduced in April giving local authorities the power to issue fixed penalties to the registered keepers of vehicles from which litter was thrown. Previously, local authorities could not issue fixed penalties to the keeper and there had been no obligation for the keeper to advise who was responsible for throwing the litter. As such, it was expected to see an increase in the number of fixed penalties going forward which would hopefully act as a deterrent. In terms of the action plan itself, the majority of actions had been completed or were ongoing.
- 14.4 A Member questioned whether the figures for abandoned vehicles, set out in the table at Paragraph 2.5, were correct for 2015/16. It stated that there had been 793 abandoned vehicles in 2015/16 compared to 237 in 2016/17 and 122 in 2017/18 which was a significant reduction; furthermore, in 2015/16 the same figure had been provided for the number of flytipping incidents i.e. 793 – it was unlikely that these numbers would have been exactly the same so he questioned whether it was an inputting error. The Member also pointed out that the performance tracker, which had been considered at Agenda Item 9, had shown there had been 967 reported enviro-crimes during 2017/18 which did not coincide with the table at Paragraph 2.5 which totalled 1,211. The Head of Community Services indicated that he would review the data following the meeting and report back to Members.
- 14.5 A Member questioned whether the signage used in relation to enviro-crimes was mobile and confirmation was provided this was the case. In response to a query as to how the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) had affected the use of CCTV cameras, the Head of Community Services advised that it was no longer possible to use cameras which stored data on a removable card that was inserted into a computer as there was a risk that the cards could be stolen. A Member raised concern that the recycling centre at Morrison's was still in operation despite it having been publicised that it was closing. The Head of Community Services advised that, at the time of writing the report, the intention was for the recycling centre to close and he was unsure why this had not happened; however, he undertook to look into this following the meeting. The Member sought confirmation that members of the public were being advised where the other recycling sites were located and the Head of Community Services indicated that the locations were listed on Tewkesbury Borough and Gloucestershire County Councils' websites and Customer Services also held this information. The sites were actively promoted and shared with the public but more promotion could be done via the Borough News.
- 14.6 A Member drew attention to Page No. 130 of the report which included an action around developing a network of communities to report enviro-crimes, enabling them to act as eyes and ears for the Council, and particular reference was made to community groups, Town and Parish Councils and volunteer litter pickers. The Member questioned why Councillors had been omitted from that list. In response, the Head of Community Services explained that Councillors were considered to be part of the community network. A simple witness statement was being produced to facilitate the reporting of enviro-crimes and this would be provided to staff and Councillors. The Deputy Chief Executive indicated that this was a multi-faceted piece of work and Borough and Parish Councillors would be instrumental in its delivery. Another Member was delighted with the summary of enforcement action,

particularly as this did not seem to be reflected across the county. He questioned how prosecutions were advertised as he felt it was important to promote the fact that action was taken. The Head of Community Services advised that much of the success was down to the hard work of Officers. He provided assurance that prosecutions were advertised in the Borough News and press releases were issued, although these were not always picked up. The Interim Communications and Policy Manager confirmed that they were also promoted via social media and every press release was posted on the Council's website. She reminded Members that they received email notifications regarding press releases and they could be confident that this meant they were also being pushed out on social media as standard practice. It was suggested that it would be useful to provide an update at the next Parish and Town Council Seminar on the work the Borough Council was doing and to ask them for assistance with promotion. A Member pointed out that not everyone used social media and he felt it would be beneficial to produce a poster showing how many prosecutions had been made which could be displayed in hotspots. The Head of Community Services welcomed communication and promotion through all channels and he indicated that signs could be designed to include that information.

14.7 The Chief Executive indicated that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been at the forefront of driving the enviro-crimes agenda and he felt that vast improvements had been made over the past year. Nevertheless, he felt that more work could be done with Ward Members around helping them to report enviro-crimes, and ensuring that they understood the various mechanisms available, and he suggested that a Member seminar be arranged for later in the year. A Member commented that she had used the facility for reporting enviro-crimes online on two occasions; she had found it very simple and had received a response within 24 hours.

14.8 In response to a query, the Head of Community Services advised there would be a similar action plan for 2018/19 which would include a number of operations with the Environment Agency and the Police and the introduction of the new Public Space Protection Order. He assured Members that he was committed to building on the progress that had already been made. It was

- RESOLVED**
1. That the update in respect of Enviro-Crimes be **NOTED**.
  2. That the Committee continue to receive reports on a six monthly basis with a detailed annual report in June based on what had been achieved in the previous year and an interim report on basic metrics and any particular issues that had arisen.

## **OS.15 REVIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

15.1 The report of the Head of Corporate Services, circulated at Pages No. 132-146, gave an update on the delivery of the Communications Strategy Action Plan. Members were asked to consider the progress that had been made during 2017/18 and to endorse the action plan for 2018/19.

15.2 The Interim Communications and Policy Manager explained that communication was at the heart of everything the Council did and clear communication helped to strengthen links with the public, residents, stakeholders, Members and staff. It had been a very busy year with focus on providing continued support for the Public Service Centre; the Joint Core Strategy; new waste rounds; the new garden waste system; and the introduction of the new format of Tewkesbury Borough News. In addition, the team had continued to produce all internal communications and had dealt with a significant number of media enquiries as well as producing regular newsletters and annual reports for various audiences. It was noted that the Communications and Policy Manager and the Communications Officer had been on

maternity leave during the year and contingency plans had been put in place to ensure there was no detrimental impact on day-to-day communications and delivery of the action plan.

- 15.3 The majority of actions had been delivered or were ongoing and this was reflected in the action plan at Appendix 1 to the report. With regard to the digital strategy, Members were advised that a great deal of work had been done in relation to online forms during the year; this action would carry over into 2018/19 as there was an ongoing need to support the digital strategy. A short course on the Council's approach to social media had been developed and this would be rolled out between June and September. It was noted that Members had been briefed previously and one to one training had also been offered. The Council's media protocol had been reviewed and, whilst no major changes had been made, it was felt that the social media aspects warranted a more in-depth review during the forthcoming year. Whilst the recommendation to issue a minimum of two press releases per week had been achieved on average, they were becoming less relevant with the popularity of social media and this needed to be recognised as an important platform for promoting the Council. The review of internal communications had raised a number of questions but there was an opportunity to provide a more streamlined service using Office 365 and these ideas would be brought to Members at the appropriate time. The Interim Communications and Policy Manager explained that opportunities had been taken to use video content, where appropriate, and this had been effective in increasing the number of likes and followers on social media. It was noted that the Council had secured a double page spread in the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) magazine early in the year based on the Council's approach to transformation and promoting the Council's achievements in the local government arena would continue to be an aim for the forthcoming year. With regard to the production of an annual forward action plan for communication opportunities, Members were informed that the introduction of Free Plug Friday on social media had resulted in the creation of a diary which was populated with upcoming events and corporate services projects. Consideration was being given as to how this could be shared with the wider Council in order to gain greater awareness of upcoming communication opportunities. She went on to explain that an email survey had been sent to all Town and Parish Councils to seek feedback on how the Parish Matters newsletter could be improved; there had only been 12 responses, three of which had stated that they did not read it. It was thought that the content may be being received elsewhere, e.g. social media, press releases, Tewkesbury Borough News, and it was intended to raise this at the next Town and Parish Council Seminar as the future of the newsletter was dependent on engagement from the Parishes. Members noted that the Council's followers on Facebook had increased by 48% over the year - from 992 to 1,463 - and 2,964 followers had been gained on Twitter which was an increase of 1,240%. Whilst this was good progress, there was still a lot to do in this area. The proposed action plan for 2018/19 was set out at Appendix 2 and the Interim Communications and Policy Manager welcomed questions from Members.
- 15.4 A Member drew attention to Page No. 145 of the report which included an action to review ways to make the intranet a one-stop shop for staff and he asked that Members be included as they could not currently access the intranet. The Interim Communications and Policy Manager understood that access would be possible through Office 365 therefore it was thought Members would be able to use the intranet in the future. The Head of Corporate Services noted that this issue had been raised before and he provided assurance that it would be considered by the new ICT Operations Manager who had been formally appointed earlier that day.
- 15.5 A Member was disappointed to hear that only 12 Parish Councils had responded to the survey about Parish Matters. The Interim Communications and Policy Manager advised that read receipts were attached to the emails and less than half were opened so clearly something needed to change. Another Member raised concern

that there were no communications in relation to grass cutting until the press release had been issued and he felt there could have been an interim response to at least acknowledge there was a problem. In response, Members were informed that this was a conscious decision and a press release had been prepared when the issue had first arisen for circulation if, and when, the problem escalated. The feedback on social media had been monitored and this had been fed back to the relevant Officers. Had a decision been taken to issue a response on social media, Members would have received this information at the same time; however, it had been decided that the matter would be taken to the Executive Committee. The Chief Executive felt that the Member had a good point in terms of how communications with Councillors had been handled but this related to the team dealing with the issues rather than the Communications Team. He recognised that there were a number of lessons to be learnt from the grass cutting issues this year and these would be picked up in the action plan. The Communications Officer clarified that the Council had responded to people on social media but it had taken a reactive approach rather than a proactive one.

15.6 Having considered the information provided, it was

**RESOLVED** That the progress made against the actions within the Communication Strategy Action Plan during 2017/18 be **NOTED** and that the action plan for 2018/19 be **ENDORSED**.

The meeting closed at 7:08 pm