

**Questions raised by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at meeting held on  
4 September 2018**

Questions raised by Overview and Scrutiny	Response from officers
<b>Performance Tracker - Priority: Finance and resources</b>	
<p>Objective 3 – Action a) – Deliver the aims and objectives of the Commercial Property Investment Strategy – A Member noted that the comments stated that the Council's property portfolio stood at £39m, producing a gross income of about £1.9m; however, the second bullet point on Page No. 33, Paragraph 2.3 of the report, stated that the annual gross income would be £2.4m.</p> <p>Members questioned how far the property investments had helped to reduce the budget deficit and what action was taken to minimise risks associated with investment properties, particularly given the recent reports about G4S, which occupied Challenge House in Tewkesbury, and the running of the facilities it operated.</p>	<p>The Finance Manager apologised for this error and indicated that she believed the correct amount was £2.4m but she undertook to provide a schedule of all properties and their gross income following the meeting.</p> <p>The Chief Executive explained that the deficit over the five year period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy remained at £1.8 - 2m and, whilst the net income of approximately £850,000 from the commercial property portfolio had made a huge difference, there were still some major issues to address as the budget programme moved forward in the autumn. Potential investments were considered by the Commercial Property Investment Board, which was a Member panel advised by Officers and the Council's investment advisors, prior to consideration by Council. In order to maximise investment potential, it was important that the property portfolio was as broad as possible and covered a range of sectors. He explained that G4S operated worldwide and had a particularly important research and manufacturing site in Tewkesbury - whilst there were no certainties with any company, this made G4S a covetable tenant; furthermore, there was no break clause with that particular lease so it was not subject to review. It was worth noting that the external auditors had found the Council's investment portfolio, and the associated processes, to be sound. Members were advised that the risks associated with the portfolio were far outweighed by the income that was generated.</p>
<p>Objective 4 – Action b) Explore options for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF) site – A Member sought an update on plans for the site.</p>	<p>Members were informed that the Executive Committee had approved the disposal of the MAFF site for residential use. In order to achieve the best price, it was intended to sell the site with planning permission, if possible, and Officers were currently commissioning survey work to support that.</p>

<b>Performance Tracker – Priority: Promoting and supporting economic growth</b>	
Objective 4 – Action b) Develop a programme with partners to progress Healings Mill and other key development opportunity sites to support the regeneration of Tewkesbury – A Member noted that the target date for this action had changed several times and she questioned whether any developers were interested in the Healings Mill site.	The Chief Executive explained that the main difficulty was that the Council did not own the site and therefore this action was largely outside of its control. Notwithstanding this, he recognised that the target date had changed significantly, and he agreed that more meaningful timescales were needed.
Objective 5 – Action a) Explore with partners – including the Battlefield Society – the potential to increase the heritage offer at the Battlefield site – A Member sought a progress update.	The Chief Executive advised that some progress had been made and it was intended to bring forward a project with the various partners. To date, Officers had met with the key landowners and stakeholders to discuss what might be possible and consideration was being given to an IT-based heritage project. The project had slipped as it had taken longer than anticipated to engage with the Battlefield Society and other partners. It was noted that the revised target date of December 2018 related to getting agreement on a way forward rather than the date the project would be completed in its entirety.
<b>Key Performance Indicators for Priority: Promoting and supporting economic growth</b>	
KPI 5 – Number of visitors to Tewkesbury Tourist Information Centre (TIC) – A Member was surprised to see that the number of visitors to the Tewkesbury TIC had decreased given the fantastic weather over the summer.	Members were reminded that the figures related to the first quarter of 2018/19 which covered the period April-June - before the extended period of hot and dry weather.
KPI 7 – Number of visitors entering the Growth Hub – A Member noted that this was a new indicator and questioned what comparisons would be used to establish whether performance was good or bad.	The Chief Executive explained that this KPI had been set by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) as a condition of the capital that it had put into the Growth Hub and it was currently the only measure of performance available. The only other tier two Growth Hub in Gloucestershire was at the Royal Agricultural University in Cirencester, which had recently opened, and no other Growth Hub in the UK was located within a local authority premises therefore there was no established track record for comparison.