

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Tuesday, 23 November 2021 commencing at 4:30 pm

Present:

Chair
Vice Chair

Councillor J W Murphy
Councillor K Berliner

and Councillors:

G J Bocking, C L J Carter, P A Godwin, P D McLain, H S Munro, J K Smith, S Thomson
and M J Williams

also present:

Councillors D W Gray and D J Harwood

OS.54 ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

OS.55 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

55.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H C McLain, R J G Smith, P D Surman and P N Workman. There were no substitutions for the meeting.

OS.56 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

56.1 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.

56.2 There were no declarations made on this occasion.

OS.57 MINUTES

57.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2021, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

OS.58 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

58.1 Attention was drawn to the Executive Committee Forward Plan, circulated at Pages No.10-14. 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.

58.2 A Member noted that the Community Infrastructure Levy Review – New Draft Charging Schedule was due to be considered by the Executive Committee in 2022/23 and he asked whether it was possible for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the draft charging schedule prior to that. In response, the Head of Development Services indicated that was something she would need to consider outside of the meeting, taking into account dates etc. A lot of work was currently underway in relation to the Community Infrastructure Levy review and an updated programme was awaited. It would be helpful to understand the issues that Members may have so they could be addressed in advance as it was quite a lengthy process. The Member explained that he did not have any particular issues at this stage but he was relatively new to the Council and felt it was something which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may like to have oversight of closer to the time.

58.3 It was

RESOLVED That the Executive Committee Forward Plan be **NOTED**.

OS.59 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

59.1 Attention was drawn to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021/22, circulated at Pages No. 15-20, which Members were asked to consider.

59.2 A Member queried whether any additional items were likely to come forward for the meeting on 8 March 2022 as there were only two items currently due to be considered. In response, the Head of Corporate Services explained that the two scheduled items – Council Plan Performance Tracker and COVID-19 Recovery Tracker and Update on Local Policing Arrangements – were expected to be sufficient for that meeting as the trackers tended to generate a lot of questions and the update on local policing arrangements would be a presentation so he would anticipate that the meeting would not be a short one. The Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee pointed out that the next meeting of that Committee was due to take place on 30 November 2021 which now clashed with a Special meeting of the Planning Committee which she would be attending but she would circulate any important updates via Democratic Services.

59.3 The Head of Corporate Services drew attention to the pending items, set out at Page No. 20. He advised that the Active Gloucestershire 'We Can Move' progress report had now been added to the 2022/23 work programme following the signing of the agreement for the project in October and, as previously mentioned, the update on local policing arrangements was now scheduled for the meeting on 8 March 2022. The Planning Services Review had been considered by the Executive Committee at its meeting the previous week and it had been agreed that the action plan for the review would be monitored by Transform Working Group on the basis that it was the appropriate mechanism for a transformational project of that nature and, in order to avoid duplication, it would be removed from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme. He stressed that Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would still receive progress updates via the performance tracker so would be able to see if actions were being delivered. A Member queried whether it would be better for the action plan to be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee given that the Committee already examined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). In response, the Head of Development Services explained that the action plan was much broader than performance, for instance, it included actions on staff training and templates etc. In addition, the Business Transformation team was looking at the processes within the Development Management service as part of the review, as such, it was considered that Transform Working Group was best placed to monitor progress. The Member requested that a copy of the action plan be sent to him and the Head of Development Services undertook to email him

the high level action plan which had been taken to the Executive Committee the previous week and was within the public domain.

59.4 It was

RESOLVED That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021/22 be **NOTED**.

OS.60 GLOUCESTERSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL UPDATE

60.1 Attention was drawn to the report from the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel, circulated at Pages No. 21-23, which gave an update on matters discussed at the last meeting of the Panel held on 3 November 2021.

60.2 The Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel advised that the entire meeting had focused on the recently issued PEEL (Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy) report of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services on the performance of Gloucestershire Constabulary. The report had been prepared based on a review undertaken prior to the appointment of the new Police and Crime Commissioner in May 2021 and assessed the Constabulary in 13 areas of policing, of those, four had been graded 'good', one 'adequate', six 'inadequate' and the remaining two were ungraded. It had been noted that Gloucestershire had been subject to a new form of review which was a more granular system than the previous one which had consequences for how matters were recorded and reported – in a previous report, Gloucestershire had been found to be adequate across all of the four categories it had been assessed upon and there had actually been little change in performance since then. One issue was around IT as the system for recording reported incidents was at the end of its life and a proposal for its replacement would be forthcoming. This was an area the Police had been focused on before the report came out with the number of Officers working with crime data having doubled to try to improve the issue. It was noted that Her Majesty's Inspectorate had now suspended using the new system which supported the view that the findings did not necessarily reflect a dip in performance.

60.3 At the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members had raised two queries which the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel had followed up with the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Chief Constable and his staff. In relation to the amount of time which the Police horses were in active use, it was noted that they were used six days per week for policing specific events and in community patrols. Whilst the Police believed they did have a positive impact on the community, there was an ongoing review into their value for money and the outcome of that was awaited. In terms of instilling confidence of women in the Police following the Sarah Everard case, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable had assured him very confidently that Gloucestershire did not have that culture within the Constabulary and there were rigorous arrangements in place to monitor recruitment and behaviour, including whistleblowing procedures. Despite that confidence, additional training had been rolled-out to all Officers in light of the case and the issues it had raised. A Member queried whether the Council's representative had felt that the responses from the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable had been genuine, and whether any evidence had been provided as to why they did not feel Gloucestershire had that culture within the force. In response, the Council's representative expressed the view that it had been a very positive conversation and the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable had been open about the issues raised by the case and the importance of addressing them. It was clear their

response was not ad hoc so consideration had clearly already been given to the matter; nevertheless, there was always a possibility of people slipping through any system and they were emphatic that any concerns would be looked into.

60.4 A Member indicated that it would be helpful if the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable could provide initial acknowledgement when constituents made complaints or raised concerns and to break down detailed response rates by districts and urban/rural split as this was an issue he and other Borough Councillors had come across. The Council's representative advised that the Police had developed a package of statistics which measured a range of performance metrics that were broken down geographically. The Home Office required a plethora of information to be collected and analysed in order to identify and address any failures and that had been shared with the Police and Crime Panel at its previous meeting. The new Police and Crime Commissioner had focused on the importance of addressing rural crime so additional measures had been implemented around that although it was noted that the Police and Crime Panel did not receive information on specific cases. Another Member questioned what the response would be in terms of actions to be taken as a result of the PEEL report and when the force would be re-inspected. In response, the Council's representative indicated that he was unsure how frequently inspections took place but he did not believe it was that that often. The results had been acknowledged and the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable would now look for opportunities to ensure a more positive set of results next time; this included increasing resources and it was noted that additional Officers were being recruited so there would hopefully be a stronger Police Force over the next couple of years.

60.5 A Member asked whether there was an action plan arising from the lessons learnt during the pandemic which would ensure the Police were better placed for another wave so that the impact would be less significant, for example, in terms of equipment, shift patterns etc. The Council's representative undertook to ask that question at the next Police and Crime Panel meeting. He indicated that the problem with the COVID-19 pandemic was that it was completely unexpected, therefore, the contingency plans which were in place did not set out how the Police should respond if there was an issue for the entire country – rather they were designed to reflect how Gloucestershire should support another Force in an emergency situation. The Member indicated that he assumed there would be simple changes which would make a big difference such as reducing contact between Officers to limit the potential spread.

60.6 The Chair thanked the Council's representative for his update and it was subsequently

RESOLVED That the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel update be **NOTED.**

OS.61 GLOUCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE UPDATE

61.1 Attention was drawn to the report from the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee, circulated at Page No. 24 and on the separate papers, which gave updates on matters discussed at the meetings held on 20 October and 17 November 2021.

61.2 The Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee advised that the meeting on 20 October had focused on the review of the Local Transport Plan and the GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership "Getting Building Fund Programme" with the 17 November meeting concentrating on modern methods of construction, the Gloucestershire Infrastructure Investment Fund and the Executive Director's report on economic growth issues for the country.

- 61.3 With regard to modern methods of construction, a Member questioned whether these would actually ever come forward and what was being done to progress schemes in Tewkesbury Borough. In response, the Council's representative advised that there were already schemes within the borough including modular housing in Winchcombe. He indicated that modular housing could be made to look any way but people tended to favour the more traditional looking housing so it often looked like 'normal' housing to the untrained eye. There were fantastic savings to be had as modular housing was much cheaper to run so it was possible that affordable housing might truly be affordable in time. The Chief Executive explained that the presentation at the meeting on 17 November was the second in a series of three with the first having focused on what modern methods of construction actually were and this one looking at it from a manufacturer's point of view in terms of what they thought the issues were. Modern methods of construction had lots of advantages in terms of the speed of delivery, the nature of the housing and the ongoing costs which meant they lent themselves to being used for affordable housing as they could be supported by registered providers who sometimes delivered them using government grants; despite this, modern methods of construction were not as common or as well-used as they might be in the affordable housing sector. The third presentation in the series would be from a private sector housing developer and the aim would then be to provide a report for the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee in order to consider how best to move forward. Modern methods of construction were a relatively new concept, particularly for the private sector, and developers were likely to say that the reason they did not bring forward more products was because the market did not want them – there were many other reasons including price and the fact they were different but, until the market started to drive the process, it would be difficult for modern methods of construction to become well-known. One manufacturer in the Forest of Dean was working to provide homes for the private sector on smaller more bespoke developments but it would be some time before people were able to see the advantages of modern methods of construction in terms of net carbon zero and the savings in terms of heating costs etc. He suggested that it may be useful to arrange a seminar on modern methods of construction in the New Year so that all Members gained a basic understanding of what that meant and the various types.
- 61.4 A Member indicated that Councillors had previously had an opportunity to see some modular housing being built and it had been very impressive; there had been very little mess on the roads and, although the housing had been moved around the country and bolted together six times, it was impossible to see the joints. The Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee indicated that the build took place in controlled conditions as opposed to out on a building site where weather conditions were unpredictable, this meant that quality was in-built and he was of the view that it may be more appealing to those who would rather work in a factory environment than a bricklayer on an outdoor building site. The Chief Executive felt there was a very important point in relation to climate change and carbon reduction as traditional building sites involved around 20-30% waste, which was the equivalent of around one in six houses, whereas the quality control measures associated with modern methods of construction reduced waste to less than 5%.
- 61.5 With regard to the Gloucestershire Infrastructure Investment Fund, a Member asked whether any infrastructure investment was being specifically targeted in Tewkesbury Borough. In response, the Chief Executive explained that the Getting Building Fund Programme was aimed at supporting growth and innovation in the digital and cyber sectors and, whilst other growth infrastructure projects had been put forward, no projects within Tewkesbury Borough had received funding due to the focus being on digital at this time. Nevertheless, the infrastructure pipeline for Gloucestershire for a range of infrastructure projects - which were often reviewed by the Gloucestershire

Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee and the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee – included a significant number of projects available for funding within Tewkesbury Borough. The Growth and Enterprise Manager undertook to provide Members with the GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership’s annual review document which detailed a number of infrastructure projects, some of which were for Tewkesbury Borough. A Member asked whether funding was still available for the A38/A40 link road and the Head of Development Services explained that each Council had to produce an annual infrastructure funding statement setting out the key projects that money could be allocated towards. The list had been considered by the Executive Committee at its meeting last week and would go to Council in December. The projects included were all transport-led and an update had been provided on progress against each. The Member asked if any projects were ever deleted from the list and, if so, whether Members would be informed and was advised that information was received from Gloucestershire County Council regarding schemes required to take forward growth of the wider Joint Core Strategy area and any projects that had been delivered would be removed along with those which the County Council indicated were no longer required – the Head of Development Services advised that, in her experience, things tended to be added to the list rather than being removed; however, if there was a change in circumstances, such as another piece of infrastructure being required which meant that it was consumed within a wider project, Members would be informed via the list.

61.6 It was

RESOLVED That the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee updates be **NOTED**.

OS.62 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM STRATEGY

62.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Community and Economic Development Manager, circulated at Pages No. 25-53, which provided an update on progress against the delivery of the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy during year four and the actions identified for 2021/22. Members were asked to consider the report.

62.2 The Community and Economic Development Manager advised that the current strategy had been in place since 2017 and was based on five key priorities: employment land planning; transport infrastructure improvement; business growth support; promoting Tewkesbury Borough; and employability, education and training. New actions were set each year under those headings. The last 12 months had been difficult for everyone and the business community was no exception; this was likely to continue into the next year. Notwithstanding this, a number of key actions from the strategy had been delivered and those of particular note were set out at Page No. 27, Paragraph 2.1 of the report, including the Growth Hub continuing to provide vital support to businesses, the successful launch of the Tewkesbury High Street Heritage Action Zone and the delivery of various grant schemes. The actions for 2021/22 were set out at Page No. 28, Paragraph 3.2 of the report and included undertaking an economic assessment and business survey to understand the needs of local businesses and help inform future strategy; continuing to deliver tailored support solutions through the Growth Hub; launching and delivering the Small Business Grant scheme; working with partners to promote Tewkesbury Borough and encourage visitors to return; working with partners to support employment and skills initiatives targeted at those affected by unemployment, including a proposed Youth Hub project; and continuing to provide COVID-19 support and High Street recovery.

- 62.3 A Member noted that Appendix 1, which set out the progress that had been made against delivery of the actions in 2020/21, contained a lot of smiley faces but he questioned whether that was a true indication of progress in some cases, for instance, Page No. 30, Action b) Delivering sufficient employment land to meet the needs of the strategic plan, contained two parts – progress towards adoption of the Borough Plan and the draft Joint Core Strategy going to public consultation. This had been carried forward into the action plan for 2021/22 which suggested that it had not progressed as expected. Similarly, Page No. 35, Action d) 1, Work with partners to identify funding opportunities, was reproduced in next year's action plan. With regard to Page No. 37, Action a) Promote Tewkesbury Borough and the M5 Growth Corridor, he asked what the process was for determining which tourist spots within the borough would be promoted as Gwinnetts Tomb was not listed under historical items on the website. He felt that the borough had a lot of options for great day trips which needed to be promoted to those who were already in the area visiting the more 'major' attractions and he felt that leaving these things off the website was a mistake – Gwinnetts Tomb in particular was of massive significance on a worldwide scale and had attracted visitors from the US Embassy. In response, the Community and Economic Development Manager explained that the actions under each objective had tended to be grouped together which meant that an overall approach had been taken when assessing progress. This had been raised as an issue by the Committee in the previous year and it had been decided that would be addressed in the new strategy. He fully agreed with the Member in terms of promoting enough to be of interest to visitors, and leaflets in relation to Gwinnetts Tomb were available in the Tourist Information Centres. He undertook to ensure that it was also being promoted on the Visit Tewkesbury website and with partners at Cotswold Tourism. The Member also queried whether all hotels in the borough were promoted on the websites and the Community and Economic Development Manager confirmed that they should be but he undertook to check.
- 62.4 A Member drew attention to Page No. 38, Action b) Promote Tewkesbury Borough to visitors, working with Cotswold Tourism and other partners, including neighbouring tourism destinations, and noted that actions for 2021/22 included 'promote the borough utilising resources from the Welcome Back Fund' and she asked for clarification on what that was. In response, Members were informed that this was a COVID-19 government fund which was originally the Re-Opening the High Street Fund and was about supporting people back to the High Street in a safe manner; the Welcome Back Fund had slightly different criteria and was focused on the retail centres in Tewkesbury, Winchcombe and Bishop's Cleeve. Related to the same action, a Member asked what the Uncover the Cotswolds Project was about and was advised that the Cotswolds brand was well-known internationally but some places were more popular than others e.g. Bourton-on-the-Water, so the scheme had been launched to promote the lesser-known experiences using an online booking system to encourage new markets. The Member asked for a list of what the money for the Welcome Back Fund had been spent on as Bishop's Cleeve had promoted several things but she did not recall the money having been received. The Community and Economic Development Manager explained that the money was yet to be spent; however, a meeting had taken place with Bishop's Cleeve Parish Council recently where they had gone through how they would like to spend the money and he would be able to share the firm plans with Members over the coming weeks. Another Member indicated that other parts of the borough were growing in size and he asked whether there were any plans to expand investment, for instance, Brockworth now had around 4,000 houses as well as a High Street with a number of shops which were also struggling to get back on their feet following the pandemic. The Growth and Enterprise Manager explained that local centres were eligible for the Welcome Back Fund and she would be happy to speak to businesses in the Brockworth area to see if any help could be offered; however, she stressed that this fund was specifically about welcoming people back. Nevertheless, wider conversations could be had with businesses via the Growth

Hub if the Member was able to put them in touch. Going forward it was hoped it would be possible for Officers to go out to the localities once again. In response to a query about suggestions for other attractions to be promoted, the Community and Economic Development Manager advised that the Visit Tewkesbury website was run by Officers so they were able to add things if required. He reiterated that attractions were promoted on both the Visit Tewkesbury website and via Cotswold.com which had 150,000 visitors last month, in addition, various social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter were also used to promote events etc.

- 62.5 A Member drew attention to Page No. 28, Paragraph 4.1 of the report, which stated that a new Economic Development and Tourism Strategy would be developed in 2022 covering the period 2022-2026 and he asked who would be reviewing this and what support the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could offer. The Community and Economic Development Manager explained that initial discussions had taken place with the Lead Member as to the best process for the review and he pointed out that a lot of the objectives within the current strategy were still very relevant; however, one of the key elements informing the review would be a business survey and economic assessment to understand the needs of the business community. It was intended to bring the draft strategy to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2022. The Member asked whether Members would have an opportunity to influence the strategy at that point and was advised that it would be a draft and so could be amended as necessary. In response to a query as to how to grow the cyber offer within the borough, taking particular advantage of the M5 growth corridor, the Growth and Enterprise Manager indicated that looking in-depth at the various sectors would be an important part of the economic assessment; Tewkesbury Borough had a strong presence in the cyber sector and that needed to be reflected in the new strategy. A Member noted that one of the successes highlighted at Page No. 28, Paragraph 2.1 of the report, related to continued delivery of the countywide inward investment service which included work on the development of advanced manufacturing and cyber propositions and he asked for more information on what had been achieved given the strategy was now entering its fifth year. The Growth and Enterprise Manager explained that work was still underway on the actual delivery of the advanced manufacturing proposal but that was due to be completed early in the New Year which was considered to be the right time; a cyber proposition was also being worked on which would put Tewkesbury Borough on an international stage. She pointed out that the report did not reflect all of the work being undertaken as it was also about developing interest and working with investors. There were a number of countywide projects which a whole range of Officers had helped to develop across the strategy period.
- 62.6 A Member noted that Page No. 50 of the strategy outlined an objective around 'air' and supporting Gloucestershire Airport's business expansion and highway access improvement; however, he raised concern that this was really about roads as opposed to the expansion of air infrastructure. The Chief Executive explained that the strategy was setting out that it was supportive of aviation and the facilities within the borough; Gloucestershire Airport relied on businesses at the site around the airport, most of which were connected to air travel in some way. Whilst he accepted that supporting business expansion and highway access improvement was not increasing the amount of flights to and from the airport, it was important in terms of the success of the airport and the air business which was recognised in the strategy. There may be an opportunity to work more closely with the airport to promote air facilities in the next strategy, if Members so wished.
- 62.7 A Member drew attention to Page No. 33, Action a) 1, Deliver year four business engagement programme of events and 1:1 meetings and he noted that 2,773 business support interactions had been delivered but this did not include any outcomes. In response, the Growth and Enterprise Manager advised that some examples included helping to grow a music academy which delivered courses in

schools, in particular assisting with marketing, finding premises for expansion and developing its business plan; assisting a successful mobile coffee business to grow by putting them in contact with events and providing HR advice in relation to taking on new employees; and working with a fruit farm to obtain a grant to develop a website and install an online selling platform. With regard to Page No. 34, Action b) Promote rural businesses and economic growth in rural areas of the borough, a Member noted that the Digital Strategy had not been taken forward at the current time so he asked why this had been attributed a smiley face. In response, the Community and Economic Development Manager explained that this was another example of where the actions needed to be split further so that progress could be accurately reported for each one; the Digital Strategy was very important for businesses but, in order to avoid duplication, this had been put on hold as Gloucestershire County Council was also taking a strategy forward. In response to a query as to when the strategy was due to be developed, the Community and Economic Development Manager advised that he believed it had already been developed but he was unsure if there was an action plan behind it and he would update Members following the meeting.

62.8 A Member indicated that he could see little in relation to environmental improvement within the current strategy and he felt that staff should be encouraging businesses to do things in more environmentally friendly ways as much as possible. The Community and Economic Development Manager reminded Members that the current strategy had been developed in 2017 and climate change and environmental impact had increased dramatically in importance since that time; a number of businesses had the green agenda at heart and this would be a key part of the new strategy going forward.

62.9 Having considered the information provided, it was

RESOLVED That the progress made against the delivery of the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy during year four, and the actions identified for 2021/22, be **NOTED**.

OS.63 REVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY AND GUIDELINES

63.1 The report of the Head of Corporate Services, circulated at Pages No. 54-64, attached, at Appendix 1, the revised Social Media Policy and Guidelines. Members were asked to recommend to the Executive Committee that the revised Policy and Guidelines be approved.

63.2 The Corporate Services Manager explained that the Social Media Policy and Guidelines had been introduced in 2015 and it had been considered prudent to undertake a review at this point in order to ensure they remained relevant and reflected best practice for local government. The Social Media Policy and Guidelines set out the Council's approach to social media and the expectations in terms of managing its use. It was a helpful reference for anyone working for the authority who was actively involved in using social media, as well as being an important way to ensure communication was consistent and a tool for enhancing the Council's brand. Social media had grown significantly since the policy was first introduced and was now one of the main channels of communication allowing Officers to communicate with, and respond to, members of the community on an immediate basis. Social media was a friendly, approachable way for the Council to engage with the community and customers recognised they could rely on those channels for advice, for instance, in adverse weather conditions such as snow or flooding. The proposed main changes were outlined at Page No. 56, Paragraph 4.1 of the report and related to the inclusion of Instagram as a social media channel used by the Communications team; the recommendation that Members help to

promote the Council's messages to their social media followers by sharing content from the corporate accounts on their own pages; and an explanation of why the Council did not currently interact on Facebook noticeboards.

- 63.3 A Member asked whether new social media platforms, such as Tik Tok, were considered for use by the Council and how often that was reviewed. In response, the Communications Officer advised that social media platforms were reviewed regularly and, as stated at Page No. 55, Paragraph 3.1 of the report, the ones currently used by the authority were Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube. Social media was constantly evolving with new platforms coming forward and growing in popularity – whilst Tik Tok was not something which the Council was considering using at this point, a few years ago it would have been unthinkable for the Council to have an Instagram account so it was possible that it would become relevant at some stage and a corporate account would be created if and when that was the case. A Member recognised the 24/7 nature of social media and he asked what processes were in place to manage that. The Corporate Services Manager explained that it was made clear via the social media channels that they were only managed during working hours; however, if there were any emergencies, these were managed between the Communications team with a rota being developed if necessary to ensure the responsibility did not lie with any one individual. In response to a query regarding moderation, the Corporate Services Manager explained that, on the rare occasion it was needed, action would be taken immediately.
- 63.4 A Member questioned whether a Social Media Policy was in place as part of employees' code of conduct in terms of personal social media use and the Corporate Services Manager undertook to check following the meeting. The Chief Executive pointed out that the authority did not monitor staff personal use of social media as that would be too resource intensive; however, staff did agree to general terms and conditions of employment which required that they must not bring the Council into disrepute and, should an issue arise, it would be a disciplinary matter. Another Member asked what training was available for staff and Members and was advised that training sessions had been run previously, particularly for Members, and the Communications Strategy required a further session to be delivered so it was hoped to run a Member seminar early in the New Year on the approach to social media, with a separate session for those staff involved in managing the Council's social media accounts.
- 63.5 The Head of Corporate Services indicated that the resourcing of the Communications team had been raised at a previous meeting of the Committee with a growth bid having been submitted for a permanent Communications Officer post. He was pleased to report that, following a reshuffle of hours within the Corporate team, this could be funded through existing resources so there were now two Communications Officer positions within the base budget.

63.6 It was

RESOLVED That it be **RECOMMENDED TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** that the Social Media Policy and Guidelines be **APPROVED**.

OS.64 DEPOT SERVICES WORKING GROUP UPDATE

- 64.1 The report of the Head of Community Services, circulated at Pages No. 65-78, provided Members with an update on the progress of the Depot Services Working Group. Members were asked to consider the report.
- 64.2 Members were advised that the Depot Services Working Group had been established in 2019 to enable Members to better understand the relationship between the Council and Ubico and how the latter operated. The Working Group had met on two occasions during 2021/22 and a further two meetings were planned in accordance with its Terms of Reference. A robust work programme had been developed and agreed at the first meeting which was attached at Appendix 2 to the report. The main considerations at the first meeting had been the increase in fly-tipping, the national driver shortage; quarter one financial performance; in-cab/connected technology; and the Defra waste and resources strategy consultation which would potentially have significant financial and operational impacts for the Council. The second meeting had focused on Ubico's quarter one performance; the trade waste project; the depot project in partnership with Cheltenham Borough Council; and grass cutting. An annual update would be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April 2022.
- 64.3 A Member noted from the Terms of Reference, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, that the Working Group was due to continue until contract renewal and he asked when that would be. In response, the Head of Community Services explained that the contract had been renewed on 1 April 2021; however, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had felt there were a number of projects which needed to be overseen and it had been agreed that the Working Group would continue on that basis. The Committee would review the Terms of Reference again at its meeting in April 2022 at which point Members could decide whether there was a continuing role for the Working Group. From his perspective, the Working Group had been productive with engagement from Ubico and Tewkesbury Borough Council Officers. The Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment chaired the Working Group and was in attendance today to endorse the update; the Lead Member felt that the Group had been an excellent bridge between Members and Ubico which had helped to address many of the concerns about the services being provided. There were still many challenges ahead, not least the need to consider the options for expansion of the depot, and it was imperative that the Group was able to continue. Another Member of the Working Group expressed the view that there was really positive communication between Ubico and the Council and a sense of trying to help one another through constructive feedback.
- 64.4 The Head of Democratic Services explained that the Terms of Reference had been approved when the Working Group was first established in 2019 and set out that the Group would comprise nine Members of the Council to include six Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, one Member of the Audit and Governance Committee and the Lead Members for Clean and Green Environment and Finance and Asset Management. Councillor Cromwell had been appointed to sit on the Working Group as a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at that time; however, having now resigned from the Committee, he was no longer entitled to sit on the Working Group on that basis and, as he did not qualify under any of the other categories set out in the Terms of Reference, this left a vacancy on the Group with a number of options available which the Committee would need to decide upon. The first option was to replace Councillor Cromwell with another Member; however, the Chair of the Working Group, Councillor Mason, was of the view that Councillor Cromwell was a valuable Member of the Group on account of the knowledge he had acquired through sitting on the Group from the outset. Therefore, a second option would be to specifically name Councillor Cromwell as a Member of the Working Group on the basis of his knowledge and experience, thus reducing the number of

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members from six to five. A third option was to increase the number of Members on the Group to 10 and to nominate someone else from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to join the Working Group as well as including Councillor Cromwell. It was noted that it was intended for the membership to be primarily from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as it was a Scrutiny Working Group which reported back to that Committee.

64.5 The Chair of the Working Group made a plea to the Committee to allow Councillor Cromwell to continue to sit on the Group as he had a great amount of knowledge on the subject of waste and had previously chaired the Grounds Maintenance Working Group which had preceded the Depot Services Working Group. As Chair, he would be more than happy for the membership to be extended to allow another Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to join the Working Group. The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee wished to echo the comments made about Councillor Cromwell's background knowledge and endorsed the suggestion of extending the Terms of Reference to include another Member.

64.6 It was proposed and seconded that the Terms of Reference be amended to include an additional Member, ensuring that the majority of Members were from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee whilst allowing Councillor Cromwell to remain on the Group, and that Councillor K Berliner be nominated as the additional Member. It was subsequently

RESOLVED

1. That the progress of the Depot Services Working Group be **NOTED**.

2. That the Terms of Reference of the Working Group be amended as follows:

2.i) The Group shall comprise ~~nine~~ **ten** Members of the Council – **the majority of which will be** ~~to include six~~ Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – **and will include** one Member of the Audit and Governance Committee and the Lead Members for Clean and Green Environment and Finance and Asset Management.

3. That Councillor K Berliner be appointed as the additional Member of the Working Group.

OS.65 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION PEER CHALLENGE REPORT ACTION PLAN

65.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Head of Corporate Services, circulated at Pages No. 79-91, which provided an update on the progress made in relation to the implementation of the Local Government Association Peer Challenge Report Action Plan. Members were asked to consider the report.

65.2 The Head of Corporate Services explained that the Local Government Association had carried out a Peer Review of Tewkesbury Borough Council during the week commencing 2 March 2020 and this was the second update report. The progress against the actions was positive and that had been endorsed by the Local Government Association when the Head of Corporate Services and the Chief Executive had met with them six weeks earlier. Delivery of the action plan was being monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the majority were things which Officers had been aware of prior to the peer review and several were now 'business as usual'. Particular attention was drawn to Action 9 - Consider the undertaking of a comprehensive and regular residents' survey and Members were informed that a survey had been sent out to 5,000 residents during October with the closing date for responses the following week. It was hoped to have some high level results prior to Christmas with a more detailed report to follow.

65.3 A Member asked how Tewkesbury Borough Council was intending to catch-up with Cheltenham Borough Council in relation to the garden community delivery given the progress that had been made on the cyber park. In response, the Chief Executive clarified that Cheltenham Borough Council was an equal partner to Tewkesbury Borough Council in that project and the majority of housing sites were within Tewkesbury Borough. The project had been rolling for four years and, to a large extent, delivery had been focused on the employment site, i.e. the cyber centre, with millions of pounds of investment. Tewkesbury Garden Town was three to four years behind so it was not fair to compare them. He stressed that these were major projects which took a significant amount of time and all garden communities across the country started from different positions. Tewkesbury Garden Town was a concept at this moment in time which was the earliest of stages. Cheltenham Borough Council had been given planning status through the Joint Core Strategy 1 which had been adopted by all three Joint Core Strategy authorities and that same level of status would not be achieved for the Tewkesbury Garden Town until Joint Core Strategy 2 had been adopted.

65.4 A Member asked how regularly the residents' survey was undertaken and how those being surveyed were selected. In response, the Head of Corporate Services indicated that, ideally the survey would be undertaken every two years and a representative sample of properties was used to ensure coverage across all Borough Wards. The Corporate Services Manager advised that Stratford District Council's consultation unit had been used for this so comparative statistical data would be available which would be weighted and statistically sound. A Member raised concern that the Tewkesbury Borough News was still not being delivered to residents in Sandhurst and he was aware that was also an issue for Minsterworth residents. The Corporate Services Manager explained that there was no way to ensure 100% guaranteed delivery for the entire borough – some properties were simply too rural; however, regular discussion took place with distributors and Officers did request evidence of delivery, of which there was a significant amount in Minsterworth. Nevertheless, she undertook to review this again with the current edition. She confirmed that compensation had been received for areas that had been missed previously and Officers were diligent in terms of checking copies had been delivered. The Chief Executive asked Members to let the Corporate Services Manager know if residents were not receiving the Borough News and reminded Members that they could request a copy from the team if they needed one. The Corporate Services Manager confirmed that they did have some hard copies available which could be posted or a link was available to an electronic version which she undertook to send to all Members.

65.5 It was

RESOLVED That the progress made in relation to the implementation of the Local Government Association Peer Challenge Report Action Plan be **NOTED**.

The meeting closed at 6:32 pm