

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	7 February 2023
Subject:	Community Services Improvement Plan
Report of:	Head of Community Services
Head of Service/Director:	Head of Community Services
Lead Member:	Lead Members for Clean and Green Environment, Community and Housing
Number of Appendices:	1

Executive Summary:

A full service review of Community Services was undertaken in 2018 which identified a number of areas for improvement. This report provides a progress report on the action plan that was developed following the service review. The actions related to the various teams that sit within Community Services and this report provides an update on some of the key actions. Updates on all actions can be found within the appendix to this report. Officers consider that no further reports on this item are necessary.

Recommendation:

To CONSIDER the progress made in relation to the Community Services Improvement Plan and to AGREE that no further reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committee are required.

Financial Implications:

None arising directly from this report.

Legal Implications:

None arising directly from this report.

Environmental and Sustainability Implications:

None arising directly from this report.

Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):

None arising directly from this report.

Safeguarding Implications:

None arising directly from this report.

Impact on the Customer:

None arising directly from this report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In 2018, a review of Community Services was undertaken and an improvement plan produced. It was agreed by the Executive Committee that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would receive an update on the implementation of the identified improvements.
- 1.2 The majority of the improvements have been implemented; one has been delayed and some superseded by events or other Council priorities.
- 1.3 Much of the routine work of the team was put on hold for almost two years as a result of the global pandemic. Environmental Health was at the forefront in dealing with combatting the pandemic by providing advice to businesses and communities.
- 1.4 This report highlights some of the key actions and improvements that have been made and the document at Appendix 1 shows progress against all actions.

2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

- 2.1 One of the improvements within this service area was to undertake a trial of a new way of working by moving the staff into geographical teams where they would work in a more generic manner, dealing with all of the various elements of environmental health work within that geographic area. This way of working was trialled for a period of six months and the feedback from Officers was negative. The main reason for this was because Officers felt comfortable dealing with areas of work within their professional discipline, for example, food safety or environmental protection, but they lacked the in-depth knowledge of the other disciplines outside of their specialist areas. For this reason, and following consultation with the team and with HR, the team has moved back to the method of working previously used i.e. Officers working across the whole borough within their specialism.
- 2.2 A further improvement in this area was to recruit to vacant posts within the structure. This action was implemented and the team is now fully staffed.

3.0 HOUSING

- 3.1 New legislation was introduced in 2018 which required the Housing team to change the way it worked. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 required Council Housing departments to undertake a much more preventative approach to those threatened with homelessness and the improvement plan identified that the level of resource required to work in this way would need to be increased. New officers were employed and the team has implemented the new legislation which is now embedded into the way that they work.
- 3.2 The improvement plan also highlighted the need to work better with the private sector. This remains challenging and a pilot carried out in 2019 to offer incentives to landlords to take those on benefits or lower incomes proved to have limited benefit. The team still work closely with private landlords where the opportunity arises.

4.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 4.1 The Council's Community Safety Partnership (CSP) has been suspended in Tewkesbury Borough and one of the actions was to reintroduce the CSP. This was done prior to the pandemic; however, the partnership is yet to deliver a meaningful Community Safety plan. This remains the only outstanding action from the improvement plan.

4.2 The Council previously did not have any resource to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) and the improvement plan introduced the development of a Community Safety team. There is now a team of two Officers in place who deal with ASB supported by a Community Safety Coordinator. The Council is about to enter into a trial partnership with Gloucestershire Police in order to improve the way it deals with persistent and high level ASB.

5.0 LICENSING

5.1 A full review of the Licensing service has been carried out and this service is subject to its own improvement plan, which is reported regularly at the Transform Working Group, Programme Board and to the Licensing Committee. Therefore, the actions in the improvement plan have been superseded.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 HR were consulted on any staffing changes that arose from the improvement plan.

7.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS

7.1 None

8.0 MONITORING

8.1 No further monitoring of this action plan is proposed.

9.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

9.1 Corporate Enforcement Policy and Environmental Health Enforcement Policy.

Background Papers: Executive Committee report - Community Services Review - 11 July 2018.

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Appendices: Appendix 1 - Community Services Improvement Plan – Action Plan