

# TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Tuesday, 11 July 2023 commencing at 4:30 pm**

## **Present:**

Chair	Councillor M Dimond-Brown
Vice Chair	Councillor C L J Carter

## **and Councillors:**

N D Adcock, C Agg, P A Godwin, G C Madle, H C McLain, E C Skelt, M J Williams, P N Workman and I Yates

## **OS.12 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

## **OS.13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

13.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H J Bowman, T J Budge, C E Mills and G M Porter. There were no substitutes for the meeting.

## **OS.14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

14.1 The Committee's attention was drawn to the Tewkesbury Borough Code of Conduct which was adopted by the Council on 24 January 2023 and took effect on 1 February 2023.

14.2 There were no declarations made on this occasion.

## **OS.15 MINUTES**

15.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2023, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

15.2 It was **AGREED** that the following additional actions be included within the Action List, circulated at Pages No. 14-18:

- Minute No. OS.8.3 – Parking Strategy Review – Executive Director: Resources and S151 to discuss with the Lead Member at the earliest opportunity whether the revised strategy should be taken forward for approval, or whether it needed to be reconsidered given the time which had now passed since the Working Group had reached its conclusions and in light of the new Council.
- Minute No. OS.9.2 – Pending items – Director: Corporate Resources to discuss with Officers how these items could be brought forward.

**OS.16 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN**

- 16.1 Attention was drawn to the Executive Committee Forward Plan, circulated at Pages No.19-30. 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.
- 16.2 The Director: Corporate Resources reiterated that the Executive Committee had previously requested some changes to the Forward Plan and an additional column showing the Lead Member had been included as a result. Moving forward it was intended to enhance the description of each Agenda item and to include links to background documents and information about where the item sat within the Council hierarchy.
- 16.3 A Member drew attention to the ICT Strategy, due to be considered at the Executive Committee meeting on 10 January 2024, which stated this had been removed from January 2023 and she asked why it had been deferred for such a long period. In response, the Director: Corporate Resources advised that it had been incorrectly scheduled for January 2023 as the strategy did not expire until 2024. Another Member commented that the Forward Plan was not well populated in September and October and the Director: Corporate Resources provided assurance that other things tended to come forward so he was confident the Agenda for those meetings would include additional items to those currently stated.
- 16.4 It was

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

**OS.17 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24**

- 17.1 Attention was drawn to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme, circulated at Pages No. 31-42. Members were asked to consider the Work Programme and Action List.
- 17.2 A Member drew attention to the Agenda for the meeting on 12 September 2023 which included the Council Plan Performance Tracker – Quarter One 2023/24 and asked what was meant by ‘performance management’ in terms of the overview of the Agenda item which stated ‘to review and scrutinise the performance management...’. The Director: Corporate Resources advised that this related to delivery of the actions within the Council Plan and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Another Member noted that the Community Safety/Aston Project Presentation had been added to the pending items section in June 2022 and she asked when that would come forward. The Chair indicated that, as had been stated at the last meeting and subsequently agreed at today’s meeting as an additional action for inclusion in the action list, the pending items were being reviewed by the Director: Corporate Resources who would propose an appropriate way forward in due course.
- 17.3 It was

**RESOLVED** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24 be **NOTED**.

**OS.18 UBICO REPORT 2022/23**

- 18.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Head of Service: Waste and Recycling, circulated at Pages No. 43-65, which provided the annual update on the Ubico contract. Members were asked to consider the 2022/23 outturn performance update on the services provided by Ubico.

- 18.2 The Head of Service: Waste and Recycling advised that collection accuracy had improved with a reduction in total missed collections across all services, a greater number of near misses had been reported and the fleet compliance audit score had stayed consistently high. There were two major projects underway: fleet procurement – large scale replacement of collections and street cleansing vehicles had progressed throughout 2022/23 and the Executive Committee had approved the approach in March 2023; and the Alloy in-cab system – implementation had begun in 2022/23 with Tewkesbury Borough’s roll-out taking place in two stages during 2023/24. The Managing Director of Ubico explained that Appendix 1 to the report provided the detailed service-related performance information for 2022/23 including the number of missed collections and assisted missed collections which was important in terms of impact on residents. The report covered sickness and absence as well as fleet services and management. Overall it was a very positive report with fewer missed collections across the board and retention of the 100% fleet compliance audit score, something which the local team was deservedly proud of.
- 18.3 The Chair raised concern that the Executive Summary, set out at Pages No. 48-49 of the report, did not mention grounds maintenance or grass cutting which was a perennial issue for Councillors who needed to be kept abreast of performance. He felt it would also be beneficial to include year on year data in order to identify trends, along with data for authorities of a similar nature to Tewkesbury Borough Council to assess how well Ubico was doing compared to other Councils. Another Member indicated that she could not tell from the report whether performance was achieving KPI targets or other objectives. In response, the Managing Director of Ubico confirmed this could all be incorporated into the next report. In terms of data from comparable authorities, this would need to be anonymised.
- 18.4 A Member drew attention to Page No. 45 of the report which stated that “overweight vehicles reduced from 39 to 25 which shows efforts to be more aware of this issue are having a positive impact” and she asked what this meant and what had happened to the 14 vehicles. The Ubico Head of Operations explained it related to the actual load being carried by vehicles, for instance, if an 11 tonne vehicle was carrying a load of 11.5 tonnes it would be classed as overweight – the number of overweight vehicles had been fewer in 2022/23 compared to previous years. The Director: Communities explained that this figure should further reduce going forward with the new rounds and vehicles being introduced. Overweight vehicles was a serious issue so it was something Ubico was working hard to address. The Chair asked for clarification as to why it was so serious and the Ubico Head of Operations advised that Ubico could be inspected by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), which had the power to revoke its operator licence, at any time. There was weighing equipment in the vehicles but it was difficult to keep this calibrated – for example, when the vehicle hit a pot hole – and that was something which was being addressed in the fleet procurement. In response to a query as to who was at fault when a vehicle was overweight, the Ubico Head of Operations advised that this varied; it could be the driver if they were putting more loads onto the vehicle to avoid having to make an additional journey to tip but, the majority of the time, vehicles were overweight by such a small amount the driver was unlikely to realise – it could be a single black bin bag which made the difference. A Member asked if there was any particular type of waste which was causing vehicles to be overweight and was advised that street litter bins and dog waste bins involved a manual handling process and relied on estimation of how much each bin weighed. Loads could be impacted by things like rain which made materials become wet causing them to get heavier. The Chair expressed the view that this issue appeared to be being actively managed by the Ubico team, as evidenced by the reduction in the number of overweight vehicles, thus lowering the risk to the Council.

- 18.5 Turning to missed collections, a Member congratulated Ubico on its performance as the number of missed bins was very low in the context of the total number of bins collected. He asked what the main reason was for missed collections and was advised that this varied; it could be due to a crew calling in sick and being replaced by another who did not know the round - this would be resolved through the introduction of in-cab technology which would remove reliance on local knowledge – or it may be that a customer had not put their bin out on time and subsequently reported it as being missed. A Member asked how information about vulnerable customers with assisted bin collections was relayed to new crew members as she had recently had a conversation with a resident who had reported an issue. The Ubico Head of Operations advised that every crew received an assisted collection list each day before they started their round. The Member explained that a series of blue bins had been left on the pavement which was a problem for people with visual impairments who were required to manoeuvre around the bins until the owners came to collect them. The Managing Director of Ubico indicated this was a difficult issue to resolve for several reasons, for instance, crews may return bins to where they were presented but residents may not collect them swiftly; whilst it was not possible to take a blanket approach whereby Ubico went onto people’s properties to put the bins back, they would be happy to work with Members on particular issues to establish if there was a better approach for certain areas. A Member noted that missed collections were fairly stable during May and June 2022 followed by a significant increase in missed food waste collections and she asked if there was any reason for this. In response, the Ubico Head of Operations advised that a fifth round had been introduced to alleviate capacity issues and there was a lack of local knowledge in terms of where bins were presented but it was expected this would improve going forward as the crew became more familiar with the round. Food waste collections tended to be the most frequently missed bins primarily because the caddies were smaller and could more easily be concealed behind refuse bins etc. The introduction of in-cab technology would allow crews to report bins which were not presented which would allow any trends to be identified and addressed. The Chair asked if it was possible to remind residents their food caddies must be visible and the Director: Communities undertook to speak to the Communications team about putting something on the Council’s social media channels. He pointed out that the collection rate was the best across Ubico and 99.99% was a fantastic achievement given the amount of collections per year. The Chair expressed the view that Members would benefit from a presentation on in-cab technology and the Director: Communities indicated this could be incorporated into the Member Induction session on Ubico and Waste Management scheduled to take place on 14 September 2023. In response to a query as to how data on missed collections was accurately collected, the Ubico Head of Operations advised that it was based on a calculation of the amount of collections, i.e. 50% recycling/50% refuse, 100% food waste and the number of garden waste service subscribers per week, multiplied by the number of weeks per year – this was as accurate as it could be currently. In response to a query as to whether it was possible to work out how much of the garden waste which was taken to Wingmoor Farm could be disposed of in a brown garden waste bin, the Managing Director of Ubico confirmed that data for material taken to the Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) in Gloucestershire was publicly available and available to Officers and Ubico.
- 18.6 A Member drew attention to Page No. 54 of the report in relation to bin requests and asked if there was a particular reason why food waste bins were more frequently requested than the others. The Ubico Head of Operations advised that, because they were smaller, they were lost more easily. A Member asked whether there would become a point where this would become uneconomical, if there was a better way of collecting food waste and what other authorities did. The Managing Director of Ubico advised that standard sized caddies were used for food waste; they were smaller and tended to be used more frequently meaning that they failed more quickly but this was the same across the country. In response to a query, she

confirmed that the food waste caddies used by Tewkesbury Borough Council were seven litre and 23 litre with the larger one being the one put out for collection; these were standard across Gloucestershire. A Member indicated that she had recently been in another county where they had used larger food waste bins and she was interested to know how much it would cost to change the bins used by Tewkesbury Borough and whether this would have any implications in terms of the vehicles collecting them – she would like to establish if the savings, in both financial and environmental terms, of introducing something larger and more robust would be worthwhile. The Managing Director of Ubico explained that this would require a much more detailed piece of work. Another Member shared the concerns about the robustness of the existing food caddies and indicated she would like to see a better design. The Director: Communities indicated this would be borne in mind if it became necessary to change all of the bins; clearly there would be a cost of doing that which would need to be investigated. The Chair felt it would be beneficial for the Depot Services Working Group to look into this in more detail to understand how much of a problem it was and the financial and environmental costs and benefits. The Director: Corporate Resources pointed out that although 3,067 food waste bins had been requested in 2022/23, these were not all replacement bins; a large proportion would be bins for new properties in the borough.

- 18.7 A Member asked whether any information was available on the recycling contamination rate and the Director: Communities confirmed there was a website which members of the public could use and Tewkesbury Borough Council received a monthly report from the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) contractor; Tewkesbury Borough's contamination rate was 3.2% which was very low. In response to a query regarding the correlation between refuse and recycling rates the Director: Communities explained there was no correlation whereby if one went up the other went down. In any case, it was the Council's responsibility to improve recycling rates and the amount of waste collected was not an issue for Ubico. A Member queried where the target of 60% recycling had come from and what could be done to improve the recycling rate and was informed this was a national target for 2030. It should be borne in mind that there had not been a 'normal' year for some time due to the impact of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis etc. so it was difficult to interpret the data but there was now a feeling that things were returning to the base line. The Member asked if this meant that the data should be ignored; if not, there was a definite downward trend in terms of the recycling rate. The Managing Director of Ubico explained that waste and recycling was seasonally affected which was why it was presented by month as opposed to by year to show increases at Christmas when there was more cardboard packaging etc. and in summer when garden waste was greater. The Chair expressed the view that there was a need for credible information in order to establish trends; if that could not be done from the data currently being collected then different data was needed. He suggested this was another area the Depot Services Working Group could be asked to explore. The Director: Communities stressed that it was important to ensure there was no duplication of the work carried out by the Gloucestershire Resources and Waste Partnership, of which Tewkesbury Borough Council was a partner. The new Gloucestershire Resources and Waste Strategy was due to be approved shortly and set out the county ambitions for the next three to four years. Notwithstanding this, he suggested it may be helpful for the Depot Services Working Group to receive a presentation on what was already being done to increase recycling rates. A Member asked whether other authorities were achieving the 60% target and was informed that the government was looking at co-ordinating figures nationally for publication; however, he indicated that details of how Tewkesbury Borough Council was performing against its nearest neighbours could be included in the performance tracker – there was more work to be done but Tewkesbury Borough Council was performing well and there was a financial incentive to continue to improve.

- 18.8 A Member asked whether the data in relation to dead animal and fly-tipping removal requests was specifically for Tewkesbury Borough, or if it covered Gloucestershire as a whole, and was informed that the report was solely related to Tewkesbury Borough data. A Member asked why there had been a reduction in the percentage of dead animal removal requests being fulfilled within two working days in February and March 2023 and was advised this was a staffing issue which had required an operational decision to divert staff to bin collections but assurance was provided the service was now back up to capacity. A Member asked why there was no data for overweight tickets in February and March 2023 and was advised there had been no overweight tickets during those months.
- 18.9 With regard to health and safety, a Member drew attention to Page No. 45, Paragraph 5,1 of the report which stated that the positive trend from 2021/22 had continued with over 1,500 near misses or safety concerns reported and noted there was a graph within the Ubico report for safety reporting but not one for near misses. The Managing Director of Ubico advised that near misses was a difficult concept to grasp so the terminology had been changed to address this but they were the same thing. The Member expressed the view that near misses should be considered as incidents and reported separately. In response, the Managing Director of Ubico advised that accidents were reported separately but safety concerns were observations of things which could have resulted in an accident and therefore were not incidents in themselves. A Member noted the safety concerns included 223 'hit by a moving vehicle' which sounded concerning and he was interested in who provided the figures. The Ubico Head of Operations explained that crews were encouraged to report safety concerns. The Managing Director of Ubico stressed that nothing had happened in those cases but it was important to capture them so measures could be proactively put in place to avoid actual incidents. Another Member felt it would be beneficial to include an explanation in the report as the figures looked quite shocking on the face of it and it was agreed that would be done going forward. A Member noted that the accident report, set out at Page No. 62 of the report, did not set out what type of accidents had occurred and the Managing Director of Ubico confirmed this could be done in future. In response to a query as to whether the one personal accident in the graph at Page No. 62 in April, May, June, July and August was a recurring accident, the Ubico Head of Operations clarified these were different accidents. A Member expressed the view this was quite low given the number of employees and the nature of the job. The Director: Communities provided assurance that the contract management team met with Ubico on a monthly basis to discuss key issues which included health and safety and he encouraged the Committee to focus on the issues within their remit. The Chair indicated that it was the Committee's job to analyse the data in order to report to the relevant authorities any action required and he encouraged Members to ask any questions which helped them enhance their understanding.
- 18.10 In response to a query regarding absence management, the Managing Director of Ubico advised there were a number of ways of supporting staff including an absence management telephone line which provided nurse-led advice and a return to work interview with tailored, for example, manual handling training. Risk assessments were undertaken and it was possible to amend duties to accommodate an injury or illness. The employee welfare service provided by Ubico was for both employees and their families and, as well as its own HR team, the Occupational Health service also supported Ubico, furthermore, there were trained mental health first aiders at each depot. Another Member asked whether absences tended to be long or short-term and was advised that it varied; there were currently no long-term absences but that could change at any time.

- 18.11 In terms of the Tewkesbury projects, outlined at Page No. 65 of the report, a Member noted that the comment against the implementation of a sweeper schedule stated that Ubico was awaiting confirmation of zone areas from the Council and asked if that had been completed. In response, the Director: Communities explained that this work was almost finished – every bin in the borough had been mapped with the focus now on establishing the regularity with which certain areas would be swept and this was almost ready to provide to Ubico. In response to a query as to whether every street would be included in the schedule, and whether Members were able to have a copy of the list, the Director: Communities confirmed that once it had been implemented and trialled it would be available to Members on the Council's website; however, it was important to manage expectations as, whilst it was intended to sweep every street at least once a year, it would be necessary to concentrate on areas of main footfall e.g. shop areas etc. The Head of Service: Waste and Recycling indicated that it would be a working document which could be tweaked as it was trialled. The Member asked if residents could report areas that needed to be cleared directly to the Council and was informed that was possible but Members needed to be mindful that this could take the team away from scheduled work.
- 18.12 With regard to fleet procurement, a Member noted that other rural Councils were arguably doing more to green their fleets and he sought a view from Ubico with regard to this. The Managing Director of Ubico explained that all of the vehicles were owned by the Council and Ubico worked with Officers to establish where they could green the fleet. There were a number of electric and hybrid vehicles across Ubico and the vast majority of Cheltenham Borough Council's diesel fleet was run on Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) which was something being considered for Tewkesbury Borough Council. Ultimately, hydrogen would perhaps be the best way forward; however, the network for supply was not yet adequate, as such, it was a question of what could be done in the meantime, for instance, electrifying smaller vehicles which had the range with the HGVs coming later down the line. In response to a query as to whether any trials of electric refuse collection vehicles had been undertaken within the county, the Managing Director of Ubico confirmed that Ubico had trialled an electric vehicle from Dursley which had been able to reach the borough but did not have the range to get back. Some of the smaller vehicles within the fleet could move to electric but the biggest vehicle that had been successfully electrified within the Ubico fleet was for Stroud District Council. She provided assurance that new trials were taking place frequently. The Ubico Head of Operations felt it was worth noting that Ubico was running training on driver behaviour at Cheltenham Borough Council where there had been a significant reduction in carbon emissions as a result.
- 18.13 A Member sought clarification as to what was meant by service integration and what economies of scale were being explored across Ubico. The Managing Director of Ubico advised this was a holistic look at where benefits of Tewkesbury Borough Council being in a teckal company could be leveraged, for instance, there was a significant benefit in terms of near neighbours being part of Ubico and the ability to cross boundaries which was being investigated. There were other potential benefits such as sharing vehicles across Ubico but it was necessary to establish how costs could be ringfenced to the relevant authority.
- 18.4 The Chair thanked the representatives from Ubico for attending the meeting and it was

**RESOLVED** That the Ubico Report 2022/23 be **NOTED**.

**OS.19 ANNUAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REVIEW**

- 19.1 The report of the Senior HR and OD Adviser, circulated at Pages No. 66-90, set out the progress made during 2022/23 against the Workforce Development Strategy Action Plan and the actions for 2023/24. Members were asked to consider the report.
- 19.2 The Senior HR and OD Adviser explained that a five year strategy had been approved by the Council in 2019 and the report looked back at delivery of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to date and what was planned for the forthcoming year. Members were advised that it was not always possible to provide data from previous years as for some actions this was the first established data set that could be collected; however, she provided assurance that comparable data would be provided moving forward. In terms of recruitment, the internal target was based on national levels and the market – the time from advert to contract had been reduced compared to previous years. Right to work checks were now required to be conducted face-to-face and a number of staff did not live locally so there was a reliance on them to come into the Council Offices to do this. With regard to candidate attraction, 624 applications had been received across 78 vacancies and Officers were looking at what could be done to ensure that adverts were fair and equitable in what was a very competitive market. There had been an increase in the number of vacancies being filled from first and second advertisements, 73% and 92% respectively, which included hard to fill vacancies in Planning and One Legal where there was tough competition from the private sector. Officers were also looking at what could be done to improve the overall package to make it more attractive to prospective employees and in 2022/23 this had included the introduction of a salary sacrifice scheme for electric/low emissions cars which had a small uptake to date. A scheme for the purchase of additional annual leave was planned for 2023/24. Positive feedback had been received regarding Eploy, an application tracking system used from the point of application to onboarding. In response to a query regarding the percentage of zero hours contracts, as opposed to fixed or permanent, the Senior HR and OD Adviser advised there was a small handful of casual vacancies to fill project gaps with 10-15% on fixed term contracts; casual staff were currently employed in the Tourist Information Centres or on project work.
- 19.3 In terms of absence, the internal target of eight days per full-time employee had not been achieved but, at 9.83 days, this was a big improvement on the previous year which had been 11.52 days. The Supporting Performance Policy had been updated which clarified the Council's requirements as an organisation and the trigger points etc. A new HR platform had recently been developed which provided a self-service portal for staff to record annual leave, sickness and timesheets – it was intended to add to this going forward. There had been a shift in the reasons for absences during 2022/23 due to staff returning to the office following the pandemic and mixing with others resulting in a number of cold and flu bugs; measures to counteract this included offering payment for flu jabs and providing cleaning supplies for desks etc. The work of the team and the Council in respect of wellbeing had been recognised with formal accreditation from Gloucestershire Health Workplaces, as set out at Appendix 3 to the report,
- 19.4 In respect of staff turnover, this had increased from 14.5% to 15.4% with a number of staff leaving the authority after the pandemic following reflection on their personal circumstances. Additional measures had been put in place to address this during quarters three and four, including the Recruitment and Retention Policy, and staff continued to be surveyed using the Pulse check to establish the landscape of the authority, particularly with increased hybrid working. It was noted that the Council operated an apprenticeship scheme and there would be four new apprentices joining the authority over the coming weeks. In terms of equality and diversity,



although the Council had no legal obligation to report the gender pay gap, this had been done for transparency since 2017 and the gap had reduced from 16% to 13.2% in 2022/23. Equal opportunities data had been reviewed and there was an equal opportunities section on Eploy in order for the Council to collect data on new starters and applicants.

- 19.5 In terms of actions for the coming year, this would include creating a library of management toolkits for common issues such as absence management, maternity, organisational change etc; reviewing the job evaluation processes and how jobs were graded; and looking at evidence-based approaches to reducing the gender pay gap. It was also intended to explore partnerships with others to increase exposure to digital innovation, for example, University of Gloucestershire Business School and GCHQ. Officers would continue to implement the Council's vision and values and ensure policies and procedures were embedded.
- 19.6 The Chair noted the accreditation from Gloucestershire Healthy Workplaces and congratulated the Council on a fantastic achievement. A Member asked which service had the most vacancies and sought assurance that the impact on staff within departments carrying vacancies was recognised. The Senior HR and OD Adviser advised that the majority of gaps were within the Planning service and, whilst it had been possible to fill some of the vacancies, there continued to be gaps across different levels which did add pressure to existing staff. With regard to Appendix 2 which set out the achievement against key performance measures, the Chair indicated it would have been helpful to include a service breakdown in order to identify any particular services or grades where specific actions were required. A Member drew attention to Page No. 75 of the report which stated that, of the 624 applications for job vacancies, 44 had been categorised as 'not specified' in terms of gender and he asked for clarification on this. The Senior HR and OD Adviser explained that those people had not responded to this particular question. She advised that the Council used "blind" applications as no personal details were made available when selecting candidates for interview. The Member asked whether gender continued to be a relevant question and the Senior HR and OD Adviser recognised this was a difficult issue. There had been an expansion of gender categories and norms which required consultation regarding appropriate terminology and phrasing. Gender was important in terms of applying equal opportunities and how this was reported, for instance, the gender pay gap, and ensuring that the Council could reach out to the right pool of candidates; however, she stressed that focus during recruitment was on experience and qualifications so it remained relevant in that regard.
- 19.7 A Member welcomed the apprenticeship scheme but noted this was normally aimed at young people and she asked whether the Council had a strategy for bringing people back to the workplace as well as the measures in place to upskill existing employees. The Senior HR and OD Adviser advised that a lot of apprentices were 21 or over and there was no upper age limit for applicants. The apprenticeship pay scale had recently been reviewed and made more attractive which it was hoped would increase the pool of candidates. The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) process, which involved a conversation between the staff member and their Line Manager, helped to identify staff training and development opportunities which enabled the HR and OD Team to build programmes for staff. Another Member indicated that apprenticeships had been very successful in the past in terms of retention and she asked whether any of the new apprenticeships would be in Planning given that was an area where recruitment was difficult. In response the Senior HR and OD Adviser explained that all operational managers had been consulted to establish whether they would be interested in taking an apprentice and two of the new positions were rotational – Environmental Health/Waste and Community Development/Planning Policy. The other two would be in IT and Revenues and Benefits. A Member asked whether flexible working was available for those not on a permanent or fixed contract and the Senior HR and OD Adviser

explained that the Agile Working Policy gave all staff the opportunity to request different working patterns provided they had completed 26 weeks service; the staff member was required to complete an application form which would be discussed with their Line Manager and, if approved, HR would write to the individual with the new terms and conditions of their employment. If anyone requested flexible retirement, there was an expectation they would drop 10% of their hours – that was the only stipulation. The Member suggested that flexible arrangements may help with recruitment and the Senior HR and OD Adviser confirmed that, for the right candidate, a request for reduced/variable hours etc. would be considered in terms of whether it was viable for the service; flexible applications were welcomed.

- 19.8 A Member asked whether the Pulse survey completed by staff was anonymous and what percentage of absences were work-related. She pointed out that six of the seven top management positions within the Council were occupied by men and asked what was being done to encourage women into more senior roles. The Senior HR and OD Adviser acknowledged that the gender pay gap was likely to be impacted by the new management structure this year but stressed there was no phrasing/terminology or imagery to deter women from applying and the appointments were based on the right person for the role. There were ways and means to support female applicants to higher roles and the authority looked to grow its own talent supported by the CPD process and mentoring. The Senior HR and OD Adviser undertook to find out the figure for work-related absences and provide that to Members following the meeting; however, she was aware that a small number of absences were due to work-related stress and HR worked quickly to address those matters. She confirmed that the Pulse survey was anonymous but it was possible for Officers to add their name if they would like a direct response to their feedback.
- 19.9 The Chair indicated that he expected to see more substance to the actions for 2023/24 and accepted this may be due to the way the document was worded; however, he sought assurance it was not reflective of a lack of ambition. In response, Senior HR and OD Adviser advised that the actions were based on resources and targets set by previous management. There was not a great deal to take forward based on the current strategy but there was work to be done year on year and there would be a lot of requirements for digital development going forward. The Chair asked for Members to be provided with a brief update on what was planned under each heading to understand the ambitions for the next 12 months and the Senior HR and OD Adviser explained that the new Associate Director: People, Culture and Performance would be taking up her post at the end of August and would be able to feed into that document.
- 19.10 Having considered the report, it was  
**RESOLVED** That progress against delivery of the Workforce Development Strategy be **NOTED**.

## **OS.20 FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT 2022/23**

- 20.1 The report of the Associate Director: Finance, circulated at Pages No. 91-101, highlighted the Council's financial performance for the previous year. Members were asked to consider the report.
- 20.2 Members were advised that the final revenue outturn position for the financial year 2022/23 showed a £1m surplus. In terms of service expenditure, employee costs were £389,343 underspent, largely as a result of high staff turnover and vacancies in a number of departments. Payments to third parties included £138,000 on various planning appeals as well as additional provisions being made for planning appeals that were currently being challenged which amounted to £330,000; in addition, £140,000 of planning appeals had been funded from reserves, therefore,

the total cost of planning appeals for 2022/23 was £608,000. Additional income had been generated, particularly within Planning and Licensing, and external grant funding was also received through the year as well as a £300,000 planning software grant to be used in the coming financial year. In terms of the Council's commercial premises, a gross rental income of £3.19m had been produced, a yield of 5%. This was approximately £178,000 less than budget due to a vacant unit; however, all units were now fully tenanted. Business rates showed a £448,000 surplus against budget and Tewkesbury Borough Council benefited from being in the Gloucestershire Business Rates Pool which had generated a further £380,000. A full explanation of all variances exceeding £25,000 at group subjective level was attached at Appendix A to the report which also contained an explanation of the variance on the corporate codes. A breakdown of the Council's reserves as at 31 March 2023 was attached at Appendix B to the report which included a breakdown of the previous year's reserves and the capital outturn was set out at Appendix C to the report.

20.3 A Member drew attention to Appendix A to the report and questioned why the budget for garden communities was zero. The Associate Director: Finance advised that the Garden Town was completely funded by an external grant which was included in the reserves - there was no cost to the Council. Another Member asked what the £33,000 biodiversity net gain grant from the government was for and was advised it was for investment in staff and resources and had to be spent on training and upskilling Officers with regard to biodiversity net gain. In response to a further query as to how it was being spent, the Director: Corporate Resources advised that the grant had to be audited to give central government assurance it was being spent in accordance with the conditions of the grant; when it had been audited nothing had been spent to date.

20.4 A Member noted that the Ubico contract was £137,000 over budget but the Ubico report considered earlier on the Agenda had suggested a contract saving of £15,282. The Associate Director: Finance indicated this was likely to be due to the pay award but she undertook to provide an answer following the meeting. In response to a query regarding the most concerning financial risk for the Council, the Executive Director: Resources and S151 indicated that, from his perspective, it was the uncertainty regarding the Council's finances from April 2024 onwards. The authority faced a number of challenges as a small council and he eagerly awaited clarification from the government regarding the funding position going forward.

20.5 It was

**RESOLVED** That the financial outturn report 2022/23 be **NOTED**.

## **OS.21 GLOUCESTERSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL UPDATE**

21.1 Attention was drawn to the report from the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel, circulated separately, which gave an update on matters discussed at the last meeting held on 7 July 2023.

21.2 In the absence of the Council's representative on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel, the Chair asked for any questions to be emailed to the representative following the meeting. It was subsequently

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

**OS.22 GLOUCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
UPDATE**

22.1 It was **NOTED** that the Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting had taken place that morning and the Council's representative on that Committee would circulate her report to Members via email.

The meeting closed at 6:40 pm

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 11 July 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No (IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)
4.	Minutes	<p>Additional actions to be included in the Action List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minute No. OS.8.3 – Parking Strategy Review – Executive Director: Resources and S151 to discuss with the Lead Member at the earliest opportunity whether the revised strategy should be taken forward for approval, or whether it needed to be reconsidered given the time which had now passed since the Working Group had reached its conclusions and in light of the new Council.</li> </ul>		Executive Director: Resources and S151	Yes – agreement from Lead Member to postpone review until 2023/24.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minute No. OS.9.2 - Pending items – Director: Corporate Resources to discuss with Officers how these items could be brought forward.</li> </ul>		Director: Corporate Resources	

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 11 July 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No <small>(IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)</small>
7.	Ubico Report 2022/23	Additional information to be included in future reports:			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grounds maintenance/grass cutting information.</li> </ul>	Was included in July 2022 report but omitted from July 2023.	Director: Communities	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparable data for:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- previous years; and</li> <li>- other similar authorities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		Director: Communities	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance against KPIs/objectives.</li> </ul>		Director: Communities	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page No. 60 – Safety Concerns – explanation of what was meant by a safety concern to be included alongside the graphs.</li> </ul>	Members were concerned that the figures and descriptions of safety concerns looked negative on the face of it e.g. 223 'hit by a moving vehicle'.	Director: Communities	

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 11 July 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No (IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Page No. 62 – Accidents – Information on type of accident to be included (similar to the categories used for safety concerns as at Page No. 60).</li> </ul>		Director: Communities	
		Social media post to remind residents their food caddies must be visible when putting them out for collection.		Director: Communities	
		In-cab technology to be incorporated into the Ubico and Waste Management Member Induction programme session on Thursday 14 September 2023.		Director: Communities	

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 11 July 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No (IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)
		Items to be referred to the Depot Services Working Group:			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration of the costs and benefits associated with replacing food waste caddies with larger, more robust receptacles.</li> </ul>		Director: Communities	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation on what was currently being done by the Gloucestershire Resources and Waste Partnership to increase recycling rates.</li> </ul>		Director: Communities	
		Information on how the Council was performing against its nearest neighbours in terms of achieving the 60% recycling rate to be included in the performance tracker.		Director: Communities	
		Tewkesbury Projects – Sweeper schedule to be made available to Members on the Council's website once implemented and trialed.		Director: Communities	



## Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 11 July 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No (IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)
8.	Annual Workforce Development Strategy Review	Appendix 2 – Assessment against Key Performance Measures – Service breakdown to be provided in future in order to identify any particular services/grades where specific action was required.		Director: Corporate Resources	
		Percentage of work-related absences to be provided to Members.		Senior HR and OD Adviser	
		Brief update on what was planned in 2023/24 under each heading to be provided to Members in order for them to understand the ambitions for the next 12 months.	To be done once Associate Director: People, Culture and Performance has taken up their post.	Director: Corporate Resources	
9.	Financial Outturn Report 2022/23	Members to be advised why the Ubico contract was showing a contract saving of £15,282 (Page No. 44) compared to Appendix A of the Financial Outturn report (Page No. 97) which outlined an overspend of £137,000.	Circulated on 19 July 2023.	Associate Director: Finance	Yes

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee Action List – 11 July 2023

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE	ACTION	COMMENTS	CONTACT OFFICER	ACTION COMPLETE Yes / No (IF NO MUST INCLUDE TARGET DATE)
11.	Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Update	Update to be circulated via email.	Circulated on 28 July 2023.	Democratic Services Officer	Yes