

SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2010/11

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Summary

This report provides details of the quarter 3 performance of the Transitional Corporate Plan for Shropshire Council in 2010/11. Similar to quarter 2 and responding to the transformation of the national performance framework, the report looks at the 12 key measures/outcomes within the Transitional Corporate Plan 2010/13, reviewing current performance, cost and customer feedback where available, how this impacts in localities (where applicable) and how this informs future service delivery.

Recommendations

- A. That Cabinet review and agree the quarter 3 performance report.
- B. That Cabinet agree the performance summary 2010/11 to be emailed to Council Members for information only (pages 2 and 3 of the report).

Shropshire Council Performance Summary 2010/11





1. Overall the Transitional Corporate Plan is on target for quarter 3 ●
2. Priority outcomes under performing at quarter 3 are:
 - Economic growth (see page 4 for further details)
 - Planning (see page 7 for further details)
 - Children's social care (see page 10 for further details)
3. The table overleaf summarises performance, financial and customer intelligence for each of the 12 key priority outcomes.
4. Detailed cost analysis is contained in the quarterly budget monitoring report, but contained where relevant within this report for a wider view of performance of outcomes.

Performance Summary Table – Quarter 3 201/11

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Key:  Performance is 5% or more above target  Performance is on or above target by up to 5%  Performance is less than 5% below target  Performance is more than 5% below target

Priority 1 Enterprise and growth – Indicating the strength of the county’s economy and local recovery following the economic downturn.

Developing the local economy

1. New Business Registration Rates provisional data show slightly fewer new business registrations than targeted. However, it would appear that Shropshire has seen slightly greater business resilience experiencing fewer business failures in comparison to the West Midlands areas.
2. The Shropshire Business Enterprise Fund (BEF) continues to support local businesses and create employment opportunities with support and grant packages. In quarter 3, 24 start up grants were awarded totalling £27,200, 6 boosters were approved (£21,347) and an additional 3 retail grants were approved (£2,815). Work during the quarter brings the total number of grants awarded this year to 99.

A Shrewsbury-based business has been able to expand and employ additional staff after receiving a grant from Shropshire Council’s BEF. Chemical Watch, based in Longden Coleham, publishes news and intelligence to help companies meet their responsibilities under environmental and chemicals legislation worldwide. To aid their expansion, managing director Julian Rose successfully applied for a £5000 grant towards new IT equipment. Julian said: *“We’re very grateful for the funding received from the Business Enterprise Fund which has enabled us to expand the team by two in Shrewsbury, where we now employ seven people. Chemicals is a truly global sector, and our website draws subscribers from around the worldwide seeking the latest news. Three-quarters of our sales are generated from overseas subscribers and advertisers.”*

- 3.
4. In quarter 1 it was reported that initial mapping work showed a lack of start-up grants around the Wem, Ellesmere, and Whitchurch areas. In quarter 3, 3 of the total grants are in these target areas. An update on the distribution of grants will be provided at quarter 4. Overall awards granted in quarter 3 by location are shown below:

	Number of Awards	Value	Average Value
Central	7	£15,375	£2,196
North	10	£11,370	£1,137
South	16	£24,617	£1,539
Total	33	£51,362	£1,556

5. As detailed at quarter 2, £3m has been allocated to the Market Town Revitalisation Programme (MTRP) as part of a longer term approach to regeneration covering the six larger towns (£2.5m) and eleven market towns (£0.5m). These elements of the MTRP are bedding in with the first few projects for approval expected to come forward over the next few months. Shrewsbury is covered by Growth Fund monies and Shrewsbury Vision work so is excluded. The Rural Challenge Fund (£0.5m) covers the remaining rural settlements and a competitive bidding round will open in March 2011.
6. The Growth Point programme and Shrewsbury Vision works programme now form part of delivering the conditions for success for the emerging Marches Local Enterprise Partnership. Funding is also contributing to two other key projects namely, the Northern Corridor and Ditherington Flax Mill. A detailed update and expenditure information was provided in the report that went to Cabinet on 19 January 2011.

Supporting 16 – 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)

7. Provisional results show that the local target of 5.2% has just been missed by 0.2% with average NEETS over the quarter at 5.4% (405 young people). Performance was second quartile at the end of quarter 2 and despite concerns about the number who have left college prematurely, the end of December 2010 level of 5% (371) is similar to the level achieved the previous year. There are six fewer NEET in number this year (377) and we are seeing a slowing down in the number of young people joining the register. Given the economic downturn this is an achievement. We are forecasting to achieve the end of year local target of 5.3%.
8. The percentage NEET in Market Drayton (7.0%, 79 young people) and Oswestry (7.4%, 76 young people) areas remains higher than the county average and missed their local targets. Bridgnorth and Ludlow have also missed their individual local targets as can be seen below.

AREA	Q3 target based on annual LOCAL 5.4% target	Average result for Q3	Performance	NEET Number Q3 average
Bridgnorth	4.0	4.1	poor	52
Ludlow	4.2	4.6	poor	52
Market Drayton	6.4	7.0	poor	79
Oswestry	6.6	7.4	poor	76
Shrewsbury	5.2	4.8	good	145
Shropshire	5.2	5.4 (provisional)	poor	405

9. The young people that are NEET at 16-18 are often the same young people who have, or go on to develop, a range of other complex needs including educational underachievement, substance misuse, disability, health and mental health needs, homelessness, offending and teenage parenthood. Poverty is the most prevalent underlying factors across this range of needs. During the last three months a range of activity continues to reduce the number of NEETs. This has included:
 - Working with the post 16 providers to identify students at risk of early drop-out. Currently there is concern about the number who have left college prematurely, many after the six week induction period, so a pilot is underway whereby college tutors from the Foundation Learning team attend the final review of statemented pupils to start the information flow.
 - Negotiating a young mum's project for the north east of the county which will start at the end of the month. This will provide 8 places and concentrate on work readiness skills.
 - Continuing to work with schools to identify young people in Year 11 who are potential NEETs. Programmes of preventative work are in place to keep them engaged for the remainder of their compulsory education.

- Discussions with housing managers to look at how Personal Advisers can work more effectively with housing providers and young people using their services. Homeless young people are one of the vulnerable groups and are well represented amongst the NEET cohort. This multi-agency approach, which builds on good practice in Oswestry, will impact on the NEET numbers.
10. In December 2009 around 55 Shropshire young people were NEET for more than 12 months; at the end of December 2010 there were 43. As part of the programme of transformation, a place based intervention project is underway which will focus on reducing worklessness in some of our most vulnerable localities and this work will support reducing long term NEETs.
 11. 2069 students in Shropshire receive Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) from a cohort of 4770 representing 43% of the student population. The loss of up to £1k EMA may impact on NEET figures prior to special grants being effective in September.

Improving council homes

12. The Housing team now target works on selected hot spot properties and are forecasting to meet (or get extremely close to meeting) the end of year target of 20% for the proportion of Council housing stock considered non-decent. A system has been developed which allows the Asset Management Team to plan work based on quality projections / models. Indicative stock condition data is being reported monthly in order to ensure performance against target and is providing encouraging information.
13. The decent homes programme has a budget of £4.09m for 2010 and to date £1.69m has been spent on decent homes works. The remainder of the budget is contractually committed and is likely to be spent as planned by the end of the financial year.
14. Customer satisfaction is measured against several key contracts and customer feedback has been positive:
 - Periodic Electrical Testing - 98% of customers said the service was good.

"The electrician was a very pleasant workman. My wife and I are very pleased with his work. He completed his work in very good time".
 - Replacement Doors – 97% said the overall improvement of their property as a result of having their doors replacement done was good and 98% were happy with the quality of workmanship and finished installation.
15. The percentage of rent collected continues to perform well. Issues that surrounded this indicator during early 2009/10 have been rectified. The quarter 3 figure is 97.66% against a target of 97.00% and shows improvement against the same period last year (94.16%). The team is forecasting to meet its end of year target of 98.5%
16. Average waiting times for major adaptations to Local Authority property has improved dramatically on last year. By better targeting jobs, waiting times fell from 78.7 weeks at quarter 1 2009/10 to 44.3 weeks at quarter 4 2009/10. National benchmarking of this measure are not available but consistent improvements have been made to waiting times which currently stand at 17.9 weeks and are expecting to meet the quarter 4 target of 24 weeks.

Priority 2: Responding to Climate Change and Enhancing our Natural and Built Environment – indicating how well the Council is responding to environmental changes in the county.

Improving street cleanliness

17. The national indicators for street cleanliness (covering litter, detritus, graffiti, fly-posting and fly-tipping) are measured 3 times a year. The results from the last survey demonstrate good and consistent performance against targets and previous reporting periods.
18. To support the achievement of improved satisfaction with street cleansing services, the service is carrying out an educational role and the impact of this role will be measured through the APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) survey which was carried out during November 2010. Results are expected by the end of January and will be reported in quarter 4.
19. Street Scene services are looking at other methods to improve customer satisfaction and adapt services to meet local needs. As part of the Community Stewardship pilot, a perception survey in the Bridgnorth area was undertaken at the end of 2010. Over 1,300 responses were received and show that litter, dog fouling and ASB were key issues residents want addressed. A focus group with 30 residents helped to gain a better understanding of the results. The final recommendations from the survey and focus group will be delivered in quarter 4. Further environmental surveys will be developed so that communities can undertake surveys themselves and report their concerns directly. The surveys will identify the issues within the community to be addressed and help the service to prioritise or re-focus its resources.
20. In quarter 3, seven deep cleans have taken place across the County (namely Whitchurch, Llanymynech, Highley, Albrighton, Brooksbury, Church Stretton, The Crescent, Clee Hill, Dinham, and Ludlow areas). 5 Community Litter Picks have taken place (although Gallows Bank, Ludlow was cancelled due to bad weather). In addition, a number of Council Organised Litter Picks have taken place with 25 volunteers taking part.
21. Street cleansing services are forecasting to come in on budget (£2,259) at end of year.

Improving the planning application process

22. Performance for all three planning application measures has declined and all are forecast to miss end of year targets. To improve the cost effectiveness of the planning service, officers have been working with applicants to address planning issues in order that an application is determined rather than refusing or requesting that an application is withdrawn. Currently, when an application is withdrawn, an applicant can re-submit a new and amended application for free. This presents the service performance in a good light as the new application is likely to be processed within time but results in duplication of work which is added cost to the Council. The new approach will initially result in a decline in performance with regard to the time taken to process the application. But it should result in a higher quality service in that applications will not require re-submission and our focus will be on accurate planning advice, not imposed time limits.
23. District office performance is varied with the North Office having processed fewer applications in time although they did receive the greater number of minor applications:

	Central Office	North Office	South Office
Major applications% - applications processed in time (total applications received)	62.5% (24)	43.5% (23)	77.8% (18)
Minor applications - applications processed in time (total applications received)	73.6% (242)	67.6% (358)	68.6% (299)
Other applications - applications processed in time (total applications received)	89.6% (538)	80.0% (444)	81.1% (636)

24. A customer satisfaction survey was developed and made available on the council website. However, take-up of the survey was very poor and given the lack of applicants responding, the value of the information provided is inconclusive. To address this, it is proposed to revise the survey and use a different methodology to achieve a higher response rate. The survey will be issued in paper format to each applicant who is sent a decision letter. It is anticipated that this work will commence in February 2011 for a 4 week period. The planning homepage will be amended to see if this can encourage more people to use the online survey.
25. Feedback left by customers via Govmetric shows some key themes:
- the lack of availability of planning officers to discuss applications and provide advice
 - the length of time it takes to validate applications
 - the accessibility and difficulty of use of on-line service
26. The information is currently being analysed and senior management will receive recommendations to address these issues later this month. An update will be given at quarter 4.
27. Year on year fee income for the quarter has increased for each application type with an overall increase from £283,484 in quarter 3 2009 to £421,206 in quarter 3 2010, which equates to an increase of 48%. However, this is lower than anticipated and as such the Planning service forecast a final year overspend of £560k.

Priority 3: Health, safe and confident people and communities – An insight into how residents feel about where they live and what they think about the Council

Increasing local peoples influence of local decisions

28. To date, 63% of the 2010/11 Local Joint Committees (LJC) grant of £1,037k has been allocated supporting 429 schemes. So far in this financial year, each £1 of LJC budget has brought in £2.18 of external funding, more than doubling the total value of LJC project costs to £2,469k.
29. In December 2010, the Council agreed to reduce the number of programmed, officer-supported meetings from 4 to 2 or 3 to reduce costs and to take account of the reduced capacity of a slimmed-down senior management team. In addition, LJC budgets have been reduced by 50%, the Arts Grant budget for 2011/12 will be distributed through LJC's and, as such, grant funding procedures, appraisal processes and eligibility criteria are being reviewed which will be effective from April 2011. Neighbouring LJC's will work together on matters of interest and where more frequent or localised community engagement is needed, local members will be supported to host informal neighbourhood or community forums within their areas.
30. No LJC meetings took place during quarter 3 therefore attendance figures and resident feedback is not available.

Increasing young people's participation in positive activities

31. Previously sourced from the now discontinued TellUs Survey, information is currently gathered from a range of sources to demonstrate how young people are participating in positive activities.
32. Young people were fully involved and consulted over the planned shape for the new youth services; Information Advice and Guidance, Targeted Youth Support and Positive Activities. This included a large public meeting where more than 100 young people attended.

33. Good Hood is a campaign which promotes the positive image of young people. All too often, stories about young people in the press are negative but many of Shropshire's young people are engaged in positive activities such as music, drama, sport, fundraising, volunteering and helping their communities. The Shropshire Members of Youth Parliament manifesto for 2009-2010 included 'A positive image of young people' and they have collected some really positive stories to show some of the things which young people do with their free time. In this booklet, there are stories of individuals and groups and their positive activities have amassed to a staggering 634 hours a week, 27,847 hours a year.
34. The Big Lottery Fund has approved a bid for funding to support the development of a new youth facility in Oswestry under the MyPlace initiative. This project will realise a complete replacement of the existing Centre North West.

Improving support for carers

35. The percentage of carers whose needs were assessed or reviewed was reported above target (23.97% against a quarterly target of 20.00%) at quarter 3 and, with an action plan in place, anticipate to further improve by year end with a result between 25-30% (target 20%). The final result will depend on the fluctuating numbers of people in receipt of community based services.
36. This improvement is a result of the detailed action put in place in 2010. For example, the contract with our main third sector provider for the completion of carers' assessments and carers' support services now includes improvement targets. In addition, our carers' training programme continues to be delivered to a broader staff group so that they have a better understanding of carers' legislation and support services. Also carers' support services are being publicised more widely so that carers are aware of the support available to them.
37. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) 2010 judgement on the quality of Adult Social Care services provided by the Council assessed the Council as having made strong improvement from 2008/09 to 2009/10, being assessed as excellent in three of the seven outcome areas and performing well in the remaining four. This puts Shropshire Council in the top 4 (ranked equal second) within the 14 West Midlands Councils. CQC identified a number of strengths including robust performance management arrangements, partnership boards with good representation from stakeholders (including carers), good consultation arrangements with stakeholders (including carers) to inform the development of plans and robust service commissioning arrangements delivering better value for money. No improvements were identified which related specifically to carers although the CQC did suggest that the Council could be clearer in demonstration how service user contributions are used and measured.
38. To date, more monies have been spent on the Carer's Grant than for the same period last year (£420k vs £386k last year) and it is forecast that overall an additional £266k will be allocated by the year end, an increase of 53%.
39. Feedback from the Carers Conference held in September 2010 have been implemented in the action plan and include improving the quality of carers' assessments and working with other agencies to address carers' issues in a holistic way. The team have various mechanisms in place to gather carers' views and the renewed Carers Strategy for Shropshire, strongly driven and influenced by carers, is nearing implementation.
40. Below is an example of how outcomes for service users and carers' have improved and how services are making a real difference:

A service user and husband who is her carer felt the need for more flexibility with their care package and have recently transferred to direct payments. They enlisted an old friend to help as a Personal Assistant for her evening care and chose a different agency for the morning care to get an earlier call as she was spending most of the morning in bed waiting for carers. To minimise disruption to their lifestyle, the husband acts as second carer during transfers so there is only a need for one carer, and the local authority paid for him to receive full hoist transfers training (e.g. from bed/chair). His needs in his own right as a carer are recognised and carefully considered, as well as the needs of his wife. They have had a full benefit check and now receive all of their entitlements, and he has joined the

carer's organisation and attends carer's group meetings and days out with peace of mind that he can have respite from his caring role and know that his wife is being supported. She also attends day care and respite regularly so that he can continue with his hobby and favourite pass time – golf.

Reducing concerns about Anti-Social Behaviour

41. Performance on the 2 crime indicators measured (serious acquisitive crime and assault with injury) continue to improve against targets set. The bad weather at the end of November and all December contributed to the reduction in the volume of crime.
42. In the absence of the Place Survey, the latest West Mercia Community Safety Survey has been used as a means of monitoring public perception levels around anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime. Results show overall confidence in the police has fallen slightly on last year (-1%) but is +4% on 2 years ago. However, other perception indicators all show positive results - those who feel completely or very safe in their neighbourhood is now 37% (up 5% on last year); those who feel fearful of crime has fallen by 4% to 38% and the perception of anti-social behaviour is now 21%, from 23% last year and 25% 2 years ago.
43. As reported at quarter 2 the Safer Stronger Communities Partnerships has allocated £25k of its Area Based Grant funding for 2010/11 to address ASB. As such a single reporting line number has now been reserved for the ASB Co-located Team and this will be advertised through a publicity campaign to raise awareness of how people can report ASB. The Police will be contributing an Inspector post to the team as well as a three quarter post that will offer admin support. Further discussions will be taking place with housing and the Council hopes to recruit a post dealing with noise pollution and ASB. The team will spend much of their time visiting victims and partner agencies and it is planned to have the team in place by 1st April 2011.

Safeguarding children

44. Spend to the end of November (£16,929k) is higher than for the same period last year (£13,760k), with projected outturn forecast at £919k over budget.
45. A number of changes, as described in the quarter 2 report, have taken place within the Assessment and Support Services during 2010 which should positively impact on improving the timeliness and quality of initial (NI 59) and core (NI 60) assessments. At present the new service structure is settling down and there is a reduction in social work absence and vacancies. The numbers of children subject to child protection plans, and those who are looked after, are reducing because of sustained, consistent professional input. This will have an impact upon related indicators. The recruitment of many newly qualified staff, who have to be inducted in our processes, has meant that initial and core assessment outcomes have not improved as quickly as we would have hoped.
46. The development of the Initial Contact Team, and the transfer of social workers from the Multi-Agency Teams (MAT) to the new Child In Need Teams has yet to be fully adjusted to by referring agencies which has led to a notable increase in referrals and a reduction in the number of Common Assessments (CAFs) completed. Discussions have taken place with the Police and schools confirming appropriate practice and threshold levels and written guidance regarding threshold levels and service responses is being re-launched and re-distributed.
47. The social work teams are now stable, developing relationships with their new team managers and reducing anxieties within the service. This culture has led to the improvements in practice noted above. Children and Young People's Services Independent Review Unit has commented upon the sustained improvements in practice and the improved outcomes for children at risk of harm or domestic breakdown.
48. As such, quarter 3 results show that both assessment timeliness indicators have fallen below their targets, although they have improved slightly on quarter 2. Staffing appointments and the implementation of the improvement action plan are leading to improved procedures and

staff capacity. End of year forecasts suggest that a maximum of 74% (initial assessments) and 62% (core assessments) can now be completed in a timely fashion rather than the 81% originally sought.

49. Referrals to MAT/Multi-Agency & Prevention Teams was the most frequent CYPs enquiry received by customer services in Q3 with 75 enquiries. 25 were enquiries related to the safeguarding of children. These calls are directed to the Assessment and Support Service Helpdesk.
50. Looked after young people involved with the Care Council give up their time to try and improve the care system in Shropshire for young people. They are also trying to show others that young people in care can achieve many positive things. Many of the group have faced difficulties in their lives, but are using their own experiences to try and help other people who are going through the care system. They worked on producing a pledge asking Councillors to sign up to a set of promises for children in care and care leavers.

Becky Davies, Care Council Co-ordinator, said *“the Care Council Crew is amazing! They give up an enormous amount of their time to meet up and talk about serious issues that are facing young people in care and work hard to improve the system.”*

51. No statutory complaints relating to safeguarding were received during the quarter 3 period.

Corporate Health

Improving the reputation of the Council

52. A draft Reputation Management Strategy, entitled 'A Sense of Place', is being developed which will ensure there is a consistent, focused message being communicated from all areas of the council. It will seek to change behaviour in a measurable way, raise awareness and will include a set of measures that will monitor the success of this work and local perceptions linked to the Councils priorities. A Sense of Place will form a tool kit to assist officers in a variety of areas including Public Relations, Social Media and Consultation. This has significantly changed the original remit of the document, which is now due to be signed off in February 2011.
53. Much has been learnt about the impact of good and timely communication on the Councils reputation following the disruption caused by the winter weather from the end of November. Whilst there were 1,218 requests for winter maintenance (gritting requests, salt bins etc) in December alone the efforts of the Highways teams in keeping Shropshire roads clear appear to have been particularly appreciated by customers with 6 times as many compliments about the teams (56 in total) recorded by Customer Services as there were complaints about lack of gritting.

Reducing sickness absence in the Council

54. Days lost has risen from 6.15 days in quarter 2 to 8.33 days in quarter 3 as anticipated (due to school holidays during quarter 2). Even so the quarter 3 result shows good performance coming in below target of 9.00 days. Comparing this figure to the same period last year (10.01), shows there has been a significant improvement, which can in part be explained by the shut down of headquarters and some of other establishments over the Christmas period. However, this is still encouraging because sickness reporting procedures have improved over the last 12 months which will inflate the figures.
55. As detailed in the quarter 2 report, adult social care is piloting the use of an external provider to manage the sickness reporting procedure. Estimated figures for quarter 3 show that days lost is 17.20 days compared to 18.18 days for the same period last year. First Care has advised that this immediate improvement may be due to improved reporting methods and a truer picture will be available at quarter 4.
56. The estimated cost of sickness absence this quarter is £1.61m, compared to £1.24m in quarter 2.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information) Shropshire Council Transitional Corporate Plan 2010/13
Human Rights Act Appraisal The recommendations in this report are compatible will provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.
Environment Appraisal n/a
Risk Management Appraisal n/a
Community / Consultations Appraisal n/a
Cabinet Member Cllr. Gwilym Butler
Local Member All
Appendices n/a