



Committee and Date

Cabinet  
19 February 2014

12.30 pm

Item

**6**

Public

## **Scrutiny: Council Business Plan 2014-2017 and Financial Strategy 2014-2017**

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### **1. Summary**

- 1.1 This reports sets out the view of Overview and Scrutiny through the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee of the Council's Business Plan and Financial Strategy. It summarises the work done, the key findings, and the Committee's observation.

### **2. Recommendations**

- A. The Financial Strategy and Business Plan represent a reasonable, robust set of figures and actions to achieve the Council's outcomes based on major budget reductions and service changes, and
- B. There is a role for Overview and Scrutiny to assist, support and challenge the redesign process and monitor the outcomes for the Leader's budget, adopting the new Rapid Action Group (RAG) methodology.

## **REPORT**

### **3. Opportunities Appraisal**

- 3.1 The work of Overview and Scrutiny has a strong focus on supporting the opportunities to deliver improved services in new and better ways to achieve an improved customer experience, and includes the identification and proactive management of the risks which might prevent this happening.

In order to reach the Committee's conclusion and recommendations, the consideration of the Financial Strategy and the Business Plan has involved challenging whether the approach to redesigning services is deliverable.

- 3.2 Ongoing close working between Overview and Scrutiny and the change programme through an effective and constructive critical friend relationship,

should also support the required pace of change and the delivery of the Council outcomes.

- 3.3 The opportunity to work in the new way through Rapid Action Groups has been well received by the Members involved, and it is intended that their use enabling close working of Overview and Scrutiny alongside service change, as it occurs, continues.

**4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no decisions required through this report that will have direct financial implications. The Performance Management Scrutiny Committee have considered the Financial Strategy and the Business Plan and the approach to delivery, and made their recommendations based on the information and evidence available.

**5. Background**

- 5.1 Overview and Scrutiny’s consideration of the Council’s Business Plan and Financial Strategy has used a combination of a new approach to Scrutiny; the Rapid Action Groups, and consideration of issues and feedback during a comprehensive formal meeting of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee.
- 5.2 Six areas were identified by members for the Rapid Action Groups (RAGs) to consider and were prioritised from the Councils Business Plan by non-executive Members, who also indicated which Group and area they wanted to be involved with. Each RAG was linked to either the appropriate Director or lead officer, with the work completed in a 4 week period. Many of the RAGs identified that there could be further work for them to do and that they would be keen to continue with this new approach to scrutiny, and as an integrated part of the redesign of services.
- 5.3 The membership of the RAGS are as follows:

<b>Rapid Action Group</b>	<b>Membership</b>
<b>Economic Growth</b>	C Barnes, J Cadwallader, D Carroll, J Tandy, D Turner
<b>Performance Management</b>	M Bennett, T Clarke, R Macey, C Mellings, A Walpole
<b>Regulatory and Business Support</b>	A Bannerman, K Parady, B Williams, L Winwood, P Wynn
<b>Waste Review</b>	P Adams, T Biggins, V Bushell, D Minnery, V Parry
<b>Adult Social Care Operating Model</b>	J Barrow, H Kidd, J Jones, P Mullock, M Shineton
<b>Impact of Personalisation for Adult Social Care</b>	N Bardsley, G Dakin, M Kenny, D Lloyd, P Moseley

Key findings from the RAGs are set out in appendix A.

- 5.4 Consideration of the Financial Strategy and Business Plan by the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee built on the RAG feedback. The challenging financial situation was recognised and reflected in some of the questioning, including the flexibility to meet increased demand on certain services that exceeded the expected levels.
- 5.5 The Committee concluded that the Financial Strategy and Business Plan represent a reasonable, robust set of figures and actions to achieve the Council’s outcomes based on major service changes and budget challenges, and that there is a role for scrutiny to assist, support and challenge the redesign process and monitor the outcomes for the Leader’s budget as part of an on going process.

**6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 The RAG approach has been developed, piloted and applied at pace and has provided significant learning to support its evolution to provide effective and flexible scrutiny input into the Councils delivery of change programme.
- 6.2 The experience and opportunity provided by the RAG approach has been well received by the Members involved, resulting in the feedback from many identifying the tight timescales and that they want to continue their work with the areas of focus. A key part of any ongoing work by the RAGs will be done in close working with the Directors, lead officers and Portfolio Holders, and maintain a focus on assisting, supporting and challenging, whilst contributing and enabling redesign of the services.
- 6.3 The close relationship that needs to exist between Overview and Scrutiny and the changes to the Council is also clear, and the Business Planning Cycle offers the opportunity to develop a Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme that ties directly to the change occurring, and will draw on the Council’s Performance Reporting.

<p><b>List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)</b></p> <p>Shropshire Council Business Plan 2014-2017                  Financial Strategy 2014-2017</p>
<p><b>Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) All</b></p>
<p><b>Local Member All</b></p>
<p><b>Appendices</b></p> <p>Appendix 1 – Feedback from the Rapid Action Groups</p>