



Date: Wednesday, 21 September 2022

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

Contact: Emily Marshall, Committee Officer  
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## COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

### TO FOLLOW REPORT (S)

#### **3 Minutes (Pages 1 - 12)**

To consider the Minutes of the Communities Overview Committee meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 4<sup>th</sup> May and 12<sup>th</sup> May 2022 (Minutes to Follow)

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Communities  
Overview Committee

21<sup>st</sup> September 2022

1.00 pm

Item

Public

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23  
MARCH 2022  
1.00 - 3.19 PM**

**Responsible Officer:** Emily Marshall  
Email: emily.marshall@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257717

**Present**

Councillor Robert Macey (Chairman)  
Councillors Ted Clarke, Mark Jones, Nick Hignett (Vice Chairman) and Christian Lea, Les Winwood (Substitute for Dan Morris) and David Vasmer (Substitute for Viv Parry),

**30 Apologies for absence and substitutions**

Apologies were received from Councillors Dan Morris (Les Winwood Substitute), Duncan Kerr (Cllr Julian Dean substitute), Nigel Hartin (Ruth Houghton Substitute) and Viv Parry (David Vasmer Substitute).

**31 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

Members were reminded that they must declare their disclosable pecuniary interests and other registrable or non-registrable interests in any matter being considered at the meeting as set out in Appendix B of the Members' Code of Conduct and consider if they should leave the room prior to the item being considered.

**32 Minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2021**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

**33 Public Question Time**

None received.

**34 Member Question Time**

None received.

**35 Strategic Housing Review of the Housing Revenue Account Management**

The Chairman welcomed Jane Trethewey, Assistant Director, Homes and Communities to the meeting. The Assistant Director presented the report, the purpose of which was to present Campbell's report from the review into the

Housing Revenue Account Management function. The report described the scope and the remit of the review undertaken and set out Campbell Tickell's recommendation as to the future arrangements for the management of the council's retained stock and Housing Revenue Account setting out also how the recommendations are to be implemented.

The Chairman welcomed Lucy Heath, Client and Commissioning Manager, Homes and Communities Team and Sue Adams, Managing Director of Star Housing, to the meeting.

In response to questions from Members of the Committee the Assistant Director confirmed the following:

- The work that was being taken to meet the decarbonisation programme was outlined, including funding opportunities being sought and a project to install air pumps at a Greenfields sheltered housing. The importance of involving tenants was highlighted and it was explained that achieving zero carbon would be difficult due to lack of funding.
- The intention behind the recommendation was not to merge CDL and Star Housing but rather to look at new ways they could work together and share responsibilities. The Committee agreed that this topic should be kept on the work programme for future review.
- Details of a passive house project were outlined.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That Campbell Tickell's report on the strategic review of the Housing Revenue Account be noted.
2. That the proposal of Campbell Tickell that STAR is retained, and for a delivery model which optimises and aligns STAR and CDL to be developed, be noted and that progress in this area is kept on the work programme of the Committee for future review.
3. That feedback be provided on the recommendation of the report and proposals for closer alignment between the activities of STAR and the strategic aims of the Council

**36 Draft Revised Housing Allocations Policy**

Jane Trethewey, Assistant Director, Homes and Communities presented the report, the purpose of which was to provide an overview of social housing in Shropshire.

The Chairman put forward the suggestion that the working group set up previously to look at this be reformed, given that the allocations policy was going to Cabinet in April, to provide initial views and feedback on the proposed draft allocations policy and scheme. The feedback and comments to be reported to the next meeting of the Communities Overview Committee. The Scrutiny Officer advised that new members would be needed and asked for nominations. Councillor Macey agreed to lead the group and Councillor Ted Clarke also volunteered to sit on the group. The Scrutiny

Officer would email the Committee, to include those not present at the meeting, to seek nominations for the group.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Assistant Director confirmed:

- The Policy brought Shropshire in line with the rest of the Country.
- Informal family carers were referenced as part of the eligibility criteria.
- The Housing Strategies would be on the Council's website so that people could easily access them.
- With regards to empty properties and affordable homes, the vacant properties in housing association ownership were monitored and scrutinised, housing associations tried to turn them around quickly and those that were vacant for any substantial amount of time, usually required substantial investment to bring them up to rentable standard or grouped together if they required bringing up to energy efficiency standard. The situation was scrutinised by the Empty Property Officer in the Private Sector Team and the Affordable Housing Forum.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the information provided on the social housing stock in Shropshire be noted; and
2. A working group be established, comprising of Councillors Macey and Clarke and others to put their names forward, to provide initial views and feedback on the proposed draft allocations policy and scheme.

**37 Economic Growth Plan**

The Chairman welcomed Tracy Darke, Assistant Director for Economy and Place and Hayley Owen, Growth Programme and Strategy Manager to the meeting. The Assistant Director provided a brief introduction to the report the purpose of which was to inform the Communities Overview Committee of the Economic Growth Strategy (EGS) review 2022-2027, the work undertaken to date, work in progress, next steps and consultation process.

The Growth Programme and Strategy Manager, gave an update and overview on the journey so far, current performance, work done to date and the next steps.

Procurement processes were outlined and how these steps could be made simple for smaller businesses.

With regards to a skills audit, through the covid pandemic, the team had been drafted in to delivering business grants, have now got funding for a new post, to support skills. This is something new and the team would work closely with training providers.

Consultancies and experts who advised business throughout the UK, were excellent in Shropshire, and could be looked at and expanded and developed to support businesses within Shropshire.

**RESOLVED:**

That Community Overview Committee note the content of the report and request that the draft Economic Growth Strategy 2022-2027 is brought back to committee in advance of any future Cabinet report and recommendations.

**38 Blue Badge Online Applications**

The Chairman introduced Robert Smith, Information and Advice Manager at Age UK and Frances Darling, Head of Business and Consumer Protection, Trading Standards and Licensing – Shropshire Council.

Robert Smith presented his report, which provided an overview of blue badge applications and accessibility for disabled and older people for Age UK Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.

The Head of Business and Consumer Protection provided an overview from the perspective of Shropshire Council and explained that the shift to digitalisation was driven prior to the pandemic by the Department for Transport (DfT), decentralising the whole process and this was part of that shift. The approach had helped the Council to process applications throughout the pandemic. It was recognised that there were people who did find it difficult to access applications using digital technology but it was predicted that as time went on this would shift. Shropshire Council did understand the point being made by Age UK, but the world as a whole was seeing a shift towards accessing services digitally. Locally, the pandemic had meant a restriction in hubs and direct access to go to in to offices, however the Council was committed to hubs being available in the future as well as buses which would go out to areas where there is need.

The Chairman suggested that a meeting be held with Age UK and Shropshire Council to discuss the issues outlined in the bullet points on page 2 of the report from Age UK. This suggestion was agreed and the Head of Business and Consumer Protection will report back to the Committee on the steps being taken to address the concerns of Age UK.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**39 Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Officer suggested that there were some important issues on the work programme, including housing and economic growth, both of which were closely linked. It was suggested that the Committee wished to keep these pieces of work within their remit, it meets informally to identify the particular areas they wanted to examine.

**RESOLVED:**

1. At the start of the municipal year 2022/23 the Committee holds a private session, informal meeting with senior officers to identify specific areas and priority areas in terms of strategy and policy to ensure work is focused.

2. That the proposed committee work programme attached as appendix 1 be agreed

40 **Date/Time of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting was due to take place on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

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Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date:

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**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4  
MAY 2022  
10.00 - 11.39 AM**

**Responsible Officer:** Shelley Davies  
Email: shelley.davies@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257718

**Present**

Councillor Robert Macey (Leader)  
Councillors Nick Hignett (Vice Chairman), Duncan Kerr, Christian Lea, Dan Morris,  
Nicholas Bardsley (substitute for Mark Jones) and David Vasmer (substitute for Nigel  
Hartin)

**41 Apologies for absence and substitutions**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ted Clarke, Nigel Hartin, Mark Jones and Viv Parry. Councillor Nick Bardsley was present as a substitute for Councillor Mark Jones and Councillor David Vasmer was present as a substitute for Councillor Nigel Hartin.

**42 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

**43 Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

**44 Member Question Time**

A question was received from Councillor Julian Dean in relation to the council debt collection policy adopted in 2016. A full copy of the question and response provided is attached to the web page for the meeting and also attached to the signed minutes.

Councillor Julian Dean stated that the response did not refer to the fact that the policy had changed and did not answer his question in regard to how many times enforcement agents had been used. The Chairman noted the points raised by Councillor Julian Dean and agreed to feed this back to officers.

## 45 Economic Growth Strategy 2022-2027

The Chairman welcomed Mark Barrow, Executive Director of Place and Hayley Owen, Growth Programme and Strategy Manager to the meeting.

Hayley Owen gave a very informative presentation and update on the development of the Economic Growth Strategy 2022-2027 which provided the committee with detailed information in relation to the framework and content of the strategy and outlined the strategy's core principles and themes.

Councillor Ed Potter, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Planning noted that the consultation process was the next important stage for the strategy and urged Members to be involved and provide feedback. Hayley Owen confirmed that the consultation process would involve Member briefings and added there would be an opportunity for the strategy to come back to this Committee following the consultation period.

In response to questions from Members the following points were made:

- It was explained that key infrastructure projects such as the Northwest Relief Road and the Mile End Roundabout were key to the strategy and that connectivity was a key theme to attract to businesses to Shropshire.
- It was noted that the importance of encouraging young people to be involved in the economy to ensure they do not move away from Shropshire was a vital element of the strategy.
- The trend for working from home with people moving out of cities and to places such as Shropshire was highlighted, and it was stressed that broadband and transport links were essential for this to continue.
- A point made in relation to the lack of KPI's was taken on board and it was explained that an action plan for delivery to include detail for KPI's was to be developed to implement key themes in the strategy.
- It was noted that since Covid there had been a number of changes and Officers were now working with local businesses to understand the economy in Shropshire and this would feature in the action plan.
- Future governance was stated as being essential to success of the strategy and it was explained that the current economic taskforce could potentially evolve into an Economic Investment Board, which would have overview and oversight of the strategy going forward and would monitor and review delivery.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for the presentation and noted that he would welcome the opportunity for the strategy to come back to this committee in due course.

**RESOLVED:** That the development of the Economic Growth Strategy be noted.

**46 Work Programme Review**

The Scrutiny Officer gave a presentation in relation to the work programme for 2022/23 and noted the topics that the Committee had agreed to look at again as stated below:

- Domestic Abuse
- Armed forces
- Housing
- Town/Parish Councils
- Buses/community transport
- Economic Growth
- Blue badge applications

The Chairman stated that there was a number of options and suggested that an informal meeting with Members and Substitutes to discuss the work programme was the best way forward.

It was agreed that the Domestic violence strategy would be built into the work programme for 2022/23 and the following suggestions were also noted by the Scrutiny Officer:

- Waste Minimisation Strategy
- Leisure Centre pricing
- Crime and drug related activity

**47 Date/Time of next meeting**

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting would take place on Wednesday, 20th July 2022.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date:

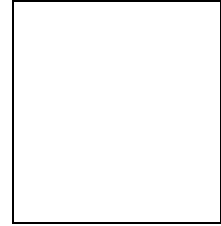
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Communities  
Overview Committee

12 May 2022

1.00 pm



**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12  
MAY 2022  
AT THE CONCLUSION OF COUNCIL**

**Responsible Officer:** Emily Marshall  
Email: emily.marshall@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257717

**Present**

Councillor Robert Macey  
Councillors Ted Clarke, Mark Jones, Nigel Hartin, Nick Hignett, Duncan Kerr,  
Christian Lea, Elliott Lynch and Dan Morris

**48 Election of Chairman**

**RESOLVED:**

That Councillor Robert Macey be elected Chairman for the ensuing year.

**49 Apologies for absence**

Councillor Viv Parry

**50 Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

**RESOLVED:**

That Councillor Nick Hignett be appointed Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date:

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