



Shropshire Council  
Legal and Democratic Services  
Shirehall  
Abbey Foregate  
Shrewsbury  
SY2 6ND

Date: 14 March 2014

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**Committee:  
Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: Monday, 24 March 2014**  
**Time: 2.00 pm**  
**Venue: The Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall, Shrewsbury**

You are requested to attend the above meeting.  
The Agenda is attached

Claire Porter  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)

**Members of Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee**

Keith Roberts (Vice Chairman)	Christian Lea
Peter Adams	Pamela Moseley
Ted Clarke	Dave Tremellen
Nigel Hartin	Arthur Walpole
Roger Hughes	Vince Hunt (Chairman)

Your Committee Officer is:

**Jane Palmer** Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Tel: 01743 252748  
Email: [jane.palmer@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:jane.palmer@shropshire.gov.uk)

# AGENDA

## **1 Apologies for absence and substitutions**

## **2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

Members are reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

## **3 Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2013 (Pages 1 - 6)**

To consider the Minutes from the meeting of the Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee held on 18 November 2013, attached marked **3**

## **4 Public Question Time**

To receive any questions, statements or petitions from the public of which members of the public have given notice. Deadline for notification for this meeting is Wednesday 19 March 2014

## **5 Member Question Time**

To receive any questions of which members of the Council have given notice. Deadline for notification for this meeting is Wednesday 19 March 2014.

## **6 Waste Rapid Action Group**

To receive feedback from the Waste RAG and discuss any key areas of work that may merit further scrutiny.

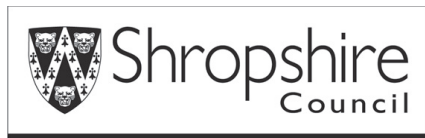
## **7 Future areas of scrutiny work using the learning from the Rapid Action Group activities (Pages 7 - 12)**

To receive information from the Director of Commissioning on potential future areas of scrutiny work.

## **8 Date/Time of next meeting**

The Committee is next scheduled to meet on Monday 16 June 2014 at 2.00pm.

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<u>Committee and Date</u>	<u>Item</u>
Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee	<b>3</b>
24 March 2014	Public

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2013

**Responsible Officer** Jane Palmer

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**Present:** Councillors P Adams, J E Clarke, N Hartin, V Hunt [**Chairman**], C Lea, P Moseley, K Roberts [**Vice Chairman**] and A Walpole.

Also in attendance: M Price, Portfolio Holder for Housing

### 22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Hughes and D Tremellen.

### 23. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Interests were declared and noted, as follows:

N Hartin – Tenant of a Housing Association

M Price – Severnside Housing, Board member

V Hunt – Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing, Board member

### 24. MINUTES – 7 OCTOBER 2013

#### RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee held on 7 October 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 25. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

### 26. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Members' questions.

**27. DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S [DCLG] CONSULTATION DOCUMENT ON 'PROVIDING SOCIAL HOUSING FOR LOCAL PEOPLE: STRENGTHENING STATUTORY GUIDANCE ON SOCIAL HOUSING ALLOCATIONS'**

The Housing, Health and Wellbeing Service Manager presented the main issues within the DCLG's consultation document entitled, 'Providing Social Housing for Local People: Strengthening Statutory Guidance on Social Housing Allocations'. She referred to the Council's former Protecting and Enhancing the Environment (PEE) Scrutiny Committee's establishment of a Task and Finish Group, to review the Council's existing Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme in the context of the Localism Act. This had resulted in recommendations being brought forward to inform the drafting of a revised Shropshire Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme. Members noted that the new Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme had been adopted by the Council in April 2013 and would be implemented in April 2014 following implementation of a new interactive Housing Options and Housing Register IT delivery model.

The Housing, Health and Wellbeing Service Manager drew attention to the five main areas highlighted in the consultation document, as follows:

1. Strongly encourage all local authorities to adopt a two year residency test as part of their qualification criteria.
2. Encourage local authorities to consider adopting other qualification criteria alongside a residency test so that people who are able to demonstrate a strong association to the local area are not disadvantaged.

Referring to points 1 and 2 above, the Housing, Health and Wellbeing Service Manager explained that the Shropshire scheme enabled a number of local connections to be flexibly interpreted to ensure that those with a reasonable connection were not excluded if they failed to meet one rigid qualification criterion. She added that preference for people with local connection was required within housing allocation policies but criteria for local connection should be determined through consultation at a local level.

Members agreed that Guidance requiring all local authorities to adopt a 2-year residence test as part of the qualification criteria would be too rigid, would not reflect local conditions and needs and may affect the development of diverse local communities.

3. Expect local authorities to consider the wider needs of the Armed Forces community

The Housing, Health and Wellbeing Service Manager commented that members of the Armed Forces with a local connection to the county and a minimum of 4 years' service would be accommodated within 5 years' of discharge. Members noted that the existing Shropshire Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme already recognised the needs of member of the

Armed Forces. The new Allocation Scheme further refined this provision and provided a target of 5% (minimum) of total allocations.

4. Remind local authorities of the need to provide for appropriate exceptions.

The Housing, Health and Wellbeing Service Manager made reference to the work of the Task and Finish Group that had considered balancing targeted accommodation against specific criteria and the need to meet the housing needs of those people in the 'reasonable preference' groups. Consideration had also been given to the administrative impacts of two different approaches: assume inclusion and assess 'out' at the point of let; or assume exclusion and assess 'in' at the point of application.

The former approach was adopted as the most cost-effective and pragmatic, recognising that as household circumstances change, each change could represent a new application which would require assessment. The numbers of people registering on the Housing Register can be managed through the Housing Advice/ Housing Options process, to reduce the number of inappropriate registrations being made.

5. Remind local authorities of the desirability of operating a housing options approach alongside a restricted waiting list.

The Housing, Health and Wellbeing Service Manager drew Members' attention to the implementation of the new interactive IT-based approach to delivery of housing options, and access to the Countywide Housing Register. From April 2014, households wishing to register for affordable housing would complete an on-line Housing Options evaluation and guidance 'form', which would provide personalised information and advice about how best to address, and meet, their housing needs. Where households had little prospect of securing social-rented housing in their preferred areas, rather than automatically registering on the Housing Register and 'waiting' to be rehoused, they would be directed to a range of self-help and supported options in housing.

Members were pleased that this new approach would trigger alerts with respect to potential/actual homelessness, vulnerability, property condition and so on, and would ensure those with a reasonable prospect of achieving rehousing through the social housing register would be able to register. The Housing, Health and Wellbeing Service Manager stressed that the aim was to better direct customers towards appropriate and achievable housing options in view of their individual circumstances, rather than using the Housing Register as a 'default option' and 'waiting' to be rehoused without a realistic prospect of being so.

6. Expect local authorities to have a clear policy about the collection and publication of waiting list and lettings information and to ensure the policy is published on the website.

Members noted that the Council's Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme was published on the Council website, and paper copies were made available at customer service points.

The Housing, Health and Wellbeing Service Manager explained that the Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme was delivered through the Shropshire HomePoint choice-based letting scheme with all available affordable social housing, including low cost home ownership options, being advertised on a weekly basis. Members further noted that all properties were advertised to maximise transparency and accountability. Details of the allocations were also provided on the Shropshire HomePoint website insofar as provision of the band and registration date of successful applicants.

Members supported the strong preference for reference to be made to a Housing Register rather than a Waiting List. The Housing, Health and Wellbeing Service Manager added that housing was allocated against a range of factors, including local connection, relative need, vulnerability, community contribution and so on, rather than length of time waiting. It was agreed that Guidance requiring publication of housing allocation policies and schemes, and clarity with respect to housing register information and letting would be welcomed.

The Committee Chairman commented that the Task and finish Group sponsored by the former Protecting and Enhancing our Environment Scrutiny Committee had undertaken a wealth of work that had influenced the Council's new Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme. He anticipated that the Committee's consideration of the DCLG consultation document would add weight and gravitas to the Council's consultation response that had to be submitted by 22 November 2013.

In supporting the observations detailed above, the Portfolio Holder for Housing welcomed to the meeting the Director of Severnside Housing and the Chief Executive of Shropshire Rural Housing. Both were willing to work with the revised Policy from April 2014 and suggested that its efficacy could be monitored in 12 months' time.

The Housing, Health and Wellbeing Service Manager and the Portfolio Holder answered a range of general questions from members of the Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) That, in consultation with the Committee Chairman, the Housing, Health and Wellbeing Service Manager compile the Council's response to the DCLG consultation paper, 'Providing Social Housing for Local People: Strengthening Statutory Guidance on Social Housing Allocations' in the light of the comments and observations made during the meeting, as detailed above.
- ii) That the response include details of the Council's Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme and explains its fundamental merits and benefits to illustrate how the Council is 'ahead of the game'.



**28. DATE/TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the Committee's next meeting would be held at 2.00pm on Monday 27 January 2014.

The meeting closed at 3.15pm p.m.

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....

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<u>Committee and Date</u>
Environment & Services Scrutiny Committee
24 March 2014

<u>Item</u>
<b>7</b>
<u>Public</u>

## **Future Areas of Scrutiny work using the learning from the Rapid Action Group activities**

### **Responsible Officer**

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### **1. Summary**

This report is intended to act as a discussion piece to help shape the work programme for the Scrutiny Committee over the next 12 months, focussing on those key areas within the three year Business Plan and Financial Strategy as well as applying where appropriate the Rapid Action Group learning.

### **2. Recommendations**

Members of the Environment & Services Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

- a) Consider the information contained within the report in relation to those activities that fall under the remit of this Scrutiny Committee.
- b) Identify from this, which areas to focus on over the next 12 months and thus inform the work programme of this Scrutiny Committee.

## **REPORT**

### **3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal**

- 3.1** There are no immediate risks associated with this report. In relation to Shropshire Council's three year Business Plan and Financial Strategy, a full risk assessment has been undertaken.
- 3.2** There are a number of opportunities by applying different approaches, be that Task & Finish, or the learning from the Rapid Action Groups, to help shape and inform the redesign activities in the respective areas. This will also ensure Scrutiny are actively involved in the agreed work streams throughout the process.

## **4. Financial Implications**

**4.1** This report does not have any direct financial implications, however as is detailed within the report, there are some significant savings attached to the redesign areas which form part of Shropshire Council's overall three year Business Plan and Financial Strategy.

## **5. Background**

**5.1** The Environment & Services Scrutiny Committee is one of five Committees across Shropshire Council. The Committee covers the following service areas:

- Natural Environment
- Waste Management
- Public Protection
- Social Housing
- Drugs & Alcohol Misuse
- Leisure & Libraries

**5.2** Shropshire Council has recently finalised its three year Business Plan and Financial Strategy 2014-2017. Within that there are a number of key work streams that naturally align themselves to the key areas that the Environment & Service Scrutiny Committee has responsibility for. These areas are attached at Appendix A. Looking at the areas there are a number that could form part of the future work programme for this Scrutiny Committee and further details of those Projects can be provided verbally at the Committee meeting.

**5.3** Within Appendix A the work streams have now been grouped under the key outcomes that Shropshire Council has approved. This is encouraging greater creativity around the redesign aspect so that Shropshire Council redesigns around outcomes as opposed to service areas.

## **6. Rapid Action Groups (RAGs)**

**6.1** Rapid Action Groups (RAGs) were suggested to the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee by the Leader of the Council as a different method to look at the changes identified in the Business Plan which will deliver the Financial Strategy. Committee agreed that they would pursue this approach, and how they would do it, by commissioning six Rapid Action Groups which reported back to the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee on 12 February 2014.

The original purpose and scope of the RAGs, as agreed by the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee were:

- To provide overview and Scrutiny Members an opportunity to be actively involved in the key stages of the Council's different change work streams.
- To provide challenge at the time of change.
- To ensure that changes will deliver the Council's outcomes.
- Ensuring that the Council is changing in the way that it says it wants to.

**6.2** The RAGs approach, following feedback to the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee on 12 February 2014, is in the process of being evaluated. This will identify whether the approach will continue, if it should - how it can be developed further, and will inform the adoption of the approach through the appropriate route i.e. Political Structures Monitoring Committee. Until this has happened, potential new topics for inclusion in the Scrutiny Committees Work Programme should initially be considered against well scoped existing approaches for Scrutiny, including Task & Finish Groups and consideration of topics structured across a number of Committee meetings.

**6.3** The RAGs that started in January can be considered by this Scrutiny Committee which can agree whether the work should continue on a Task and Finish basis or (following the review of the RAG process) as a RAG and how they fit into their work programme with appropriate officer support and the production of officer reports back to this Committee.

As part of the six RAGs undertaken, a number fell under the remit of this Scrutiny Committee and included Regulatory & Business Support Model (RABSS) and Waste Review.

Also, whilst not a direct link, but has an independency with this Scrutiny Committee, was the reviews undertaken in the two Rapid Action Groups activities across Adult Social Care.

**List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)**

BUSINESS PLAN AND FINANCIAL STRATEGY – 2014/15 TO 2016/17  
(Performance Management Scrutiny 12-2-14)

BUSINESS PLAN AND FINANCIAL STRATEGY – 2014/15 TO 2016/17  
(Council 27-2-2014)

**Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)**

Cllr Mal Price - Portfolio Holder: Planning, Housing and Commissioning (Central)

Cllr Steve Charmley - Portfolio Holder: Business Growth, ip&e and Commissioning (North)

Cllr Karen Calder - Portfolio Holder: Health

Cllr Gwilym Butler - Portfolio Holder: Leisure, Libraries and Culture
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<b>Local Member</b>
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<b>Appendices</b>
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Appendix A – Key Activities for Environment & Service Scrutiny Committee
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2014/17 Financial Strategy - Programme of Activities

	Director Lead	Portfolio Holder	Target 14/15 (£'000)	Target 15/16 (£'000)	Target 16/17 (£'000)	3 Year Total (£'000)	Reinvention/Redesign Period
<b>1) I want to feel financial secure and believe in a positive future for myself and my family</b>	<b>Clive Wright</b>						
1b) <u>Regulatory and Business Support model (RaBSS)</u>	Paul McGreary						
CP01 - Create commercial activity within wider regulatory and business support model (RaBSS)		Steve Charmley	-	50	773		
CO11 - Redesign Public Protection in preparation for regulatory and business support services (RaBSS)		Steve Charmley	109	-	-		
CO16 - Redesign Development Management & Planning Policy Environment and Sustainability service redesigned for integrated delivery		Mal Price	151	35	-		
1b) Total			260	85	773	1,117	Feb - Jul 14
<b>2) I want to live a long enjoyable and healthy life</b>	<b>Rod Thompson</b>						
2c) <u>CO17 - Review of joint use Leisure facilities to identify how to best deliver on a local basis</u>	Peter Davis	Gwilym Butler	118	206	227	552	Mar - Dec 14
2d) <u>Sports &amp; Recreational Activities</u>	Tim Smith						
CO14 - Redesign across Positive Activities, Arts Development and Sports Development to create new activities for young people		Gwilym Butler/Ann Hartley	5	226	272		
CO09 - Redesign within Community Action, Positive Activities, Outdoor Recreation and Sports Development		Gwilym Butler	196	-	171		
2d) Total			201	226	443	870	Mar - Jun 14
2e) <u>CO10 - Redesign of Outdoor Recreation service that will lead to locally led approaches with focus on physical activity</u>	Deb Hughes	Gwilym Butler	162	194	194	550	Oct - Dec 14
<b>4) I want to live in an attractive, vibrant and safe environment, in a place that's right for me</b>	<b>George Candler</b>						
4a) <u>CO15 - Redesign safer, stronger communities function stopping bikeability and redefining 24/7 CCTV monitoring</u>		Steve Charmley	21	140	-	161	14/15 savings achieved
4b) <u>CO12 - Redesign healthier and sustainable environment including commissioning of parking and cash collection</u>		Steve Charmley	94	-	-	94	14/15 savings achieved
4c) <u>CO13 - Create efficiencies in Bereavement Services stopping non-utilised service and generating income</u>		Steve Charmley	59	-	-	59	14/15 savings achieved
4d) <u>Waste (SEGS)</u>	Tim Smith						
CO05 - Behavioural change programme using customer segmentation approach to increase recycling and reducing waste growth		Steve Charmley	240	120	240		
CW03 - Enforcement of Waste Management Policy and recommissioning of some services		Steve Charmley	180	-	-		
4d) Total			420	120	240	780	£100k 14/15 savings achieved (CW03) Rest Feb to Dec 14
4e) <u>Customer Contact - Face to Face</u>	George Candler						
CO06 - Redesign Libraries service including Visitor Information Centres		Gwilym Butler	1,006	300	-		
RO01 - Redesign points of face to face contact for full range of transactional services. Meet demand for increased access in alternative methods of contact			150	-	-		
4e) Total			1,156	300	-	1,456	April - Dec 14
4f) <u>Cheshire West &amp; Chester Partnership</u>	Chris Edwards						
CO08 - Redesign Environmental Maintenance function, creating merge function with Cheshire West & Chester, moving processes in house and increasing income		Claire Wild	150	203	153		
CO07 - Redesign Highways and Transport function, creating alliance with Cheshire West & Chester		Claire Wild	430	72	502		
4f) Total			580	275	655	1,510	Feb - Jun 14

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