

SHOPSHIRE COUNCIL

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2015

10.00 - 11.25 am in the Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

Responsible Officer: Jane Palmer

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Present

Councillors Steve Davenport (Vice Chairman), David Lloyd, Joyce Barrow, Gerald Dakin, Roger Evans, Vince Hunt, Miles Kenny, Alan Mosley, Dave Tremellen and Robert Macey (Substitute) (substitute for David Minnery)

5 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Minnery for whom Councillor R Macey attended as substitute. The Vice Chairman, Councillor S Davenport, took the Chair for the duration of the meeting.

6 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None were declared.

7 Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March and 14 May 2015

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee held on 25 March and 14 May 2015 be approved as correct records subject to the addition of the following text to Minute 1 of the meeting held on 14 May 2015, 'Councillor R Evans was nominated as Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year but the nomination did not receive sufficient support'.

8 Public Question Time

No public questions were received.

9 Member Question Time

No questions were received from Members.

10 Revenue Outturn 2014-15

The Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance drew attention to the information on the revenue outturn position for Shropshire Council for 2014/15 and the summary of the revenue outturn for each service area together with a commentary on the main variations

and an outline of how the position has changed since Quarter 3, the movements in the Council's General Balance and the Council's reserves and provisions.

In answer to a Member's concerns, the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance stated that the Council was able to balance its in year budget. Responding to the comment that the Council had balanced its books at the expense of its long term sustainability, he stressed that the Council's long term Business Plan supported this use of financial resources. He added that one off savings could not be relied upon as base budget for the future given their future uncertainty.

Referring to Adult Services, the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance stated that people came in and out of the system at different times. The Director of Adult Services commented that last year had seen a 20% increase in the number of people ringing the Council as a first point of contact and the new operating model had allowed 75% of people to be helped without a cost to the Council. However, packages of care following hospital stays resulted in increasing unit costs so although less people were being funded the unit cost of care had contributed to the overspend in this area.

RESOLVED:

That the information detailed in the Revenue Outturn report 2014/15 be noted:

- The Outturn for the Revenue Budget for 2014/15 is an underspend of £0.300m, this represents 0.05% of the original gross budget of £578m;
- The level of general balance stands at £15.206m, which is above the anticipated level included within the Financial Strategy;
- The Outturn for the Housing Revenue Account for 2014/15 is an underspend of £0.763m and the level of the Housing Revenue Account reserve stands at £3.076m (2013/14 £2.542m);
- The increase in the level of Earmarked Reserves and Provisions (excluding delegated school balances) of £17.939m in 2014/15;
- The level of school balances stand at £3.957m (2013/14 £5.523m).

11 Capital Outturn 2014-15

The Committee noted the information in the report relating to the final outturn position for the Council's 2014/15 capital programme and the current position regarding the 2015/16 to 2017/18 capital programme taking into account the slippage following the closure of the 2014/15 programme and any budget increases/decreases for 2014/15 and future years.

Responding to a Member's query on the structural maintenance programme [bridges, structures and roads], the Chief Executive stated that progress was being made and a report would be made to Members once the position was known. The Chairman of the

Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee added that this Committee undertook a rolling review of these issues.

Given the absence of the relevant Portfolio Holder from the meeting, the Chairman stated that he would ensure that information on Broadband funding be made available to the Committee. The Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance added that 'slippage' would not result in the funding not being available as it was protected for this scheme.

In response to a Member's query on the downward trend in grant take up, the Director of Commissioning explained that people had been generally consolidating their business rather than expanding however he added that the call on this funding was likely to increase in the current year. Members further noted that the grants currently on offer were to be reviewed.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations detailed in the report be noted.

12 Quarter 4 Performance Report 2014 to 2015

The Performance Manager presented the report detailing the Council's performance against its outcomes for Quarter 4 2014/15 and provided a view of the year in comparison with 2013/14. Members also considered the detailed intelligence illustrated within the four technical dashboards:

- 'Your Money' Outcome
- 'Your Environment' Outcome
- 'Your Life' Outcome
- 'Your Health' Outcome

The Portfolio Holder for Performance Management explained that each of the Scrutiny Committees would also be given the opportunity to consider the information within the dashboards relevant to their respective remits. He added that the picture presented today represented little change from the information presented in the previous quarter.

Referring to the 'Your Life' appendix, slide 9, the Performance Manager explained that the information relating to the proportion of Adult Social Care users who find it easy to find information about services was collected by survey to the Department of Health; results for 2014/15 would be available in the autumn 2015. The Director of Adult Services commented that a great deal of work had been undertaken in the last 12 months and a new portal had been introduced as a result of the requirements of the Care Act and this should result in a positive change to this indicator. He added that people were also being encouraged to pick up the telephone and talk through the issues. A Member commented on the ease of finding the information and queried the reducing trend illustrated by this indicator.

In response to a Member's question on slide 5, the Director of Children's Services stated that the figures on the percentage of ceased Looked After Children [LAC] adopted during the year related to very few families and did not represent a trend. Commenting on the

increase in numbers of LAC, slide 3, she added that this was an indicator to watch but she drew attention to the fact that the numbers had stabilised during the last 6 months. Members noted that this was part of a national trend relating to referrals of children to social care. The Chief Executive commented individuals in communities were becoming more aware of issues and this resulted in more referrals coming through.

Referring to the 'Your Health' appendix, slide 3, 'bed blockers', the Portfolio Holder for Performance Management reported that this issue would be considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board to establish the facts behind the statistics. The Director of Adult Services added that the issue of delayed transfers of care was also to be considered by the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee in the autumn 2015.

In answer to a Member's query on slide 7, the Performance Manager explained that the figures shown were produced from the health survey mentioned earlier in the meeting. The Director of Adult Services commented that, although the figures showed a drop, the Council was one of the top performers in England. He added that many changes were ongoing in the methods of performance measurement of Adult Social Care by Government.

In response to a Member's query, the Chairman advised that the reduction in street night lighting had not resulted in any increase in the levels of crime in the area.

The Portfolio Holder for Performance Management commented that the quarterly satisfaction survey comprised a sample size of 951 with relatively high satisfaction levels. He stated that resampling from a different sample of the population may possibly be considered. He added that the current response rate was 80%. The Performance Manager added that the tracker survey had always been recognised as one way of obtaining information and he stressed the need to also look at performance in service areas although this remained static at present.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Quarter 4 performance information be noted; and
- ii) That each of the Council's Scrutiny Committees be given the opportunity to consider the performance monitoring information relevant to their respective remits.

13 Discretionary Housing Payments [DHP] - Review of the DHP Policy and Administration

The Committee received an update on the progress of the DHP Policy following its earlier consideration at its meeting on 28 January 2015. The Policy addressed the issues raised by the DHP Task and Finish Group during its investigations into Shropshire's approach to the administration of DHPs. The draft Policy had been out to consultation and replies from the voluntary sector and Housing Association support workers broadly endorsed the policy and its processes.

The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group added that the Group had reconvened during the consultation period and had provided valuable input into the process. He drew attention to the High Court ruling that required Disability Living Allowance [DLA] to be excluded from the DHP calculation. Finally he assured the Committee that measures were being put in place to mitigate the risk of overspending these limited funds whilst still meeting the needs of the most vulnerable citizens.

The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group commented that the Task and Finish Group's report would be made available to Members once it had received the necessary approval but he stressed that the Group was in support of the DHP Policy document.

A Member expressed concern that monies that had remained unspent in previous years had been returned to Government and this had impacted on the amount of funding the Council now received. He voiced his disappointment that the Council was in this position and added that from April to September 2014, only 36% of the Council's allocation had been spent. Another Member commented that public money should be spent where needed and the spend needed to be fully justified and not spent just because money was available.

The majority agreed, one abstention, that the Policy be referred for Cabinet's consideration.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the implementation of the DHP Policy be endorsed; and
- ii) That the financial pressures on the DHP fund and the measures to help mitigate the risk of overspending be noted.

14 Date/Time of next meeting of the Committee

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to be held at 2.30pm on Wednesday 15 July 2015.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: