

Shropshire Council
Legal and Democratic Services
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND
Date: Wednesday, 6 December 2017

Committee: COUNCIL

Date: Thursday, 14 December 2017

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Council Chamber, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND

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

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

Ann Hartley (Chairman)	Simon Harris	Kevin Pardy
Peter Nutting (Leader)	Nigel Hartin	William Parr
Vince Hunt (Speaker)	Nick Hignett	Vivienne Parry
Steve Charmley (Dep Leader)	Richard Huffer	Tony Parsons
Peter Adams	Tracey Huffer	Malcolm Pate
Roy Aldcroft	Roger Hughes	Alexander Phillips
Clare Aspinall	Ioan Jones	Lezley Picton
Nicholas Bardsley	Simon Jones	Ed Potter
Joyce Barrow	Mark Jones	John Price
Thomas Biggins	Jonny Keeley	Keith Roberts
Andy Boddington	Heather Kidd	Madge Shingleton
Gwilym Butler	Nic Laurens	Harry Taylor
Karen Calder	Christian Lea	Robert Tindall
Dean Carroll	Matt Lee	Dave Tremellen
Lee Chapman	Elliott Lynch	Kevin Turley
Ted Clarke	Robert Macey	David Turner
Gerald Dakin	Jane MacKenzie	David Vasmer
Steve Davenport	Chris Mellings	Stuart West
Julian Dean	Paul Milner	Claire Wild
Pauline Dee	David Minnery	Brian Williams
David Evans	Dan Morris	Leslie Winwood
Roger Evans	Pamela Moseley	Michael Wood
Hannah Fraser	Alan Mosley	Tina Woodward
Rob Gittins	Cecilia Motley	Paul Wynn
Nat Green	Peggy Mullock	

Your Committee Officers are:

Karen Nixon Committee Officer and **Jane Palmer** Senior Committee Officer

Tel: 01743 257720 or 01743 257712

Email: karen.nixon@shropshire.gov.uk jane.palmer@shropshire.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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 (Pages 1 - 8)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 September 2017, which are attached.

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive such communications as the Chairman, Speaker, Leader and Head of Paid Service may desire to lay before the Council.

5 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

To receive any questions from the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14.

Two petitions, bearing over 1,000 signatures, have been received from the following requesting a debate under the Council's Petition Scheme:

- Petition opposing the changes and charges to the Market Drayton Car Park – Geoff Vernon, Festival Drayton Centre
- Say NO to Council plans to raise parking charges in Shrewsbury

The petitioners will be allowed 5 minutes to outline their case, after which there may be a debate of up to 15 minutes maximum.

6 PORTFOLIO HOLDER ANNUAL REPORT FOR ECONOMY AND GROWTH (Pages 9 - 18)

To receive the annual report from the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Growth, attached.

7 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PLACE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE (INCORPORATING ENTERPRISE AND GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE) (Pages 19 - 20)

To receive the annual report of the Place Overview Committee, which is attached.

- 8 PORTFOLIO HOLDER ANNUAL REPORT FOR FINANCE** (Pages 21 - 24)
To receive the report from the Portfolio Holder for Finance which is attached.
- 9 PORTFOLIO HOLDER ANNUAL REPORT FOR CORPORATE SUPPORT** (Pages 25 - 40)
To receive the report from the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support which is attached.
- 10 REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR UNIVERSITY AND STRATEGIC** (Pages 41 - 44)
To receive the report from the Leader and Portfolio Holder for University and Strategic which is attached.
- 11 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** (Pages 45 - 46)
To receive the report of the Chairman of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee which is attached.
- 12 PORTFOLIO HOLDER HEALTH AND ADULTS** (Pages 47 - 64)
To receive the report from the Portfolio Holder for Health and Adults which is attached.
- 13 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (formerly HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE)** (Pages 65 - 66)
To receive the annual report of the Chairman of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee which is attached.
- 14 SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX TAXBASE FOR 2018/19** (Pages 67 - 90)
Report of the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance is attached.
Contact James Walton Tel 01743 255011.
- 15 SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL - COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2018/19** (Pages 91 - 116)
Report of the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance is attached.
Contact James Walton Tel 01743 255011.

16 **AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION** (Pages 117 - 120)

Report of the Head of Legal & Democratic Services is attached.

Contact Claire Porter Tel: 01743 252763.

17 **MOTIONS**

The following 3 motions have been received in accordance with Procedure Rule 16:

21.1 From Councillor Julian Dean

Housing Benefit for those in Women's Refuges

Council notes:

The government proposals to remove Domestic Abuse Refuges and other forms of short-term supported housing from the welfare system.

On average housing benefit makes up 53% of the funding to refuges that provide a vital, sometimes life-saving service to vulnerable women and children fleeing abusive partners.

The chief executive of Women's Aid had said: "The government's proposed reforms to supported housing will dismantle our national network of lifesaving refuges and put the lives of women and children trying to escape domestic abuse at risk. This is a matter of life or death."

West Mercia Police has seen the number of domestic abuse reports more than double in the last four years.

The government proposal will see housing benefit replaced with a grant to local authorities. However there is no proposal to ring fence this for particular forms of short-term supported housing. In addition many people fleeing domestic violence and abuse need to relocate, and so may stay in areas where they have little or no local connection, with the possibility that the response from local authorities to their short-term housing needs will become uneven at best.

Council resolves to instruct the Chief Executive and Leader to make representations to government calling on them to remove this proposal and retain access to housing benefit for those in short-term supported housing to help secure the future of this vital service.

21.2 From Councillor Heather Kidd

The Council has severe problems recruiting carers, teachers and other key workers in rural areas – especially in South West Shropshire. The Council now needs to have a robust plan to define our key workers and a delivery plan for their housing in the countryside. Maintaining and improving sustainability of our villages is vital for their future, the future of their services e.g. schools, shops and local businesses. This has the potential to save money in Council Service delivery too.

This Council requests officers- as a matter of urgency - to bring forward innovative ways to build housing to satisfy local need and not developers wants in our rural areas. This response should include cost effective and low resource methods to improve the status of Parish and Neighbourhood planning so that Towns and Parishes have a meaningful role in planning applications and can reflect needs of their communities. A new definition and status of key workers is also vital.

21.3 From Councillor Andy Boddington

Council funding for community groups has been substantially reduced and is set to fall further. Several councils have introduced a community lottery. For example, the pioneering Vale Lottery run by Aylesbury Vale District Council raised around £75,000 for good causes in its first year. The sales drive is led by charities and voluntary groups. These support everything from village halls to suicide prevention and from helping young people to ensuring the air ambulance keeps flying. Good causes get 50% of the sales for every nomination. A further 10% of the £1 stake goes to other good causes locally. That leaves 40% for administration.

This council instructs the Chief Executive to examine the case for a Shropshire community lottery and to report back to council before the end of March 2018.

18 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS** (Pages 121 - 132)

To receive any questions from Members, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 15.2.

19 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: That in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and Paragraph 10.4 (3) of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules, the public and press be excluded during consideration of the following items.

20 **SHREWSBURY SHOPPING CENTRES (EXEMPT ITEM)**

Exempt Report of the Director of Place and Enterprise WILL FOLLOW.

Contact George Candler Tel 01743 258671.

21 **TREASURY STRATEGY 2017/18 - MID YEAR REVIEW (EXEMPT ITEM)** (Pages 133 - 166)

Exempt report of the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance is attached.

Contact James Walton Tel 01743 255011.

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 3



Committee and Date

Council

14th December 2017

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2017

In the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND

10.00 am - 12.20 pm

Responsible Officer: Karen Nixon

Email: karen.nixon@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257720

Present

Councillors Ann Hartley (Chairman) and Peter Nutting (Leader)
Councillors Vince Hunt (Speaker), Steve Charmley (Deputy Leader), Peter Adams, Clare Aspinall, Nicholas Bardsley, Joyce Barrow, Thomas Biggins, Andy Boddington, Gwilym Butler, Karen Calder, Dean Carroll, Lee Chapman, Ted Clarke, Gerald Dakin, Steve Davenport, Julian Dean, Pauline Dee, David Evans, Roger Evans, Hannah Fraser, Rob Gittins, Nat Green, Simon Harris, Nick Hignett, Richard Huffer, Simon Jones, Mark Jones, Nic Laurens, Christian Lea, Matt Lee, Robert Macey, Jane MacKenzie, Chris Mellings, Paul Milner, David Minnery, Dan Morris, Pamela Moseley, Cecilia Motley, Peggy Mullock, Kevin Pardy, William Parr, Vivienne Parry, Tony Parsons, Malcolm Pate, Alexander Phillips, Lezley Picton, Ed Potter, John Price, Keith Roberts, Madge Shingleton, Robert Tindall, Dave Tremellen, Kevin Turley, David Turner, David Vasmer, Claire Wild, Leslie Winwood, Tina Woodward and Paul Wynn

45 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chief Executive reported that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Aldcroft, Hartin, T Huffer, Hughes, Kidd, Mosely, West, Williams and Wood.

46 DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Members were 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.

47 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th July 2017, as circulated with the agenda papers, be approved and signed as a correct record.

48 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman's Engagements

The Chairman referred Members to the list of official engagements carried out by herself and the Speaker since the last meeting of the Council on 20th July 2017, which had been circulated at the meeting.

Daniel Kawczynski MP - Award

On behalf of the Council, the Chairman congratulated Daniel on the 'From the depths of Zabinski award' made to him on behalf of his great uncle Jan Kawczynski, who was murdered along with his wife and daughter for sheltering members of the Jewish community during the second World War.

49 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Public Questions

The Speaker advised that one public question had been received from Mr Mulloy in accordance with Procedure Rule 15 (a copy of the report containing the question and the formal response was circulated at the meeting and a copy is attached to the signed minutes).

Mr Mulloy asked a supplementary question of the Speaker: As a member of the North Planning Committee since 2009 and supporter of the British Ironworks, do you feel betrayed by the fact that the owner never applied for planning consent for the activities there and potentially put people's lives in danger by ignoring a planning condition that required improvements to the junction with the A5. Also is there a reason why you have not declared any political sponsorship in your register of interest?

The Speaker replied that he had been involved with the British Ironworks in his capacity as Mayor of the civic authority (Oswestry Town Council), however he said that he would not take part in any Planning matters that might arise. Regarding the rest, he did not believe he had to answer that question.

50 REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

It was proposed by Councillor Bardsley, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People and seconded by Councillor Aspinall that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes be received.

Councillor Bardsley presented his report on undertaking his responsibilities as Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People. The report detailed all that had been achieved so far and the direction for the future. In amplifying his report Councillor Bardsley responded to the questions, queries and concerns raised by Members, including Councillors Fraser, Parry and Evans.

In conclusion, he thanked all those who had been, and continued to be, involved in the areas of work covered by the Portfolio and for the support of the Deputy Portfolio Holder

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report of the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People be received.

51 ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17 OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (PEOPLE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE from July 2017)

It was proposed by Councillor Mullock, Chair of the People Overview Committee, and seconded by Councillor Potter, that the Annual Report 2016-17, a copy of which is attached to the signed Minutes, be received and agreed.

Councillor Mullock presented her report and drew attention to the improved turnaround for adoptions and fostering that had been initiated by the Committee. She listed the subjects that had been considered by the Committee and highlighted the significant topics that were emerging for the year ahead.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the Annual Report 2016-17 of the Young People's Scrutiny Committee (now People Overview Committee) be received.

52 PORTFOLIO HOLDER ANNUAL REPORT FOR PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES

It was proposed by Councillor Macey, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services and seconded by Councillor Carroll that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes be received.

Councillor Macey presented and amplified his detailed report on undertaking his responsibilities as Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services and drew attention to the key areas within the report relating to Planning Services, Strategic Planning, Housing Enabling and Development, the Trading Standards and Licensing Service and Regulatory Services and set out the key priorities for the coming year.

He responded to particular questions and comments raised by Members, including Councillors Dee, Shingleton, Boddington, Green, Evans, Fraser and Tindall. In conclusion, he thanked all Members for their support and also thanked all Officers for their hard work and continuing commitment.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report of the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services be received.

53 **PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORT FOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT**

It was proposed by Councillor Davenport, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport, and seconded by Councillor Adams, that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes be received.

Councillor Davenport presented his report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, on undertaking his responsibilities as Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport. The report set out what had been achieved so far and the direction for the future. In amplifying his report Councillor Davenport responded to the questions, queries and concerns raised by Members, including Councillors Parsons, Evans, Shineton, Boddington, Tindall, Parry, Fraser and Turner.

In conclusion, he invited anyone with a query to email him directly.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report by the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport be received.

54 **PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORT FOR CULTURE AND LEISURE**

Councillor Picton presented her report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, on undertaking her responsibilities as Portfolio Holder for Culture and Leisure, which also included the Arts Service. Councillor Picton amplified the report and responded to the questions, queries and concerns raised by Members, including Councillors Boddington, Fraser, Carroll, Motley and Mackenzie.

In summary, special thanks were given to the staff and volunteers who worked tirelessly in the Leisure service.

RESOLVED: That subject to the foregoing, the contents of the report by the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Leisure be received.

55 **ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17 OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE from July 2017)**

It was proposed by Councillor Motley, Chair of the Communities Overview Committee, and seconded by Councillor Hignett, that the Annual Report 2016-17 of the Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee (now the Communities Overview Committee), a copy of which is attached to the signed Minutes, be received and agreed.

Councillor Motley presented her report and drew attention to the future change in emphasis of the new committee.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the Annual Report 2016-17 of the Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee (now the Communities Overview Committee), be received.

56 AUDITED ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2016/17

It was proposed by Councillor Nutting, and seconded by Councillor Adams, that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the 2016/17 Statement of Accounts be approved and that the Chairman of the Council signs them (in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015).
- b) That the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance be authorised to make any minor adjustments to the Statement of Accounts prior to the 30th September 2017.
- c) That the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance and the Chairman of the Audit Committee be authorised to sign the letter of representation in relation to the financial statements on behalf of the Council and send to the External Auditor.

57 ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT 2016/17

It was proposed by Councillor Nutting, and seconded by Councillor Minnery, that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED: That the position as set out in the Annual Treasury report 2016/17 of the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance be approved.

(Councillor Tindall abstained from voting).

58 WEST MERCIA YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2017/18

It was proposed by Councillor Bardsley, and seconded by Councillor Aspinall, that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed Minutes, and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed. Members noted the Plan detailing the structure of youth justice services across the West Mercia area and the key actions identified to address risks to service delivery and improvement.

In response to a detailed question from Councillor P Moseley, Councillor Bardsley undertook to answer the question directly with Councillor Moseley after the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Youth Justice Plan 2017/18, attached as Appendix A to the report, be approved.

59 DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

It was proposed by Councillor Wild and seconded by Councillor Butler, that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed Minutes and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED: That the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee receive an update on the Digital Transformation Programme at each meeting.

60 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON

It was proposed by The Speaker, Councillor Hunt and seconded by the Chairman, Councillor Hartley, that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendation contained therein, be received and agreed.

RESOLVED: That Mr Stephen Donkersley be appointed as an Independent Person for a period of five years.

61 MOTIONS

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Kidd and duly seconded by Councillor Parry:

- i) "The Council notes that the Government has failed to make fair transitional state pension arrangements for all women born on or after 6th April 1951, who have unfairly borne the burden of the increase to the State Pension Age (SPA) with lack of appropriate notification.

Hundreds of thousands of women had significant pension changes imposed on them by the Pensions Acts of 1995 and 2011 with little/no/personal notification of the changes. Some women had only two years notice of a six-year increase to their state pension age.

Many women born in the 1950's are living in hardship. Retirement plans have been shattered with devastating consequences. Many of these women are already out of the labour market, caring for elderly relatives, providing child-care for grandchildren or suffering discrimination in the workplace so struggle to find employment.

Women born in this decade are suffering financially. These women have worked hard, raised families and paid their tax and national insurance with the expectation that they would be financially secure when reaching 60. It is not the pension age itself that is in dispute – it is widely accepted that women and men should retire at the same time.

The issue is that the rise in the women's state pension age has been too rapid and has happened without sufficient notice being given to the women affected, leaving them with no time to make alternative arrangements.

The Council requests that the Chief Executive write letters of support to the Prime Minister, the secretary of State for DWP (David Gauke) and the Pensions Minister (Guy Opperman) to advise them of the adverse effects that these changes to the SPA is having on women living in Shropshire who were born on or after 6th April 1951."

On being put to the vote this motion was lost, with the overwhelming majority voting against it (there were 3 abstentions).

- ii) The following motion was proposed by Councillor Boddington and duly seconded by Councillor Evans:

"Many policies that Shropshire Council introduces will have a direct or indirect impact on the economy of the towns and villages of Shropshire. The way the transport, education, housing, care and health systems are managed impacts on the economic wellbeing of our county. If we don't provide the right places for people to live and to work in the right jobs, and they can't get access to the education and health care they need, we will not thrive.

Every paper coming to Cabinet and Council should incorporate a brief statement on the perceived economic impacts of any policy. The intention of this duty is not to be onerous. It aims to focus the Council on the benefits and disbenefits of any policy for a county that we all want to flourish.

This motion requests the Council establish a Task and Finish Group to consider an economic duty and how it should be reported to Council. It should report to full Council no later than December 2017.

An amendment was circulated at the meeting by the Conservative Group as follows;

Delete the final paragraph of the motion and replace with "The Council refers this motion to the appropriate Overview/Scrutiny Committee for further consideration and to decide whether any further action is required."

This was proposed by the Leader, Councillor Nutting and duly seconded by Councillor Charmley.

On being put to the vote this amended motion was duly carried.

62 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

The Speaker advised that the following questions had been received in accordance with Procedure Rule 15 (a copy of the report containing the questions and the formal responses is attached to the signed minutes).

Question 1, received from Councillor Clarke and answered by Councillor Laurens, Portfolio Holder for Economy and Growth on the installation of fibre optic cable on greenfield sites.

By way of a supplementary question Councillor Clarke asked what was being done for new developments coming on stream shortly, such as at Sutton Grange, Shrewsbury. The Portfolio holder replied that all avenues were being explored and assured that they were working to improve this. For that particular site mentioned, he was confident of connectivity by the end of 2017.

Question 2, received from Councillor Pardy and answered by Councillor Macey, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services, on the installation of sprinklers in all new build as part of Building Regulations.

By way of a supplementary question Councillor Pardy stated that Fire safety legislation and building regulations have historically changed and improved safety over history. Today we live within the shadow of Grenfell. Many councils across the country are insisting on change and some are indeed making changes and are prepared to fit sprinkler systems retrospectively to their own properties. Therefore will the Portfolio Holder revisit my question and acknowledge that it is a question asking the Council to be a front runner in a campaign for change both nationally, through legislation and locally through negotiation with developers. So that future new builds will have the life-saving sprinkler system installed?

The Portfolio Holder replied that he did not doubt the importance of this issue and that once current reviews had been completed and it was clear what it meant for Shropshire Council, appropriate action could be taken, whilst he also highlighted the importance of supporting legislation to enforce future action.

Signed (Chairman)

Date:



Committee and Date

Council

14 December 2017

PORTFOLIO HOLDER ANNUAL REPORT FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Nic Laurens
e-mail: nic.laurens@shropshire.gov.uk

Summary Overview

The development and publication of a new five year Economic Growth Strategy for Shropshire has been a key achievement this year. This strategy sets out the ambitions for achieving increased economic productivity for the county based on three strategic objectives; supporting and growing existing businesses, attracting new investment and retaining and developing skills and talent. The preparation of the strategy began last year with robust evidence gathering including stakeholder engagement and particularly collaboration with Shropshire Business Board, this informed the writing of the draft strategy in the first few months of 2017, followed by a period of public consultation feeding into the finalisation of the strategy in July.

Key for the Economic Growth Strategy was that it was 'of and for' Shropshire and therefore has sought to be based strongly on the economic characteristics of the county. The vision statement makes reference to the county's high quality assets and special environment, recognising that these must inform our growth. A snapshot of the economic picture;

- Economic productivity is growing slower than the national average (0.2% compared to 2.8% for the UK and 2.2% for the West Midlands) *Note: 2015 figures. 2016 figures are due before Christmas.*
- One of the most rural and sparsely populated local authorities in the country (less than 1 person per hectare)
- Shropshire has 15,650 registered enterprises (at March 2017)
- Of these 99.8% are classed as small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) i.e. they employ less than 250 employees
- 90.4% of businesses have less than 10 employees
- Health and social care is the largest sector based on employee numbers (17%), followed by tourism (including all food services, accommodation, arts, entertainment and leisure) (14%) and then retail and manufacturing (both approx. 10%)
- Shropshire has lower wage levels compared to the national and regional averages and this gap has increased in the last year (Shropshire = £470.80, West Midlands = £514.90, National = £552.30 *weekly work based earnings*)
- Shropshire's demographic is ageing, 24% of the population are aged 65 or over (compared to 18% of the West Midlands population). 60% of Shropshire's population are aged between 16 and 64 ('traditional working age') compared to 62% in the West Midlands.

- Low unemployment (3.4% compared to 4.6 % nationally and 5.2% in the West Midlands)
- Rising qualifications levels amongst residents, however significant proportion of businesses report skills shortage and gaps (15% of businesses)

It was also an important exercise to consider and take account of national events to give the context for the strategy. This includes the publication of the UK Industrial Strategy, the decision by Britain to leave the EU, and the emergence of the West Midlands Combined Authority plans and ambitions. The national economic context will continue to be a key factor in the implementation of the strategy and will inform forecasts and some activities.

The Shropshire Economic Growth strategy was formally launched at the end of September at a high profile business leaders' event hosted by the Council and Shropshire Business Board, with national and regional support including the West Midlands Combined Authority, Marches Local Enterprise Partnership and University of Chester. This was followed by a local economic conference with the county's Town and Parish Councils attending a workshop to discuss the local importance and impacts of economic growth. This is being taken forward with local economic growth strategies for each of the key market towns.

The Economic Growth service has been restructured to ensure full alignment with the strategy and to support the successful delivery of each of the priority actions. This has involved the creation of a Growth Strategy and Programme team and a Business Growth and Investment Team, with two new senior managers joining the service in February 2018 to lead these areas. These sit alongside Planning Services, Strategic Planning and Policy and Connecting Shropshire as the Economic Growth Team. There are also formal internal working arrangements between Economic Growth and Highways, recognising the role of Highways in supporting the delivery of the growth agenda, and with Assets and Estates. (Please note that Planning Services and Strategic Planning and Policy were included in the annual report for the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services in September).

The remainder of this report provides a summary of activities under each of the priority actions to date and a forward look of key activities for the forthcoming year.

Economic Opportunities

Recognising the importance of Shropshire's economic partnerships and geographic relationships, the Council is proactively engaging in the West Midlands Combined Authority and Midlands Engine for example in Midlands Connect and the Housing and Land Delivery Board. Shropshire is one of three unitary authorities working closely together as part of the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership and over the last 12 months has developed relationships with neighbouring authorities including Powys Council (Grow Mid Wales Partnership) and Cheshire East Council (Constellation Partnership).

Work is progressing at pace on the review of the Local Plan to 2036 which provides the framework for housing and employment development to support the delivery of sustainable economic growth. The recent publication of the preferred scale and distribution of development consultation is in line with the identification of strategic

growth corridors and the urban focus for development set out in the Economic Growth Strategy.

Within this year the Council has worked closely with partners and stakeholders progressing a number of strategic development schemes in the county. This includes Historic England who have commenced work on the full restoration of the historic Flaxmill main mill and kiln building to create commercial opportunities that will be available from 2021. The Council has contributed £1 million to this project and is one of three key partners in the delivery. The Council convenes the Tern Hill Task Force for Clive Barracks with the local MP and Defence Infrastructure Organisation, a significant development site on the A41 corridor available from 2022 when the current battalion are due to vacate. The Task Force have visited other sites in the country to explore sustainable new settlements including Poundbury. Ironbridge Power Station is the single largest development site in Shropshire offering 142 hectares and the Council are working closely with Uniper and their team informing the future mixed use development opportunity.

The Council has played a key role in progressing the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan – a vision and development framework for the future of Shrewsbury. This has been achieved in collaboration with Shrewsbury BID and the Town Council. Over 3,500 comments were received during the consultation in September of this year, promoted particularly with a physical presence in town with a ‘pop up’ shop. A steering group involving Cabinet members, local businesses, University Centre Shrewsbury, Town Council and BID representatives was reconvened in the Spring and has helped to drive progress. The next steps are to undertake a masterplan co-funded by the partners and to ensure co-ordination of projects across the town including Shrewsbury Integrated Transport Plan and the Flaxmill Maltings.

Work has progressed to establish a pipeline of projects to inform a Shropshire growth programme including commercial opportunities. This programme is developing and incorporates transformational schemes including those listed above and will also link to work to review the economic development estate and opportunities for investing directly in the creation of business space, particularly to support identified growth sectors. The team are working with the Midlands Engine Investment Hub to promote these key schemes to investors on an international platform.

Targeting the identified key growth sectors is an ongoing activity and work to date has involved the facilitation of a small sub group from Shropshire Business Board involving the advanced manufacturing representative companies to respond directly to the Industrial Strategy consultation earlier this year. The team meet regularly with colleagues from University Centre Shrewsbury with a particular focus on the new Environmental Science Research Centre which has secured European Regional Development Fund funding and will launch in February. The Council also facilitates a cross sector group to identify and progress opportunities in the Health and Social Care sector, particularly high tech and digital solutions to support the ageing demographic and maximise economic potential from this growing sector.

Government’s negotiations with the EU on the Brexit deal are likely to have a number of consequences for businesses and the economy. Within the Council, a member Brexit Task and Finish group has been established and is meeting with the remit to gather evidence and consider information on possible implications for the Shropshire economy and to prepare for any announcements and consultation, particularly in relation to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which is likely to replace EU funds.

Shropshire has allocated approximately half of its £37 million funding under the current European Structural Investment Funds Programme including toward business support and innovation, environmental projects and social inclusion. The Task and Finish group is due to report back in the Spring of next year.

Enable business to start, grow and succeed

The Council has an active key account programme, which engages approx. one hundred (to date) of the County's largest employers and this list continues to grow as new contacts are made. Visits have led to a number of outcomes for example support with recruitment, increased apprenticeship opportunities, introductions to Department for International Trade for exporting, Innovate UK support, supply chain linkages and liaison with schools and colleges. Through the relationships developed it has also been possible to help secure the future of companies when premises have been sold. Quickly reacting to announcements, even when negative, also means that the Council has helped to mitigate the impacts of redundancies and businesses down-sizing.

In 2017 so far there has been £27.7 million of investments by foreign owned companies expanding with whom we are directly working, and this continues a positive trend that was reported in financial year 16/17 when over £26 million of investment was delivered, 41 new jobs created and 470 jobs were safeguarded. We have also forged a number of new relationships including with some fast growing companies based in Oswestry, Shrewsbury, Whitchurch, Ludlow, Craven Arms and Much Wenlock.

The team continue to have a strong relationship with Shropshire Business Board, which has expanded its membership this year to include NFU, Co-operative Group, Starfish Advertising and Shropshire Festivals. The Board have actively been involved with a number of projects including the Marches Centre for Manufacturing and Technology, Environmental Science and Technology Research Centre, Digital Health and the Investment Prospectus for UCS.

Shropshire Growth Hub as part of the Marches Growth Hub offer will have been open at the Food Enterprise Centre for two years in March next year. This year between 1st January and 31st October the Hub had undertaken 524 telephone contacts with businesses and conducted 227 face to face meetings. We can relate this assistance to the creation of 33 jobs in Shropshire. An independent evaluation of the growth hub service across the Marches was carried out between August and October and this is now reporting back. This has highlighted the importance of the service, particularly in simplifying business support provision and that the physical presence is valued by businesses. Recommendations include the need for further clarity of the growth hub offer, furthering business reach, and better data sharing. We have already committed to a satellite hub at Bridgnorth located in the Marches Centre for Manufacturing and Technology and have delivered events in Ludlow and Oswestry.

Through the business support activities and the European funding programmes, Shropshire businesses benefit from access to a number of business grant schemes where the council is either a delivery or project partner. One of these schemes is the Business Growth Programme (BGP) funded through ERDF. To date 25 Shropshire businesses have been supported through the current Business Growth Programme since its launch in 2016. Shropshire's performance has been excellent to date, with

Shropshire's targets either exceeded or on track to be delivered. 71 jobs will be created from the investment and over £560,000 grant has been secured drawing in further private sector match of almost £1 million.

In November, Shropshire was formally recognised as a hotbed of Social Enterprise activity, receiving the award for the county as a 'Social Enterprise Place'. This recognises the significant role that social enterprises play in the economy and through organisations including the Voluntary Sector Assembly and representation on the Business Board and LEP, it is a contribution that is set to grow further.

Deliver infrastructure to support growth

Digital connectivity is a necessity for residents and businesses to live their lives and operate their day to day businesses. This year Connecting Shropshire has completed its first contract with BT, is now part way through delivery of the second contract with BT, and at the beginning of delivery of contract 3. Following a robust procurement exercise, the Council appointed Airband Community Internet Ltd. as its delivery partner for the third contract and the continued rollout of superfast broadband.

Airband will be responsible for delivering high speed wireless broadband to over 14,000 premises over the next 3 years. When this contract is completed, and together with commercial delivery projections, we expect 98% of premises in Shropshire to have access to superfast broadband, with a final gap of circa 2,000 projected premises. The total contract with Airband is of the value of £11.2 million and this includes funding from Shropshire Council (£2.24 million) Broadband Delivery UK (£5.29 million) and the LEP (£2.27 million).

One of the key areas of focus for the Council since awarding the contract with Airband has been to manage the planning risk for the building of new masts, or additional masts on existing structures in some locations. Dedicated planning case officers are working closely with the team and Airband to help ensure the contract is deployed in the best interests of the local communities whilst recognising the commercial and technical risks of the provider.

At the outturn of contract 1 with BT (June 2017), 345 structures had been built providing access to superfast broadband for 54,177 premises plus a further 11,000 premises that have now got better broadband speeds. Take up of the new network to date is 42.5. Contract 2 was procured and awarded to BT in May 2015 and the expected completion of this contract is summer 2018. The public subsidy costs per premise have increased considerably between contract 1 and 2 from £310 to over £1,200 and this highlights the high cost of deploying fibre technology in rural areas. This is a message that the Council is communicating through BDUK into Government, and this is particularly relevant in light of the Government's current aspirations for its Local Full Fibre programme.

Connecting Shropshire, working with Broadband Delivery UK have to date issued 640 Better Broadband Subsidy codes. These enable any household without access to a 2 Megabit per second solution to obtain a grant of up to £350 which can be used to obtain a solution from an approved supplier. Shropshire Council remains the second largest beneficiary of the scheme nationally.

Connecting Shropshire, alongside partners Fastershire and Superfast Telford and part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund introduced the Marches and Gloucestershire business broadband grant in spring 2017. The grant covers the cost of up to 100% of the capital installation, up to a maximum £25,000, and through an online portal can match applicants with infrastructure providers in their location. A member of staff has been recruited to run the scheme (hosted by Herefordshire). Take up of the grants has been relatively slow to date owing to the initial delay in recruiting to the post. 14 SME's have been engaged in Shropshire, with 3 companies having grant offers made. A focused marketing campaign to potential beneficiaries is currently being launched this winter.

Together with partners Fastershire and Superfast Telford, Connecting Shropshire has applied for £10.4m funding from DEFRA's £30m national allocation to address the final projected rural gaps in superfast broadband, including potential gaps that may arise from commercial non delivery. The project has the potential to address 56 rural clusters (16 in Shropshire) across the LEP area. The project, if successful with its funding bid will aim to start deployment in 2018 and deliver by December 2020.

The Digital Economy Bill was introduced in April 2017 and set out the aspiration of a Universal Service Obligation to all premises from 2020. The Government announced in its autumn statement further £1.1bn investment in digital infrastructure, through its Local Full Fibre Network and 5G programmes. The objective is to stimulate the telecoms market to invest in more fibre connectivity for homes, businesses and 5G masts, through a variety of initiatives. Connecting Shropshire is engaging with the Department for Culture Media and Sport and partner authorities to assess further opportunities through the programmes to benefit Shropshire infrastructure.

Connecting Shropshire continues to work closely with both Ofcom and the Mobile Network Operators (MNO's). Mobile phone coverage gaps continue to be a barrier for both homeowners and businesses, particularly those in our most rural areas. We, together with our MP's have continued to lobby the market for improvements. Positively we have subsequently seen improvements in both 3g and 4g provision across Shropshire including a number of new masts already built with others planned for deployment in 2018 (e.g. EE have committed to 5 new masts going live in 2018 in South Shropshire). We intend to work closely with Ofcom in 2018 to hold the MNO's coverage claims to account.

There are a number of strategic transport schemes that are key to support economic growth and are needed to deliver improvements to networks and capacity increases where there is planned growth. This includes Shrewsbury Integrated Transport Package (SITP), the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road and A5 corridor to Oswestry among others in the county that are the subject of further discussions with Highways England and Network Rail, for example the A49. The outline business case for the North West Relief Road has been refreshed to put the scheme into its current context with the SITP and Oxon Link Road programmed for full delivery by 2021. This refreshed business case has been completed with funding secured from the Department for Transport's Local Majors Fund and will be submitted to Government by the end of this calendar year. The NWRR and the Oxon Link Road are required to support development in Shrewsbury (this is linked to the Big Town Plan outlines earlier in this report).

The team are working closely with the LEP and Highways England to undertake modelling of the current A5 stretch of highway and junctions around Oswestry. This is

key to unlocking housing and employment growth (identified in the Urban Extension in the current Local Plan) for Oswestry including Council owned land for a new Innovation Park. This is challenging as a result of the capacity constraints, particularly at Mile End roundabout. However progress is being made and the combined work between Highways England and the Council's transport consultants is due to report back results and a preferred option by April 2018. The Council have submitted a bid, supported by the LEP, WMCA and developers, to DCLG's Housing Infrastructure Fund and are awaiting the outcome.

The Council have played a key role in the completion of the Marches Freight Strategy, led by the LEP, and continues to input to the Midlands Connect partnership and periodic Rail industry consultations to ensure that Shropshire's schemes are captured. Senior meetings have taken place between the Council and Midlands Connect and we are also highlighting our strategic priorities within the Combined Authority Land and Housing work, which recognises that strategic corridors and infrastructure priorities will be key to unlocking growth on the West Midlands footprint.

A review of Community Infrastructure Levy is underway led by a member Task and Finish Group. The group have held a series of meetings with officer input and are due to report back early in the New Year to Performance Scrutiny Committee. In this time, a refresh of the Place Plans has been undertaken led by the Community Enablement Team working with Town and Parish Councils. This sits within the Planning and Regulatory Services portfolio, but is key to economic growth as CIL's purpose is to support the delivery of infrastructure in communities to meet growth needs for example school places and highways.

We continue to hold discussions and liaise with Utility providers and ensure that capacity needs are highlighted in Shropshire. This year the formal consultation has commenced on the North Shropshire reinforcement programme by Scottish Power Energy Network (SPEN). This is an £18 million investment for a new electrical circuit between Oswestry and Wem, and is key to meet growth in the North of the county. The Council brings together utility providers in forums and this is particularly important to demonstrate implementation of the Local Plan.

Meet skills needs and aspirations

The Council has prepared a draft detailed skills plan following the gathering of evidence from employers and providers. This has been discussed in draft with Shropshire Business Board and the Marches Skills Provider Network. Recruitment and retention of staff with the appropriate skills to meet current and future business needs remains a key challenge across sectors in Shropshire. The Council continue to facilitate conversations between companies and training providers through individual discussions and via networks.

The Council has developed an apprenticeship plan and framework of providers to help maximise the use of its own apprenticeship levy. A discussion has been held with Shropshire Business Board to explore ways of maximising apprentice numbers and how the Council levy may support meeting business skills needs. Interest in this was positive and further work is underway. The use of the Apprenticeship Levy is also being raised as part of Places Overview Scrutiny's work programme.

The opportunities in businesses in Shropshire need to be more readily communicated with children of school age and young people to make them aware of the career prospects and broaden their aspirations about the county. The Council is working with the Careers and Enterprise Company and the Marches LEP to forge these linkages and has employed a dedicated Co-ordinator within the Business Growth and Investment team to work with employers and schools.

The Council has supported the new Marches Centre for Manufacturing and Technology based at Stanmore Industrial Estate and Bridgnorth, which has been driven by a private sector consortium of four local companies. The Centre has established as a Community Interest Company, has enrolled 25 apprentices since opening in September and was officially launched and opened on the 10th of November.

There is still a significant amount of the European Social Funds allocation to commit across the Marches, this is proving more challenging due to the lack of match funding in partner organisations. A dedicated officer is now employed by Herefordshire Council as accountable body and they are co-located with the team in Shropshire for part of the week. The Building Better Opportunities programme is performing well which is focused on providing pre-employment support to those unemployed and in disadvantaged groups. To date £1 million of funding has been committed to this programme.

Promote Shropshire

The Council is doing more to promote Shropshire as an investment location by working with the Midlands Engine Investment Hub, Department for International Trade and with private sector partners and project sponsors e.g. Historic England. The successful launch of the Economic Growth Strategy at the end of September was a strong platform to build from with a number of positive stories following this event.

The Invest in Shropshire website is receiving more traffic and is the main source of promotional material and information for investors, developers and businesses. There is also a strong social media presence and news is put out via social media channels regularly. The team are also regularly feeding in to member briefings and have held a number of staff information sessions on the Economic Growth strategy.

The Invest in Shropshire and Shropshire Growth Hub brands and information have been taken to a number of events in the year including the Shropshire Chamber business expo, SME Accelerator Event, and Marches LEP Business Conference. Further engagements are being planned for 2018 and an engagement plan for targeting audiences and an events calendar is being produced.

'A Council that is good to do business with'

To help meet this underpinning action of the Economic Growth strategy the restructure of parts of the Economic Growth service has been completed and is now in place – this includes the two new teams of Business Growth and Investment and Growth Programme and Strategy. A 'whole system;' review of the Economic Growth system and all those services that touch an enquiry or project is underway working

with external consultants and this is due to conclude in January. A business survey is also being planned for the spring to update the intelligence we hold of what businesses want and need. Multiple business visits have been held this year involving a number of officers and the Portfolio Holder, feedback has been broadly positive and the general view is that businesses support the focus on growth, the publication of a clear plan and the direction of travel. This will be closely monitored and reviewed and all feedback is being collected and acted on.

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

Economic Growth Strategy for Shropshire 2017 - 21

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Nic Laurens

Local Member

All Members

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Council
14 December 2017
10.00am

Councillor Gwilym Butler
Place Overview Committee Chairman

ANNUAL REPORT 2017
PLACE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
[INCORPORATING ENTERPRISE AND GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE]

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report is an overview of the work of the Place Overview Committee and its predecessor, the Enterprise and Growth Scrutiny Committee. The report is a summary of the work undertaken by the Committee between January and December 2017.

2.0 Scrutiny activity in 2017

2.1 The Enterprise and Growth Scrutiny Committee met formally on three occasions until July 2017 when following a review of the Council's scrutiny function, it was replaced by the Place Overview Committee, which first met in September 2017 and will meet again in December 2017. The following reports and presentations were received: -

- Outline of the Planning Review Methodology
- Draft Economic Growth Strategy
- Economic Growth Redesign Update
- Empty Homes Task and Finish Group Recommendations Implementation Update
- The North West Relief Road
- Business Rates

2.2 The development of the Economic Growth Strategy in the first half of the year was a key activity and the Committee has played an important role in informing this document. Committee Members were involved in the initial 'roundtable' consultations and have received updates on progress throughout the year which has given Members the opportunity to input to the final Strategy. The Committee will continue to play a role in the monitoring and review of delivery of the Strategy's actions.

- 2.3 In February 2017, the Committee received an update on the implementation of the Empty Homes Task and Finish Group Recommendations.
- 2.4 The Committee continues to work with Shropshire Business Board. The Board Chairman updated Members on their work in March 2017. In September, the Committee invited a representative from the Shropshire Business Board to join the discussion on the issue of Business rates.
- 2.5 In July 2017, following the Scrutiny Peer Review conducted by the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Centre of Public Scrutiny (CFPS), and Council's subsequent approval of the Leader's proposed changes to the Scrutiny Committee remits and structures, the Committee considered an introduction to scrutiny, an overview of its key functional areas and key development areas.
- 2.4 The Committee approved the establishment of the Brexit Task and Finish Group at its September meeting. The Task and Finish Group was established to explore the potential impacts, positive and negative, of Brexit on the county and enable the Council to be able to respond effectively to any future Government consultations or proposals.
- 2.7 Infrastructure delivery is key for future economic growth and members heard from a number of key stakeholders at its September meeting in relation to the proposals for the North West Relief Road in Shrewsbury. This was part of the development of the outline business case for this project, ahead of submission to Government for further consideration.
- 2.8 At its meeting in December 2017 the Committee will consider the Apprenticeship Levy, Shrewsbury Town Centre Development and receive updates on Business Rates and the work of the Brexit Task and Finish Group.

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

Reports to Enterprise and Growth Scrutiny Committee
Reports to the Place Overview Committee

Cabinet Members

Councillors Steve Charmley, Nic Laurens, Robert Macey

Local Member/s

All

Appendices

None



Committee and date

Council

14 December 2017

10.00am

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR FINANCE

Contact: David Minnery
Email: David.minnery@shropshire.gov.uk

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document identifies some of the work undertaken within the Finance Portfolio since May 2017 and details some of the aims and objectives for the future.

2.0 Financial Strategy

- 2.1 The work of this portfolio is dominated by the need to develop a financial strategy for the Council that balances the limited resources we have available with the many services the people of Shropshire value and use on a daily basis.
- 2.2 In the summer, following considerable work, a refresh of the Council's budget model was completed. This model covered the detailed and high cost, highly volatile areas of the budget such as Adult and Children's Services as well as more discretionary areas that have seen inflationary growth in costs as well as changeable levels of demand. The growth model went on to inform the Council's financial position and when placed alongside available resources confirmed a significant and growing funding gap.
- 2.3 As a Council it is pleasing to report that based on national statistics we deliver some of the lowest cost services per head of population. This includes the costs of Adult Social Care (our highest cost area) and Resources and Support costs (services that enable the Council to function). It is frustrating that despite our low costs and high performance, national funding does not reflect the demand placed on our services, now and into the future. Adult Services is projected to grow by at least £8m per year, yet we cannot raise the funds locally to pay for this growth.
- 2.4 In October revised financial position was reported to Cabinet and work to address the funding gap began in earnest. The approach accepted that we need time to plan for the significant changes the Council needs to make alongside a backdrop of increased and unprecedented uncertainty within Local Government Finance.

Cabinet Members and officers have worked closely since October to establish an approach to deliver a balanced budget and then to identify proposals within this approach which will ultimately go before Council for approval in February 2018. The approach looks to deliver innovation and increased efficiency and to maximise income generation before ultimately considering service cuts.

- 2.5 The Performance Management Scrutiny Committee have been involved in the process from the beginning and will have opportunity to feed into the budget process before Council meets to set the 218/19 Budget in February.

3.0 Financial Oversight

- 3.1 Over the financial year it is important to ensure that an oversight of the Council's financial position is reported through to Cabinet. This is delivered by financial monitoring reports covering the revenue account, the capital programme and the cash position via treasury management updates.

- 3.2 The capital programme is being delivered and extended through a substantial number of additional, commercially focused schemes linked to the Financial Strategy. Details of these schemes will be reported over the coming months and progress monitored through quarterly reporting. One area gathering significant momentum over the coming months is the delivery of the Digital Transformation Programme. This programme is a major investment for the Council and it is pleasing that progress is being made well within the identified budget with the potential to deliver savings through increased efficiency running into the many millions.

- 3.3 The Treasury Management approach adopted by the Council continues to deliver above benchmark returns, providing additional much needed cash without undertaking unnecessary risk on the capital employed.

- 3.4 The Council's in-year revenue position is under strain as a result of pressures particularly within the Children's services Directorate. We are working across the Council to deliver a spending freeze alongside other initiatives to bring the projected overspend into balance before the end of the year.

4.0 Services within the Portfolio

- 4.1 A number of initiatives have been or are being implemented by services directly within the Finance Portfolio.

- 4.2 Following the securing of a government grant worth £1.308m in 2017/18 a local discretionary business scheme has been created and this funding allocated to almost 1,000 business across Shropshire. These funds will help businesses cover the transitional costs of business rates revaluation from April 2017 and is an important boost to Shropshire's business economy.

- 4.3 The Council’s Council Tax Support Scheme has also been reviewed to bring it into line with the majority of Councils across the country. The scheme has been scrutinised in depth by the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee. Implementation of the scheme will deliver up to an additional £1.2m per year, achieved by more of Shropshire’s population making a contribution though Council Tax, which will help prevent future cuts in some of our much-valued services.
- 4.4 In other areas of the Portfolio there are plans in place to deliver further efficiencies on top of the aforementioned Digital Transformation Programme, to review further policies within Council Tax and Business Rates and to increase returns from Treasury Management. All these proposals are identified within the Financial Strategy, together providing £2.5m of savings year on year, the equivalent of 2% Council Tax.

<p>List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)</p> <p>Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21 – Cabinet 18 October 2017</p> <p>Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2022/23 – Cabinet 13 December 2017</p> <p>Financial Monitoring Report Quarter 1 2017/18 – Cabinet 6 September 2017</p> <p>Financial Monitoring Report Quarter 2 2017/18 – Cabinet 15 November 2017</p> <p>Treasury Management Update Quarter 1 2017/18 – Cabinet 6 September 2017</p> <p>Treasury Management Update Quarter 2 2017/18 – Cabinet 6 December 2017</p> <p>New Business Rate Discretionary Relief Scheme 2017/18 – Cabinet 6 September 2017</p> <p>Shropshire Council - Council Tax Support Scheme 2018/19 – Cabinet 18 October 2017</p>
<p>Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) David Minnery</p>
<p>Local Member All</p>
<p>Appendices None.</p>

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Committee and date

Council

14 December 2017

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR CORPORATE SUPPORT

Contact: Steve Charmley
Email: steve.charmley@shropshire.gov.uk

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document presents a selection of the work undertaken by Corporate Support services and details some of the aims and objectives for the future.
- 1.2 Throughout 2017 work has continued to deliver more commercial opportunities and increasing opportunities to increase revenue for the council resulting in more cost effective service delivery.
- 1.3 Again in 2017 the Digital Transformation Programme has been a focus of activity. Now that the design phases are underway staff roadshows are being planned for the new year to increase understanding and levels of engagement with the programme.

2.0 HR Advice

2.2 Upskill Shropshire

The introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy on 6 April 2017 has seen the creation of Upskill Shropshire – a branded offer for our staff to maximise the use of the levy pot for the council. We have also created a commercial offer which is already being taken up by other local authorities and public sector bodies. A fully procured framework of providers is in place and the first selection panels have taken place with a number of apprentices lined up to start in the autumn.

2.3 Leadership Programme

The Shropshire Leadership Programme launched in April 2017 - Top Team (Directors), Senior Leaders (Heads of Service/Service Managers - direct reports to Directors) and focuses on the challenges and changes ahead for the authority. The programme content covers the key drivers of change: Digital Transformation, Commercialism, Agile and Mobile Working and Customer Experience taking account of external influences around national/local politics and enhancing Economic Growth for the county. The Future Leaders Programme launches in

September 2017 and will bring together talented individuals who aspire to be leaders of the future and will be mentored by our senior leaders. We are currently working with the University of Chester for accreditation of the Future Leaders Programme as well as looking at opportunities for co-delivery for Level 7 Apprenticeship programmes in Leadership.

2.4 Commercial Opportunities

As well as the commercial interest generated from Upskill Shropshire, a number of contracts have been secured for provision of HR Advice Services generating income in the last 6 months including a Care Home in Oswestry, Just Credit Union, Town & Parish Councils, schools in neighbouring authorities and a school in a London Borough looking for consultancy advice in federating. Our Business Plans are currently being updated to reflect a changing marketplace and informing our offer going forward.

2.5 Sickness Absence – Joint Working Group

Work continues on the group and an update to Directors took place in the autumn. Policy changes are being recommended along with other interventions to reduce sickness absence levels and support the overall workforce health.

2.6 The focus for the coming year will be on developing the Organisation Development Strategy to support the cultural and behavioural change required as part of Digital Transformation, being more Commercial, Agile and the changing Customer Experience.

3.0 Employment Services

3.1 Employment Services (Payroll, Recruitment & Contracts) have been focussing on the design phase of new systems for Digital Transformation (see 5.9 below). Work also continues on developing the commercial offer and following up leads for new business.

4.0 Occupational Health and Safety

4.1 The Occupational Health and Safety team have been focusing on improving a number of health and safety initiatives to support staff in the following activities:

- Further measures piloted for managing employees who are lone working in higher risk situations.
- Focused workshops on the use of laptops and equipment in agile working environments to reduce and minimise the risks associated with musculoskeletal conditions.
- Continuation of specific workshops for Schools on health and safety.

- Focused support via the Crime Prevention Officer on management of suspicion incidents in Schools. Working closely with School Leaders and the Police on policy development and communication strategies.
- Continuation of a full programme of health and safety courses including first aid to support the work undertaken by employees and provide a commercial offering to external companies, i.e. Academies for reasonably priced quality courses.

4.2 Continued work to improve employee health and wellbeing has occurred as follows:

- Monthly 'Feel Good' employee events around the county at Council buildings focusing on a range of self-help, prevention programmes and fun activities during lunchtime.
- Working with colleagues from Public Health's 'Help2Change' Team to deliver monthly Health MOT checks to employees to check blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol levels.
- A Health Monitor machine has been placed in Shirehall's Ground Floor to enable employees to monitor their own weight, blood pressure and obtain a regular reading of their Body Mass Index as and when necessary.
- Targeted support for musculoskeletal conditions has been arranged through Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust for fast track access for employees to Physiotherapy Services and accessible clinics as part of the Wellbeing 'Feel-good employee' events around the County.
- Planning is underway for seasonal Influenza Campaign for front line staff.

4.3 Health, safety and workplace health is reported regularly to the Health, Safety and Welfare group and the group continues to monitor progress against work plans, incidents including accidents and approves all new health and safety guidance.

4.4 The focus for the coming year will be to continue to support initiatives regarding workplace wellbeing, reducing sickness absence and to build on the commercial approach of the teams.

5.0 Digital Transformation / IT

5.1 IT Strategy

The IT Strategy was approved by cabinet but due to a change in management and the increasing speed at which IT develops, an updated version is being produced.

5.2 The IT Strategy sets out how the vision for IT underpins the Council vision and the

strategic and delivery principles that will be adhered to in delivering that vision. The document includes the approach being taken to delivering the Digital Transformation Programme, the Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity strategy and progress in the delivery of that strategy, and commercial opportunities being pursued by IT.

- 5.3 The update to the IT strategy defines how Shropshire Council's IT department are adopting the internationally recognised best practice IT management principles of ITIL (formally an acronym for Information Technology Information Library but now a brand of its own).
- 5.4 The IT department are now managed by Technology and Communications manager, Andrew Boxall.
- 5.5 The IT department have worked extremely hard to reduce the number of Audit recommendations and have made great strides in overcoming the issues this presented.
- 5.6 The IT department have also worked to reduce the associated risk around IT service provision, bringing the risk level from a "High" to a "Medium" with plans for it to be reduced further over the coming months.
- 5.7 The commercial offering of IT is also expanding, with work for schools and academies continuing to expand – particularly with the new offering of the Schools Managed Service (SMS), which is proving popular with early adopters.
- 5.8 IT's contribution to the Digital Transformation programme has increased significantly over the past six months, with fundamental parts of the programme being worked on by the team. This not only ensures the knowledge of the work remains within the organisation but also reduces the cost, as consultant fees can be prohibitively expensive.
- 5.9 The Digital Transformation Programme
The Digital Transformation Programme is a major transformation initiative that will enable the Council to transform the delivery of services through a customer focused approach utilising cloud technologies.
- 5.10 Delivery of this programme is being enacted through four interrelated and concurrent projects:-
 - **Social Care** – which will improve the provision of such services to both Adults and Children's Services to meet the increased demand on these services whilst reducing the ongoing costs of such service provision.
 - **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)** – that will provide an integrated modern solution for all back-office processes to automate our existing manual

and disparate systems, and provide improved management information and a better reporting capability. This project also includes the delivery of an improved Customer Services Centre which will enable customers to contact the Council digitally.

- **Infrastructure and Architecture (I&A)** – to support delivery of the other streams of work, enabling staff to spend more time on customer-facing activities through improved connectivity; enable agile and flexible working and provide improved Wi-Fi capability in Council offices and other public meeting points. This project will also support the ICT initiative to provide resilient Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity for all Council systems and software.
- **Customer Experience** – this piece of work is looking at the way we, as Shropshire Council, interact with residents, businesses and other organisations to identify opportunities to make improvements, mainly using digital means. For instance, new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software will enable staff to create automated workflows that take currently manual processes and automates them – increasing productivity significantly. This piece of work is also delivering a new piece of Call Centre software that will allow a much more seamless experience for residents.

5.11 The business case to support this programme was approved by Cabinet meetings on 27th April and 11th May, and ratified by Council on July 21st. That paper forecast that the cashable savings derived from the programme would be £4.276m and total non-cashable benefits of £31.805m over a 5-year period.

5.12 Social Care Project

The Social Care project has chosen its supplier (Liquid Logic) and is now in the design phase, documenting the information needed for the software provider and our own staff to benefit from this new solution.

5.13 Enterprise Resource planning (ERP)

The ERP contract has also now been signed, with the UNIT 4 offering being selected. This piece of work has now entered the design phase.

5.14 Infrastructure and Architecture (I&A)

The I&A encompasses many pieces of work into one manageable programme. Improvements such as new WiFi at strategic points is now coming to fruition, with the installations being planned at some sites for before Christmas 2017. Other important parts of the I&A include improvements to our security, supporting mobile and agile working and other undertakings that will create a more flexible and commercially viable organisation.

5.15 The I&A is also looking at the organisations data needs, both now and in the future. This will enable managers to make more informed decisions, as timely information will be readily available.

5.16 Programme Management

The Digital Transformation Programme is on track to deliver against the strategy set out in the business case that was approved by Council in July. The Social Care project is also ahead of schedule in the supplier selection and contracts award phase of the project, and anticipates enabling delivery to commence 2 months ahead of schedule.

5.17 The Digital Transformation Programme and the 3 constituent projects are managed through fortnightly programme and project boards who's' memberships include directors acting as the SRO, stakeholders from the relevant services, and officers representing Governance, Audit and Risk Management.

5.18 The actual spend on the programme to date is less than that which was budgeted, the savings being achieved through faster delivery and recruiting less expensive external resources than those originally forecast.

5.19 The business case will be updated once the preferred supplier's actual costs have been factored in, and the resource requirements (internal and external personnel) have been re-forecast

5.20 The Programme Manager also is a member of the ICT Approvals Board to ensure that other ICT related initiatives across the Council do not contradict the Digital Transformation Programme strategy or delivery.

6.0 Communications

6.1 In 2016, the Communications department was relocated to a central point in the West Wing of Shirehall and from August 2016 the department was overseen by a single manager in the Communications and Public Relations manager (Andrew Boxall). In April 2017, Andrew was successful in his application for the Technology and Communications Service manager role, expanding the positions remit to cover IT services alongside communications.

6.2 The objective of the communications department has been to find more positive articles and communications, to ensure that residents and businesses understand the work undertaken across Shropshire Council. A new Communications strategy has been documented and will be submitted to Cabinet in September 2017, detailing the plans for improving our communications.

6.3 A restructure of the Customer Services department, which includes elements of the communications teams, is due to close in early September 2017, this is in response to the reduction in opening hours of Face-to-face customer service sites (approved by full Council in December 2016) and to help achieve the required savings targets. The restructure sees the removal of split grades (a corporate

objective) and more staff being moved into the areas of work required, such as moving to work in the call centre rather than face-to-face service points which have seen a drastic reduction in clients.

- 6.4 The Media team have been given a focus on finding good news and the staff newsletter has been very successful in sharing information (the readership figures continue to rise). The communications team have plans to offer and support other methods of communications, all of which are detailed in the upcoming strategy.
- 6.5 2017 will see the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) and the Digital Transformation Program, delivering a much needed shift in the delivery of information for residents of Shropshire. These shifts have been prepared for and work is underway to ensure the Shropshire Council communications team play a central role.

7.0 Commissioning Support – Data Analysis and Intelligence

- 7.1 The past year has seen Commissioning Support extend how it works across the Council with individual teams and commissioning activity, as well as informing and supporting more strategic work. There has been an emphasis on making information more accessible, and developing performance management with a focus on contract performance measures and how these are used in commissioning and contract management.
- 7.2 The Corporate Performance Management Framework has continued to develop with the Performance Portal providing the means to share the key measures and provide access to information on trends and explanations on performance provided by the services areas.
- 7.3 The introduction of new systems through the Digital Transformation Programme will enable access to information and the presentation and interaction with data to improve further.
- 7.4 New ways of presenting and sharing information have been identified. This has a number of benefits, including preparing plans and for the new systems and to support key activity by the Council including Economic Growth, profiles are being developed for the market towns. So far profiles for Oswestry, Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth have been published on the Council's website, with the profiles for the other market towns being added as they are completed. The electoral division profiles have also been refreshed.
- 7.5 The development of reporting for Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care has also progressed, with new dashboards and information being created which automate self-serve reporting to staff, managers and senior managers to support

them in their planning and decision making, and to identify the impact of change on people who receive services.

- 7.6 The Big Conversation took the opportunity to ask people for their thoughts on the Council's priorities set out in the draft Corporate Plan and to better understand the likely impact of changes on people. A particular focus was to reach those groups who would be least likely or able to take part in engagement work through face to face activities. This was completed by working with organisations who were best placed to engage with the target groups. Through this approach we heard from over 700 children and young people, people with disabilities and those who care for them, as well as people who don't tend to complete online surveys and people on lower incomes.
- 7.7 There has also been a continued increase in customer feedback to the Council which helps to inform how services can improve. All types of feedback are positively encouraged. The largest increase was in compliments with smaller increases in the number comments and complaints compared to the previous year.

8.0 Legal and Democratic Services

- 8.1 Legal Services continues to support the corporate governance of the Council and the specific needs of the service areas. A new case management system is going to improve our efficiency and should also provide additional opportunities for income generation.
- 8.2 Though all areas of our work are under on-going pressure, child-care in particular has experienced an exceptionally difficult twelve months with a number of highly contentious and complex cases which have been extremely challenging and resource intensive. There is no sign of this pressure reducing and so we plan to address this structurally.
- 8.3 Electoral Services have undertaken two major elections in the last year including a snap general election. They are currently undertaking the annual canvass. Individual Electoral Registration is dealt with on a day-to-day basis alongside any other legislative obligations that are required for Electoral Registration and Elections. Since May we have had three by-elections. At present we are in the early stages of looking at working with other councils to bring in some income.

9.0 Commissioning Development & Procurement

9.1 Procurement and Contracts

9.2 On-going procurement and contracts support

9.3 The Procurement team has continued to provide Procurement support throughout the year to all areas of the Council through the following:-

- The Provision of Procurement advice relating to all types of procurement activity throughout the Council.
- Management of tender processes and advice to all types of tendering activity throughout the Council
- Category management of certain corporate expenditure items
- Procurement support to arms-length organisations
- The Provision of procurement guidance, training and facilitation of best practice within the Council
- The Administration of an e-tendering system and Expenditure Analysis Tool

9.4 Support has been provided to major procurement processes within the last 12 months which have included the new Highway Term Maintenance Contract, major Public Health, Social Care and Procurement supporting the Council's Digital Transformation Project.

9.5 Contracts support has continued providing, advice on and drafting of contracts for Adult Social Care and Children Services, assisting with contract management and monitoring within these areas and safeguarding investigations and relevant liaison with commissioners and other colleagues in Adult Social Care and other bodies as appropriate and market shaping and market resilience work.

9.6 E-tendering

9.7 The Council has had an e-tendering system ('Delta') over recent years which provides a full audit trail for procurement processes as well as an electronic means of managing tender processes and receiving tenders. This has been particularly effective when used by the Procurement Team and Property Services, the use has also been extended over the last year to Highways, Passenger Transport and HR colleagues. Almost all tendering undertaken by the Council is now carried out through this system. The system also provides the contract register for the Council and is also used for the storage of procurement and contract documents which strengthens governance of contract award and management.

9.8 Expenditure, Contractor & Market Analysis

9.9 Over the past year the Council have procured a product from Porge Research called Illuminator which can be used by commissioners, procurers and contract managers to analyse the Council's contractor expenditure, the make-up of public sector organisations who use the same contractors, and a view of the market available. This includes understanding how much reliance any particular contractor has on the Council i.e. the Council's spend as a proportion of the contractor's total income from the public sector. This helps to inform commissioners about the sustainability of the contractor and the potential risk to the Council's procured services should they lose another contract from a different public sector organisation, or the risk to the contractor of losing a contract from the Council.

9.10 Contract Management & Assurance

9.11 The Commissioning Assurance and Performance Board has met throughout the last 12 months. The board consists of the Directors Group who have met on a monthly basis to consider commissioning assurance issues. This has included receiving reports from each directorate on their key contracts based on costs, risk and strategic importance. Directors are updated on whether contracts are judged to be performing well, achieving expected outcomes or failing to deliver what is required. Directors consider and also invite contract managers back to their meetings to explain their systems and processes and how they ensure contract outcomes are delivered.

9.12 As well as the contract management reporting to Commissioning and Assurance Board identified above, other developments have been progressed. Training and Development has been identified as a key requirement for good contract management.

9.13 The procurement team has tested some contract management training provided free of charge which has been developed by the University of Southampton, the UK Cabinet Office and other public bodies. This training has been assessed and will now be rolled out through the Leap into Learning portal to relevant contract managers and commissioners across the Council.

9.14 Commissioning Development

9.15 Commissioning Development has;

- Developed and launched a Social Value Charter for Shropshire <https://shropshire.gov.uk/social-value/>. The Council has led on this with organisations from across the public and voluntary community and social enterprise sectors. This extends the Council's framework and approach to

this activity to achieve additional social, economic and environmental benefits from the delivery of services on behalf of the Council.

- Supported Children’s Services to transition to new contracts for assessed Short Breaks.
- Has worked with stakeholders to prepare for the re-procurement of Local Healthwatch.
- Has supported Housing Services to commission mortgage support for people with long-term disabilities and to commission work to determine the future of the Council’s current housing stock.
- Has commenced work looking at how outcomes can be better coordinated across the Council. This work is ongoing.
- Has supported and undertaken a number of invitations to quote and service reviews as required.
- Is working with Adult Services and local voluntary and community sector providers to review and plan the future of preventative services in the county.
- Is working with Library Services to seek a new provider for Church Stretton library.

9.16 Anti–Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

9.17 A council statement is being drafted which includes our policy and action taken to meet the policy around safeguarding, procurement, supply chain activities. Approval will be sought from Council before its publication and promotion.

10.0 Shire Services

10.1 Shire Services is a Trading Department of Shropshire Council providing catering and cleaning services predominantly to schools. The service also manages the Facilities team and oversees the day to day management of the Student Accommodation building at Mardol House. Catering services are provided within 8 Local Authority areas, as well as within Shropshire. Services are provided in North Wales, Cheshire, Walsall, Telford, Sandwell, Worcester, Hereford and Wolverhampton.

10.2 For the first time in 2017/18 the number of catering contracts held outside of Shropshire has exceeded the number of catering contracts held within Shropshire. Due to financial pressures and the perceived savings that can be generated by managing the service in house, a number of smaller schools across the county have opted out of the current agreement. Multi Academy Trust arrangements has also resulted in schools moving away from the service provided by Shire Services to join the collective arrangements of the trust.

- 10.3 In 2016/17 the overall Turnover for the department was £14.82 million, with £2.82 million from cleaning contracts. In April 2017 the service had 170 catering contracts and 134 cleaning contracts.
- 10.4 During 2017/18 and 2018/19 the service has plans in place to remove the need for the base budget from Shropshire Council and to achieve a break even position. In 2017/18 savings of £200,000 are planned in 2018/19 the savings target is £297,000. This is a challenging target, given that our costs are increasing over and above the savings target which increase the overall amount that we need to save.
- 10.5 When budgets were set and issued to schools ready for 2017/18, the employer's pension costs were set at 13.5%. In May 2017 it came to light the employer's pension costs had increased to 14.8%. This added another £84,000 of costs to the service that had not been anticipated or budgeted for. We have also been made aware that legal services will be introducing a recharge for services that they provide to start in 2017/18. The service was of the impression that legal services were already included in the Corporate Recharge figure but apparently that is not the case.
- 10.6 The greatest challenge the service currently has is reducing our resources and overheads to achieve the savings targets whilst retaining sufficient staff to deliver the current level of service required, as well as to grow and mobilise new contracts.
- 10.7 Our new online pre-order and payment system (Squid) has now been introduced to 20 schools. Introducing this new system will have a number of important benefits as well as allowing parents to pay for meals on line; reduced queueing time for pupils, reduced waste as kitchens know how much of each menu item need to be produced, existing paper based processes can be eliminated as data can be transferred electronically between devices, kitchen employees can spend more time preparing and making food and less time completing paperwork, whilst also improving the speed of communication between kitchens and Head Office. The system has been well received by parents and schools. We have consistently seen an increase in the uptake of meals in the schools that are now using the system.
- 10.8 The move towards the Living Wage of £9.00 on 2020 continues to impact on site based staff. Whilst the lower grades of staff such as cleaning assistants and catering assistants have had a significant increase in salary over the last couple of years, the staff who line manage these groups of employees have not experienced the same increase. In some cases an employee are expected to manage all aspects of a team of people for as little as an extra 9p per hour. This reducing differential has affected our ability to recruit and retain staff of the right calibre to line manager roles.
- 10.9 Phase 2 of providing Student Accommodation for the University of Chester is underway with the Tannery project now being underway. The service continues to

manage the day to day operational aspects of the accommodation at Mardol House. As well as being involved in the Project Group for Phase 2.

11.0 Property Services Group

- 11.1 The Council's Property Services Group undertook a rebranding exercise in order to raise commercial presence in the market. This included a new website, social media campaigns, marketing material and extensive training. This is a continuation of the group's business development activities, which commenced in January 2016. This commercial focus has prompted the group to re-evaluate resources and restructure in order to meet the demands of the market.
- 11.2 The group enjoyed another successful year with high levels of buy back from Shropshire Schools, including schools and academies who have not previously bought into the service. This has resulted in extensive recruitment of two team leaders, building and mechanical surveyors. They have also recruited trainee surveyors and continue to support their development for succession planning. The Finance & Business Development Manager has recently completed an MBA in Business Administration and is currently on the Future Leaders Programme.
- 11.3 Trading income exceeded £1.3 million in 2016/17 ensuring a profitable position for the group. New external business contracts awarded included Shrewsbury Academy Trust, Needham Inks Ltd, Town & Parish Councils and Libraries. The group is working in collaboration with Adult Social Care and Housing (HOLD, HIA & SHIP properties) to develop a strategic approach to managing and maintaining properties. The group is also developing a good working relationship with First Choice Housing and are looking at assisting with acquiring and refurbishing properties on their behalf.
- 11.4 Tech Forge Cloud has enabled the group to continually streamline their processes. They are engaging with the Digital Transformation Team as the ERP will interface with TF. As their processes have already been streamlined, this should be a seamless transition.
- 11.5 340 capital projects worth £6.3 million were completed in financial year 2016-17 and 255 projects are in progress worth £7.4 million in this current financial year, with more expected. The projects included school placement planned extensions, L&S condition programme which included projects ranging from boiler replacement, electrical rewires, windows and roofing, to meet the essential requirements of the DfE dashboard criteria for ensuring schools are water tight and safe. The group have also taken on the responsibility and budget management for the Corporate Landlord properties. They also undertook conditions surveys of all Shropshire schools/academies and a number of corporate buildings.

11.6 During 2016 & 17, 61 customer satisfaction surveys were returned with an average satisfaction rate of 9.10 out of 10 for our service and that of our contractors, with more questionnaires expected to come in. Customer testimonials are also available on their website.

11.7 The focus of the group will continue to investigate areas of new business as well as analyse existing business to ensure sustainability. New services have been offered to customers including CIF bids, 3D survey scanning, Fire Risk Assessments, TF Cloud training. Staff have also undertaken Prince 2 Practitioner/Foundation training to enable effective project management.

12.0 Commercial Services

12.1 The Council needs to create new sustainable income streams through commercial activity above the current level of resources it receives. The Council approved its Commercial Strategy in March 2017. The Leader has asked me to accelerate the commercial and investment programme to support our economic growth ambitions for the county. Our aim is to invest £300 million over the next 3 years with an overall return of 10%, or 5% net of capital repayments and interest.

12.2 Projects will be prioritised based on the level of return and benefit they bring to the council and the county. Most will require us to work closely with partners, public and private, to generate the best return. We are looking to invest in sites and projects which bring together public services in a more integrated way in local communities. This includes housing, employment, health, care and other community based services. We will look to use the new technologies that the Council is investing in to equip a more agile workforce allowing running costs in Council owned property to reduce and income to be generated by letting out available office space to third parties.

12.3 We are also providing commercial skills training to our workforce as we know they are a valuable asset who can generate income generating ideas which can be tested and, where applicable and properly appraised, delivered.

13.0 Strategic Asset Management

13.1 Strategic asset management for the future will be key in releasing value from the Council's assets and to deliver economic growth. The Council's portfolio will be continuously reviewed to ensure it provides a durable income stream. This may involve the release of poor performing assets together with the retention of those which present the best opportunity for increased return and high property yields for the future. Property Investment will be a key part of a new asset management strategy with acquisition opportunities being assessed, again to both generate income streams and to further economic growth and development. Land

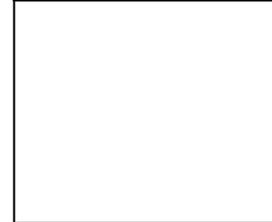
management, place shaping and property master planning will ensure a coordinated and focused approach alongside public sector partners and the private sector to match the Council's key objectives relating back to the economic and commercial strategies.

- 13.2 The new approach may involve delivering property services differently with a more investment and commercial focus together with the delivery of efficient and effective property management.

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<u>Committee and Date</u>
Council
14 December 2017



PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORT UNIVERSITY & STRATEGIC PETER NUTTING: LEADER, SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

1. Summary

I became the Leader of the Council in May 2017 and at the outset I made clear that the new Administration would have two priorities:

- i) Economic Growth.
- ii) Changing the Culture of the Council.

I am very pleased to report that good progress has been made on both of these issues.

2. Economic Growth

Shropshire's Economic Growth Strategy was launched in September and this marks a 'sea change' in ambition and scale for growth. Shropshire's economy continues to perform well. The backbone of our business base is small and medium enterprises, particularly those employing fewer than 10 people (90% of all enterprises). The Council has continued to support this and an example is the ongoing success of the Shropshire Growth Hub operating virtually and with a physical presence based at the Food Enterprise Centre in Battlefield. Between 1st January and 31st October this year over 740 business contacts have been made by phone or face to face and this relates to the creation of 33 new jobs.

I have also paid attention to the economic needs of our Market Towns and I have visited all of our key towns and many of our parishes to gauge their ambition. The Council is developing proposals for a number of locations and I expect them to be submitted to the Marches LEP and I am optimistic that they will be funded.

We also have plans for strategic economic growth and there are a number of projects which I expect to announce shortly.

3. Priority Projects

We have set out a number of priority projects as follows:

- i) M54 Corridor.
- ii) Shrewsbury Shopping Centres.
- iii) Housing.
- iv) Car Parking.
- v) Shirehall Refurbishment.
- vi) Quarry Swimming Centre.
- vii) Digital Transformation.
- viii) Green Waste.
- ix) Capital Programme.
- x) Community Enablement Team.
- xi) CIL.
- xii) Mardol House.

4. Changing Organisation Culture

I want to encourage a more commercial 'can do' approach within the Council and I have been clear to implement a 'no blame' approach. I want our staff to be empowered to make decisions and eliminate command and control styles of management.

The Council has implemented an in-house 'Leadership Programme' to encourage improvements in leadership/management practice and to extend the skill range of our managers. The programme has received 100% positive feedback from the participants.

Digital Transformation will also provide the vehicle for changing the way in which the Council operates to be more efficient and customer/community focussed.

5. Commercial Activity

The Council needs new, self-generated income streams. We have a Commercial Strategy and I am accelerating this through the Deputy Leader. Our aim is to invest £300 million over the next 3 years with an overall return of 10%, or 5% net of capital repayments and interest.

6. Children and Adult Social Care

Our Social Services continue to perform well and I want to congratulate the Portfolio Holder and staff for achieving 'good' at the recent Children's Social Care Ofsted inspection. This is a truly fantastic achievement.

The future for social care is to reduce predicted demand by innovation and new interventions. The relevant Portfolio Holders are focussed on making this happen.

7. Financial Strategy

Our Financial Strategy will set out in detail the approach we are taking to managing our finances. Finance continues to be a challenge and we have taken steps to correct this in the medium term. Our aim is to protect services and the front line by being more efficient and raising new income streams. It will be necessary, as planned, to use freed up earmarked reserves over the next few years.

8. Digital Transformation

The Council is investing £24 million into developing new IT systems which will enable us to work in a modern way. The technology will reduce the number of inputs and transactions required and will provide proper management information and business intelligence. Our aim is to drive out £10 million of savings by implementing a new operating system. New ways of working will also improve our culture and the 'job satisfaction' experienced by our staff.

9. Estates and Assets

A review of our Estates function has been initiated and I expect this to make recommendations on how our staff and operations need to change. The final report will be available in January 2018.

Following the review of Estates, it is likely that a review of our Assets (land, buildings and plant) will need to be undertaken to ensure we are maximising their potential.

10. University Centre, Shrewsbury (UCS)

The Council has partnered the University of Chester to develop a University of Shrewsbury. UCS is intended to become an independent entity once it has 2000 or so students attending.

Progress in student recruitment has been slower than we would have liked and currently the university has 336 students in total. I am told that this compares favourably with other 'fledgling' universities at this stage in the process.

The Council's investment into the partnership is to provide buildings including the Guildhall, Rowley's House and student accommodation. I am pleased to report that we have fulfilled our commitment ahead of when required. Approximately 65 new student living units are currently being

constructed at the Tannery site in Shrewsbury with capacity to extend this as the university grows.

The role of Chester University is to develop curriculum which is beneficial to our economy by attracting young people to study and stay here in higher paid jobs. I am pleased that the university is diversifying into new curriculum areas including environmental science and new health technologies.

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

None.

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Councillor Peter Nutting.

Local Member

Appendices

None.



Committee and Date

COUNCIL

14th December 2017

Councillor Claire Wild
Performance Management Scrutiny Committee Chairman

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2017

1.0 Summary

1.1 This is an overview of the work of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee since the last report to Council in December 2016.

2.0 What have we done?

2.1 The Committee has held seven formal Committee meetings since the last report made to Council.

2.2 The Committee has scrutinised quarterly performance reports and revenue and capital reports.

Areas under particular consideration have included:

- The Financial Strategy 2017/18 – 2019/20
- The Financial Strategy 2018/19 – 2020/21
- The Digital Transformation Programme
- Overview of key functional areas [Scrutiny]
- Section 106 Agreements, Community Infrastructure Levy and New Homes Bonus
- Council Tax Support Scheme

2.3 Following the Scrutiny Peer Review conducted in February 2017 by the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Centre of Public Scrutiny and Council's subsequent approval of the Leader's proposed changes to the Scrutiny Committee remits and structures, the Committee considered its key functional areas and key development areas for the next two years in July 2017.

2.4 Further to the work done by the Planning Task and Finish Group in 2016, the Committee agreed to establish a Section 106 Agreements, Community Infrastructure Levy and New Homes Bonus Task and Finish Group in February 2017. This group is on-going, but made an interim report to the Committee in

September 2017. It is anticipated that this Task and Finish Group will report to the Committee again in the New Year.

- 2.5 In November 2017, the Committee agreed to establish a Financial Strategy 2018/19 -2020/21 Task and Finish Group with the anticipation that the work would be completed by February 2018.
- 2.6 In October 2017, the Committee was requested to consider the Cabinet decision regarding the Minimum Income Guarantee, following a Call-In of that decision by the Liberal Democrat Group. After consideration of the issues, the Committee upheld the Cabinet Decision.
- 2.6 In addition to the budget shaping process and continual monitoring of performance in the light of ongoing changes, the Committee's future Work Programme is under rolling review, and will continue to monitor the Digital Transformation Programme and Financial Strategy, and will consider the establishment of a Welfare Reform Task and Finish Group at its meeting in December 2017.



Committee and Date

Council

14th December 2017

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE/HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Lee Chapman

Email: lee.chapman@shropshire.gov.uk

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

1.0 Introduction

- 1.2 Adult Social Care ("ASC") has had another challenging year. In January 2017 the leadership structure was reviewed and significant changes were made. In June we welcomed a sector led improvement peer challenge. The Peer Review team were complimentary about the work of ASC and noted the enthusiasm of the ASC workforce and all stakeholders they engaged with. The Peer Review saw a clear commitment to making a positive difference to the lives of Shropshire residents and achievement was recognised in the Council's approach to partnership and engagement.
- 1.3 As portfolio holder I continue to be impressed with the progressive culture in Adult Social Care that constantly reviews our approach and is always looking for improvement and innovation. My portfolio report provides cabinet with an overview of the significant developments and achievements that have been delivered in 2017.
- 1.4 Adult Services net budget has increased by £5.8m from 2016/17 to 2017/18, due to the combination of a growing and ageing population, increasingly complex care needs, and increases in care costs. It is well evidenced that the demographic pressures on adult social care will increase further in the longer-term. Shropshire Council's expenditure on adult social care is forecast to increase by £7m next year, and by an average of £8.3m per year over the next 5 years.
- 1.4.1 Continued cost pressures being faced by care providers, particularly as a result of the National Living Wage, energy price increases and price inflation, have resulted in the Council being exposed to significantly increased market prices.
- 1.4.2 In the last Parliament, a series of short-term funding measures for adult social care were announced by the Government, namely the Social Care Precept, improved Better Care Fund (iBCF) and Adult Social Care Support Grant, in order to try to address pressures on adult social care. These additional funding measures are one-off and time-limited, and therefore do not change Shropshire Council's underlying funding gap.
- 1.4.3 In March 2017, Shropshire Council was awarded additional iBCF funding for 2017/18. This funding is explicitly focused on reducing pressures on the NHS, particularly delayed hospital discharges.

2.0 Mental Health

2.1 The Countywide Mental Health Social Work Team consolidated and developed its new model of delivery; with an identity distinct from our health colleagues but working very closely in partnership with them. A move to a central location has helped the team to be firmly linked to the community, enabling it to deliver the more preventative elements of work.

3.0 The Emergency Duty Team (EDT)

3.1 EDT's mission statement is to safeguard the people of Shropshire by providing urgent Social Work Services outside of normal working hours. It has been busy year for EDT which has changed its operating model and rotas to enable more time for practitioners to deliver emergency social work interventions out of hours, including all bank holidays and weekends (The council is legally obliged to have an AMHP available for MHAs 365 days a year, a duty that EDT provides).

4.0 Integrated Community Services (ICS)

4.1 The team continues to work hard to ensure that people are discharged from hospital in as timely a manner as possible thereby preventing any delayed transfers of care (DTOC). Covering all Shropshire hospitals, as well as any out of county hospitals with Shropshire patients, **the team was tasked with improving the DTOC rate by 60% between April and September. ICS has played a large part in not only achieving the target, but exceeding it and improving the DTOC rate by 75%.**

5.0 Improved Better Care Fund (IBCF)

5.1 Following the government announcement of the additional monies provided to LA's 'The Improved Better Care Fund' has enabled a series of new initiatives as part of our ongoing work to ensure those in need of support are able to remain at home rather than going to hospital unnecessarily or having to live in a nursing or care home.

5.2 The Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF) monies have provided additional staffing resources to our hospital social work team, with which **a new target was set to increase discharges from the acute hospitals; from a baseline**

5.3 The team has also worked very closely with colleagues from the Redwoods psychiatric unit to reduce the number of avoidable admissions. This has been very successful, and; for a 10 month period from late 2016 there were no new admissions to the Redwoods from care homes.

6.0 Continuing Health Care (CHC)

6.1 In 2017, Adult Social Care made a commitment to recruit 3 dedicated Qualified Social Work staff to specifically focus on joint assessment responsibilities with Shropshire CCG.

6.2 Adult Social Care have supported the joint reassessments of existing individuals who are jointly funded between the CCG and Adult Social Care and have provided Social Care Practitioner staff to ensure that assessments are jointly completed and compliant with best practice guidance.

7.0 Let's Talk Local (LTL)

7.1 This year we have continued to consolidate and develop the Let's talk Local Hubs. **Adult Social Care now operate 20 Let's Talk Local sessions throughout Shropshire**; some sessions are drop in and others are with appointments. The key development this year has been starting some drop in sessions in two of the local community hospitals. We now aim to also provide this service on the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital site once we can identify some space.

8.0 Transition from Children's Services

8.1 In 2017 **Adult social care have welcomed our new senior transition lead, who has been working to improve the transition process in ASC**, which we had recognised required improvement.

8.2 Our aim is to improve the communication, information and advice for young people at an early age so they can develop their own aspirations for their future.

8.3 In October 2017 we were fortunate to win a grant to enable us to deliver the Named Social Worker Pilot. The pilot is exploring 'Good Social Work' with people with learning disabilities working in partnership with Severndale Specialist Academy. The intended impact of the pilot is to define how we deliver excellent person-centred support for individuals with learning disabilities their parent/carers and to explore how we improve our social worker practice to deliver high quality, responsive, person-centred and asset based care and support.

9.0 Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

9.1 The joint action (with three other local authorities) taken last year against the Government for inadequately funding DoLS was not successful. We agreed additional investment in this area in order to fulfil our statutory duties have plans in place to increase this resource further. While this area remains a risk the progress we have made is reducing the reputational risk for the Council and increasing the safeguards for people who lack capacity to consent to the where they receive their care and treatment.

10.0 The Client Property and Appointeeship Team

10.1 This team looks after the financial affairs of people not able to manage themselves with no one else appropriate to do this for them. **They are currently sixty percent self-funding**, as they are able to charge the individual for the services and support they provide. **The team are working on increasing this percentage over the next couple of years in order to reduce the contribution currently received from the Council.**

11.0 The Keeping Adults Safe in Shropshire Board

11.1 The Board continues to operate effectively having a strategic oversight over the arrangements to safeguard adults with care and support needs from abuse. **We have a new joint board manager for Shropshire adults and children safeguarding boards.** The Annual Report that explains their activity for 2016/17 has now been published.

12.0 The Adult Safeguarding Team

- 12.1 This team continues to make decisions on a daily basis about whether contacts made to the Council about safeguarding should result in an enquiry being undertaken with the person effected. In 2016/17, there were over two thousand contacts made to the Council. Over 200 enquiries were undertaken and the majority of people were helped to resolve their problems either on their own or with support from either other agencies or the Council

In house Provider Services

13.0 Day Services

- 13.1 I am pleased to report the **successful transfer of the Meres day service in Ellesmere to Bethphage in July 2017** and became 'Our Space: Ellesmere Community Centre and Library.
- 13.2 With regards to our other in house day care provision **Maesbury Metals and Cornerpatch day services are currently transferring to Livability**, a national charity which will support the continuation and growth of these two services as well as delivering a saving over 5 years to Shropshire Council. The remaining in house services will now be developed with the people who use services and their carers and staff teams to ensure that all services are innovative, creative, meaningful and purposeful for all those that attend and outcome focussed.

14.0 Enable - Supporting people with disabilities into paid employment

- 14.1 **Enable has provided employment support across Shropshire, Telford, Wolverhampton, Staffordshire and Birmingham this year and has successfully supported (to date) almost 300 people into paid employment. This includes people with learning disabilities, mental health issues, autism and armed forces veterans.**
- 14.2 **Travel Training Celebration:** this was held by Shropshire Council's Travel Unit at Shrewsbury Football Club ground in June 2017 to celebrate the success of Enable providing travel training for young people in Shropshire to get to school or college as an alternative to using a taxi or similar transport.
- 14.3 **Mental Health and Employment Event for Employers:** This was held in October 2017 and was chaired by myself. Employers from across Shropshire were invited to hear the business benefits and successes of employing people with mental health issues.

15.0 START

- 15.1 The START service is our in house rehabilitation team who continue to offer a very valued service, evidenced by the number of compliments received from service users and highlighted in 'compliment of the day' and were part of the wider group involved in supporting the decrease in DTOC.

16.0 Four Rivers

16.1 Four Rivers is our 40-bed nursing home in Ludlow. The home provides high quality nursing support which appears highly valued as the home has had no complaints this year which perhaps illustrates the regard the home is held in. The home has had a bed occupancy of 98% this year, which is positive.

17.0 Joint Training

17.1 A busy year as always for our training colleagues who have been delivering high quality training across the social care sector. The team have been delivering training across the county in subjects such as Shropshire Leaders and Managers, Advocacy Certificate, End of Life care, Substance Misuse, Maastricht Interview and Autism Training to name a few.

18.0 Commissioning and Governance

18.1 Over the past 12 month there have been a number of areas for development within adult social care commissioned services.

19.0 Community Living Transfer March 2017

19.1 We saw the successful transfer of our community living services to a new supported living provider, Perthyn. As a part of their person centred approach, Perthyn supports individuals in maximising the opportunities to access activities and local amenities whilst supporting them to present a positive image of themselves in their local community.

20.0 Fee uplift Negotiations and confirmation April 2017

20.1 Following negotiations with Shropshire Partners In care (SPIC) Shropshire Council has committed to offer providers an inflationary uplift for the next 3 years, which helps, manages costs to the council but gives business security to the providers. The uplifts were confirmed as follows:

20.2 Residential and Nursing (including block contracts)

- 2017/18: 2% effective Monday 3rd April 2017
- 2018/19: 2.5% effective Monday 2nd April 2018
- 2019/20: 3% effective Monday 1st April 2019

20.3 **Domiciliary providers were given an uplift of 3% per year over the 3 years**, this increase allows for the additional costs incurred by the rurality of our county and the financial impact that this has on providers when delivering domiciliary care.

21.0 Provider engagement event June 2017

21.1 We held to hold a provider engagement event with domiciliary care and residential and nursing care providers. We used this time to review our draft market position statement and review our current demand for services and how we can meet the needs of individuals in a more creative and cost effective way. Following on from this event we had further meetings with providers regarding our current contracts and this led to a new tender for reablement support being commissioned. We plan to book events for 2018 to continue to engage with the provider market around future commissioning opportunities

22.0 Retender of reablement service to preferred provider model October 2017

22.1 Since November 2015 the Council has had block contracts for reablement work in place with a number of providers around the county; however to ensure a flexible and responsive service the decision was taken to move to a preferred provider model.

22.2 Working to reable individuals means that there will be an expectation that providers will reduce, where safe and in accordance with the initial support plan, the input of care hours during the maximum of a 6 week period of service and ensure wherever possible that agreed outcomes and goals are achieved.

23.0 Closure of Doddington Lodge Residential care Home October 2017

23.1 Shropshire Council was extremely disappointed to hear the decision by the owners, to close Doddington Lodge Residential Home in Cleobury Mortimer. At the time ASC were commissioning 18 beds in the home.

23.2 Our social work team, senior managers and commissioners supported the home through the closure process and the social work team have actively worked with residents to make sure residents were safely rehomed in alternative accommodation.

24.0 Prevention Engagement Event November 2017

24.1 Following an **announcement by the Clinical Commissioning Group in September 2017 that they would not be providing further grants to the Voluntary and Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector**, we have been working closely with our colleagues in the VCSE. We recognises the longer-term financial impacts on social care and health budgets if the preventative outcomes currently being delivered by Shropshire's VCSE sector are at risk through funding reductions to the sector

24.2 Shropshire Council Adult Services has commenced work with VCS and local housing providers to review and plan our approach to commissioning preventative services beyond 2018/19. These include many of the Better Care Fund schemes, in particular Social Prescribing. It is hoped that Shropshire CCG will be able to work with the Council on this review.

25.0 Principal Social Worker (PSW) and Professional Development Unit (PDU)

- In response to the Care Act an in-house training programme has been developed for social care practitioners who are not professionally trained. This year the module was accredited by Chester University providing 10 successful candidates with 20 credits at Undergraduate level. There are 12 candidates who have started the module this autumn and the programme will form part of a career progression pathway.

26.0 Making it Real (MiR) and Partnership Boards

26.1 **Early in 2017, Making it Real (MiR) was shortlisted for an MJ Award in 'Excellence in Community Engagement'**. This shortlisting recognised the hard work of experts by experience and Council partners, as well as their commitment to enhance adult services.

26.2 The enthusiasm of the ASC workforce and all stakeholders was then again recognised in the ASC Peer challenge during June 2017. This Peer review saw a clear commitment

to making a positive difference to the lives of Shropshire residents and achievement was recognised in the Council's approach to partnership and engagement.

- 26.3 A new and expanded MiR Board has now been established, having had its first meeting in late October.
- 26.4 MiR has an important role to play in the development of ASC. It is there as an important reminder that social care is about improving real people's lives not just offering a service. Making it Real continues to work to ensure that the voice of lived experience is heard, valued and used to inform developments and practice in Shropshire's Adult Social Care.
- 26.5 The linked 'Plan on a page' sums up what Making it Real is about in Shropshire. [Follow this link to take a look at the plan.](#)

27.0 Conclusion

- 27.1 Adult social care continues to flex and adapt to an ever changing landscape of challenges; more people with more complex needs, care providers struggling to recruit staff in a rural area, and healthcare colleagues working to reorganise hospital based services. There are considerable uncertainties around future funding initiatives from Government in relation to Adult Social Care and the across the wider health & social care economy. But I am confident that our prudent approach to operational spend, continuing focus on managing demand and our drive for continuous innovation and improvement, will help to maintain the delivery of essential services. I am happy to share my view that the tireless dedication of our staff and partner organisations (including the voluntary sector), are delivering improved outcomes in the quality of life for people who need us most in Shropshire.

28.0 Housing

- 28.1 Housing is a group of interrelated services which includes the Housing Options Service, Private Sector Housing Service, Shropshire HomePoint and Housing Support.
- 28.2 It also has governance and monitoring responsibility for Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing, a Arms-Length Management Organisation (ALMO), which manages the Council's housing stock.

29.0 Housing Options & Homelessness Service

- 29.1 There have been 1,010 homelessness presentations in the calendar year to date.
- 29.2 Of the 882 homeless application decisions, 298 (34%) were accepted as statutorily homeless and owed a full housing duty. The team has also received, is helping, or has helped, with over 2,725 advice and prevention enquiries from individuals and families.
- 29.3 A key challenge for the Service will be implementing the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. It is widely considered to be the most significant change in homelessness and housing advice legislation in over 40 years, which begins in April 2018.
- 29.4 The Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan is currently under review. There will be a full consultation process in the New Year, including briefings for Cabinet and Members.

30.0 Private Sector Housing

30.1 The service has continued to see significant reports of owner occupied properties which are in serious disrepair and exhibit a high number of Category 1 hazards (Housing Health and Safety Rating System). Hoarding remains a challenge, a major contributor to poor and hazardous home environments. The Service works closely with Regulatory Services, Health, Community Mental Health and Social Care services to address this issue through partnered approaches.

31.0 Disabled Adaptations

31.1 In the financial year 2016/17, there were 364 Occupational Therapy Service referrals, the majority of which were completed. In this financial year, 203 referrals have been received already.

31.2 The Service continues to work closely with the Occupational Therapy Service, Adult Social Care and Children's Services.

32.0 Shropshire HomePoint

32.1 Shropshire HomePoint, the county's choice-based lettings scheme provides a one-stop customer focused solution to meet the increasing needs and aspirations of the people of Shropshire.

32.2 The current number of applications on the Housing Register is 5,167. In 2016/17 1,575 applicants and their families were rehoused through Shropshire HomePoint and many more were helped to find alternative housing solutions.

32.3 The team on average manages everyday 250 telephone calls, as many emails and receives over 1,250 unique visitors to its website.

33.0 Housing Support & Contracts

33.1 To support its work, 'Housing' commissions, monitors and reviews a number of contracts with external organisations. Broadly they can be divided into accommodation-based support and floating support.

33.2 'Housing' continues to work closely with other Service Areas, such as Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Public Health. As an example, it is working with Children's Services to redesign accommodation for young people in the county.

33.3 **The New Century Court Project in Oswestry**, in conjunction with STaR Housing will provide **12 bed spaces for clients aged between 16 to 35, including a training flat and crash pad**. It is expected to open in April 2018.

33.4 **Working with Adult Social Care, new projects include Step-Down Beds to reduce Delayed Transfer of Care from hospital and Step-Up Beds using Extra Care bed spaces rather than hospital beds.**

34.0 Telecare Hospital Discharge Pilot

34.1 Working with telecare service provider Well-being, Housing and Adult Social Care has recently begun a pilot project exploring the benefits to be had from the provision of telecare at point of discharge from hospital.

34.2 The benefits of this model include; a reduction in delayed hospital discharge, reduction in hospital re-admissions, avoidance or delay of more intrusive forms of care and the introduction of telecare to people who may not of considered it previously.

35.0 Home Ownership for People with Long-Term Disabilities (HOLD) Project

35.1 The HOLD Project, supports clients to purchase a home on a shared ownership (part rent / part buy) basis.

35.2 **Following the successful bid for £2.4 million grant funding**, the Project has recently seen the successful completion of 3 property purchases with many more in the pipeline currently being processed.

35.3 The project aims through owning a home, to promote long-term stability; improve wellbeing; provide reassurance; independence; reduce the need for residential care and hospital admissions; and promote community sustainability.

36.0 Syrian Refugee Assistance

36.1 The civil war in Syria began in 2011, with over half the Syrian population leaving their homes to escape the conflict. In January 2014, the UK government established the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement programme in response to the Syrian refugee crisis.

36.2 Over 100 local authorities volunteered to resettle refugees. **Shropshire is proud to have been able to help and has successfully rehoused families and unaccompanied young children, totalling 59 individuals.**

37.0 Council Housing Stock

37.1 The Council Housing Stock Options Review of the remaining 4,100 properties (in predominantly the Bridgnorth and Oswestry areas) is currently underway. Property Specialists Savills are assisting. Any resulting recommendations will be considered by Cabinet and Full Council.

37.2 Members will continue to be kept fully updated, including a Members Briefing Event to be held in February 2018.

38.0 Technology-Based Projects

38.1 The Service, working with ICT Colleagues, has begun a number of innovative projects to maximise the benefits from advances in technology, to encourage the development of smart homes, and where possible utilise mainstream consumer technology.

38.2 **'Housing' also recently held a successful Assistive Technology Event called Severn Tech Seed, to promote technology. This is being expanded next year, with**

a major event planned for the 17th and 18th July 2018 called 'Tech Severn 2018' to promote Four Centres of Excellence in, Assistive Technology, Digi-Health Technology, Eco-Technology, and Modern Methods of Construction (MMC).

PUBLIC HEALTH

40.0 Children and Young People Team Commissioned Services: Health Visiting and School Nursing

40.1 Local Authorities are responsible for commissioning Public Health Nursing Services for 0-19 year olds and up to 25 where additional needs are identified. A new 0-25 Public Health Nursing Service contract was developed and put out to tender. Shropshire Community Health Trust were awarded the contract that commenced on 1st October 2017. The service specification was developed to enable the opportunity to provide a coherent, effective, flexible approach that uses a greater skill mix of staff delivering services in homes, community settings, schools and FE colleges to meet the needs of the children and young people of Shropshire. The 0-25 Public Health Nursing Service has amalgamated the services provided by health visiting, Family Nurse Partnership and school nursing.

40.2 The core public health offer for all children includes:

- Child health surveillance (including infant physical examination) and development review.
- Child health protection, immunisation and screening
- Information, advice and targeted support for families with additional needs
- Health promotion and prevention by the multidisciplinary team
- Defined support in the early years and education settings for children with additional and complex health needs
- Additional or targeted public health nursing support as identified in the JSNA, e.g. support for looked after children, young carers or children of military families.

40.3 Health, wellbeing and resilience are essential to the development of all our children now and for their future. Evidence through the national Healthy Child Programme shows that we can achieve this approach through a strong children and young people's Public Health service.

The specification for this contract will:

- provide an opportunity to tailor services to what is needed within localities and communities across the county;
- focus on improving accessibility of services,
- enable continuity through transition points for children and young people,
- deliver improved child health outcomes in Shropshire.

Co-ordination and Delivery of health promotion in schools.

40.4 **TaMHS (targeted mental health support)** encompasses training programmes, support and co-ordination of activity across a wide range of agencies, including schools, colleges, social work etc. to develop expertise of frontline staff in identifying and working with children and young people who experience lower levels of mental health issues.

- 40.5 **PSHE, RSE and working with schools.** The programme works with schools and the school community such as parents to deliver evidence based, young people informed curriculum and whole school approaches which address and contribute to council strategic priorities e.g. safeguarding, safer communities and equalities. Children Services Ofsted report 2017-highlighted “comprehensive and well-developed work” “extensive work “undertaken to measure impact. The programme works with key partners in Health, Education, Police and voluntary sector. Reach: over 87% of all Shropshire primary schools, all secondary schools including Catholic consortium and independent sector are signed up to work with the co-ordinator.
- 40.6 **PSHE and RSE work plans include:**
- Focus on raising curriculum standards via the PSHE young Inspectors scheme; work with vulnerable young people. Issues such as CSE, grooming and online safety, emotional and mental health
 - Policy and guidance for schools on Transgender, Drug and Alcohol, bullying, sexting and peer to peer abuse
 - Raise status and profile of PSHE, helping school prepare for statutory status, supporting school leadership and governors
 - Support and contribute to regional and national developments via W.M. Public Health England, Sex Education Forum advisory group and PSHE Association expert group
- 40.7 **Nationally recognised:**
- 2017 Winner of the Children and Young People Award PSHE category
 - 2015 finalist Pamela Sheridan Sexual Health award for innovation for the RSE primary
 - 2012 Winner as above for the secondary RSE programme
 - PSHE Association accredited quality assurance for the RSE work
 - Shropshire’s work features in a number of national publications and conferences as a good practice case study, most recently 2017 LGA conference.
- 40.8 **Partnership Working:**
The children and young people staff are involved in a variety of work streams, including:
- The reshaping of maternity services (subset of the Local STP arrangements)
 - Developing best practice for schools etc. in relation to Ofsted requirements
 - Leading professional development training and good practice in relation to mental health and wellbeing for C&YP
 - Developing innovative approaches to emerging issues (eg LGBTQ, substance misuse)
 - Leading elements of developmental work to support the implementation of the new 0-25 Emotional Health & Wellbeing Service
- 40.9 **Future plans:**
- Greater integration, alignment and data sharing with Children’s Services, e.g. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), school readiness and LAC information, with a focus on outcomes
 - Accident prevention and hospital admissions (under 5’s)
 - Tracking the impact of targeted interventions, e.g. Fit Families, Breastfeeding
 - Development of Teen Health initiatives plus TaMHS training modules to encompass further education settings

- Development of PSHE support to cover early years' settings as part of the 0-25yrs approach.

41.0 Substance Misuse

Willowdene Women's Recovery Centre

- 41.1 'Willowdene's mission statement is "to stimulate, encourage and promote a purposeful offending and substance free lifestyle in a working society" that creates the system of recovery that engages service users in treatment through to successful programme completion and ultimately overcoming dependence for good.
- 41.2 In March 2017, Willowdene Farm was awarded a three-year contract, directly from the Ministry of Justice, with match funding from the West Mercia Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, to provide the Women's LINC (Local Initiatives Nurturing Change) Project - a whole systems approach for females in, at risk of entering, or leaving the Criminal Justice System across West Mercia. The primary aim of the Women's Recovery Centre (WRC) is to provide recovery day services and residential programmes enabling women initially across Warwickshire and West Mercia (Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, Herefordshire and Worcestershire) and then promoted nationally to overcome alcohol and/or substance misuse dependence and achieve sustainable recovery. The WRC project will offer an extension of services currently offered by Willowdene on a new women only site, separate from the main centre.
- 41.3 The WRC will offer the opportunity to deliver treatment specific to the needs of women with dependency issues in a dedicated environment. The programme will consist of recovery-orientated treatment that helps women overcome their dependency issues and in turn reduces the harm that addiction causes to our communities. The programmes are designed with the individual and their families at the heart of their recovery plan, enabling them to take greater responsibility for rebuilding their lives and shaping their future'
- ##### **41.4 The UK Recovery Walk 2018: Shrewsbury**
- 41.5 The UK Recovery Walk celebrates the achievements of people in recovery from drug and alcohol dependency, alongside promoting the work of treatment services. The walk also gives the opportunity to demonstrate that recovery is possible and challenges the stigma often associated with drug and alcohol dependency. Each year around 5000 people travel from across the country to participate in the event, this year the walk was held in Blackpool
- 41.6 Following a very successful campaign, Shrewsbury won a national public vote to host the UK Recovery Walk in 2018, the 10th anniversary of the walk. The walk will take place on Saturday 8th September 2018. The 1.5-mile circular route will start and end in the Quarry Park, and will take in many of the key landmarks of Shrewsbury including Quantum Leap, Shrewsbury Castle and the Town Square. The walk will conclude with a family friendly celebration event in the Quarry.
- 41.7 The planning for the walk has already begun. Coordinated by the Shropshire Drug & Alcohol Action Team, the Shrewsbury Recovery Walk Steering Group, made up of a range of partners and stakeholders including Shrewsbury Town Council, The Shropshire.
- 41.8 Recovery Partnership, University Centre Shrewsbury, FAVOR UK; the national charity

who oversee the walk and a range of Shropshire Council departments and services will be meeting on a monthly basis. Service users and members of the recovery community will also be fully involved in the every aspect of the planning process.

- 41.9 In addition to celebrating recovery, the recovery walk will give an opportunity to raise awareness of drug and alcohol dependency and challenge the stigma linked with substance misuse. The opportunity of hosting the walk will also create a lasting legacy for recovery in Shropshire, bringing together disparate recovery communities across the county, which can be isolated due to the rurality of the county.

42.0 Sexual Health

- 42.1 In April 2016, following a formal procurement process, Shropshire's contract for Integrated Sexual Health Services was awarded to South Staffordshire and Shropshire NHS Foundation Trust, for a period of 3 years, with an option to extend for a further 2 years. The contract provides the mandated sexual health services of comprehensive, open-access, contraception and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) testing and treatment services. Shropshire Council's Public Health Team completed a comprehensive needs assessment of sexual health in 2015 in order to inform the service specification and baseline activity.

- 42.2 Shropshire continues to have the lowest diagnosis rates for all new sexually transmitted infections in the West Midlands. Teenage pregnancy rates also continue to remain lower than national and regional rates, and again is the lowest in the West Midlands region.

- 42.3 HIV diagnosis in Shropshire remains low in comparison to both the West Midlands region and rest of England, however, the late diagnosis rate is higher than both the West Midlands and England rate. PH continues to work with the provider, PHE and NHSE, to develop unique and sensitive approaches to HIV prevention services, to encourage those at risk to access HIV testing who are reluctant to access main stream services. PH commissions a free and confidential HIV home sampling service for those at higher risk and has developed with Health Protection England, County wide prevention campaign material, widely advertising access to the online HIV home sampling service which is integral to the National HIV testing campaign.

43.0 Help2Change

- 43.1 As more people live longer, there is an urgent imperative to keep people well and reduce the demand on health and care services.

- 43.2 Help2Change is focused on tackling the major risk factors for disability, including smoking, poor diet, physical inactivity, obesity and cardiovascular risk factors (high blood pressure, high cholesterol and high blood glucose).

Smoking:

- 43.3 Help2Change delivers the award-winning stop-smoking service Help2Quit to more than 2,500 people each year. Stop smoking services have been identified as one of the most cost effective interventions available to reduce disability (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence). The additional spending on social care for adults aged 50 and over in Shropshire as a result of smoking is estimated to be £8.3 million per year.

Obesity:

43.4 Help2Change supports more than 1,000 obese people each year to lose weight through its Help2Slim service. Being obese increases the risk of diabetes, heart attack, stroke, arthritis, cancer and dementia. This results in severely obese people having a three times greater need for social care compared to people of normal weight.

Cardiovascular risk factors:

43.5 Help2Change carries out over 8,500 NHS Health Checks every year in Shropshire as part of a mandated national programme to identify and manage cardiovascular risk. Heart disease and strokes are a major cause of disability but they can largely be prevented by identifying and managing risk factors such as high blood pressure. Risk of dementia can also be significantly reduced.

43.6 **Wider determinants of health:**

Most frailty in later life is not a normal consequence of ageing but is an acquired risk from a combination of social circumstances and unhealthy behaviours. Shropshire's Healthy Lives programme addresses this in partnership with the NHS and the third sector, building on evidence from successful initiatives elsewhere. Help2Change provides core infrastructure support to the programme, including social prescribing advisor sessions and GP practice support.

43.7 **NHS Health Check:**

Help2Change is on target to meet the Council's statutory responsibility to invite the full 5-year eligible Shropshire population (approximately 100,000 adult residents) to their first NHS Health Check by 2018.

43.8 Collaborative working between general practice and Help2Change has enabled both invites and take-up of the service to rise year-on-year, with over 8500 Patients attending during the past year. The close working between organisations has also enabled essential follow-up interventions to be made available within general practice and community settings, to address risks such as smoking and obesity. Access to the NHS Health Check has been improved through the provision of evening sessions and use of the Help2Change mobile clinic.

43.9 Help2Change has also provided NHS Health Checks to West Midlands Ambulance staff, as part of its commercial workplace offer.

Stop Smoking Services and Tobacco control

43.10 Help2Quit stop smoking clinics are being delivered in 35 general practices, 22 pharmacies and a range of other community venues in Shropshire, offering easy access to one of the most effective interventions for reducing disability and premature death. Help2Quit is an award-winning service, treating more than 2,500 patients each year.

43.11 Approximately 38,000 adults in the county still smoke and smoking remains a leading cause of health inequalities, preventable illness and premature death. A national economic review has indicated that smoking adds £8.3 million per year to the cost of social care in Shropshire for adults aged 50 and over. There is also an additional cost to the NHS in Shropshire of over £10 million per year.

43.12 Help2Change continues to work with the hospitals and mental health trust, in support of smoke-free policies and referral of patients that smoke into Help2Quit. Help2Change is also commissioned by NHS England to provide stop smoking support to HMP Stoke

Heath, and successfully supported the prison in its transition to become completely smoke-free in August 2017.

43.13 Electronic cigarette use has increased in recent few years and Help2Change has provided a position statement on e-cigarettes that recommends the use of licensed stop smoking medicines for quitting but which offers behavioural support to those who wish to use unlicensed, self-purchased e-cigarettes as part of their quit attempt.

43.14 Shropshire's smoking in pregnancy rates have reduced from 16.4% in 2004/5 to 12.4% in 2016/17. All pregnant smokers in Shropshire are referred by maternity services to the Help2Quit service, and 161 pregnant women received support to quit from a dedicated specialist advisor in 2016/17. The Help2Quit pregnancy service offers a choice of venues including GP practice, pharmacy, community, home visits and telephone support. Help2Change also delivers specialist training on smoking in pregnancy to nurses, health care assistants and pharmacy staff.

Weight management services and obesity prevention

43.15 Help2Change provides weight management support to adults through its Help2Slim service in GP Surgeries, pharmacies, community centres and workplaces, treating approximately 1,000 patients per year in Shropshire.

43.16 Overweight and obesity is a major cause of chronic illness and disability, especially type 2 diabetes. In Shropshire, there are more than 16,000 adults with diabetes and approximately 31,000 with pre-diabetes. The cost to social care in Shropshire of diabetes and its complications is estimated to be £8m per year, with an additional cost to the NHS of £47m per year.

43.17 Public Health is also responsible for delivering the statutory National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) in Shropshire, which provides annual data on the weight status of every child measured in Reception Year and Year 6 of primary school. 8.3% of 4-5 year olds in Shropshire are very overweight (obese) and this figure rises to 16.7% by age 10-11 years. Help2change chairs a local multi-agency working group which works closely with Shropshire's School Nursing Service to undertake the measurements and provide important follow-on support services to families. This includes proactive follow-up telephone support as well as referral into 'Fit Families' weight management support, a six month programme offering confidential and family-centred support to enable families with very overweight children to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

Physical activity and prevention of falls

43.18 One in two women and a third of all men in England are damaging their health through a lack of physical activity. Tackling physical inactivity is central to ageing well and reducing frailty in later life. A linked priority is the prevention of falls. Currently one third of the population aged over 65 falls at least once a year. It's estimated that around 400 older people fall every week in Shropshire, with 1 in 5 of these falls resulting in significant injury. Injurious falls often lead to a loss of independence and are very costly to health and care services as well as to the individual and their families.

43.19 Public Health has funded Outdoor Partnerships to deliver:

- Walking for Health (weekly, volunteer-led walking for those requiring support) which contributes to the prevention or delay of long-term health issues, and supports

people to live independently for longer. In 2016-17 there were

- 56 active groups across Shropshire
 - 338 volunteer walks leaders
 - 1,818 participants
 - 47% of participants with one or more long term condition
 - 86% of participants aged over 55yrs and 20% over 75yrs
 - 710 people walking every week
- Shropshire Wild Teams (conservation volunteers who are users of mental health services). Mental health professionals and supporting agencies report that the Wild Teams are making a significant difference to the health of service users, and helping to reduce costs associated with relapses, hospital admissions, home visits and medication use.

43.20 Public Health is also providing support for falls prevention and has:

- delivered a 'Lets Talks about the F-Word' programme in partnership with Age UK STW to promote a range of national evidence-based resources that enable people to understand their personal falls risk and take action to reduce that risk. These tools are being used in health and adult social care services <http://www.healthyshropshire.co.uk/topics/ageing-well/preventing-falls/>
- commissioned Energize STW (County Sports Partnership) to recruit and train local exercise instructors in delivering a community-based postural stability exercise pilot for reducing risk of falls:
 - 9 independent exercise instructors are training as Level 4 Postural Stability Instructors. An additional 2 University students (USC) are being trained
 - Classes will be established for self-referral and referral from health and care services in community settings in early spring 2018

43.21 Keeping physically active represents a significant challenge for care home residents. Public Health has been working with Shropshire Partners in Care (SPIC) to help care homes to adopt a physical activity-promoting culture. A 'best practice' framework guides care homes in self-assessment of current practice to identify areas for improvement and to implement changes e.g. use of a validated physical function tool in care planning. SPIC will share these exemplar approaches across Shropshire's care home sector.

Healthy Lives programme.

43.22 The provision of clinical care has been shown to have less impact on people's health than their lifestyle behaviours and the conditions in which they live. The Healthy Lives programme has been developed by Shropshire Council in partnership with the NHS and the community, voluntary and social enterprise sector to take a population-based approach to keeping people well in their local communities, building on existing assets. Help2Change provides core infrastructure support to the programme, including the provision of social prescribing sessions and GP practice support.

43.23 Demonstrator sites have been established in three different localities in Shropshire, and a funding bid has been submitted to the Department of Health to enable the programme to be scaled up across the county. An evaluation of the impact of the programme is

being undertaken by Westminster University.

- 43.24 Aligned to the development of Healthy Lives, Help2Change is collaborating with the Shropshire and South Staffordshire Foundation Trust to provide behavioural support for Shropshire residents with enduring mental illness. A one-stop clinic at the Severn Fields surgery in Shrewsbury provides behaviour change support for patients already attending mental health appointments. Support is offered on nutrition, weight management and stopping smoking. Volunteers are now being recruited to deliver additional social prescribing interventions.

Education and training

- 43.25 Help2Change has continued to expand its education and training offer in support of 'Making Every Contact Count' and NHS Health Check, which helps to develop the professional competencies necessary to effectively support people in managing their own health. Training reflects current evidence of best practice and supports nationally recognised core and technical competence standards.
- 43.26 In 2016-17 Help2change commenced work with five GP Practices (Demonstrator Sites) to provide accredited structured education for Shropshire residents living with pre-diabetes. Structured education has been shown to be effective in preventing development of diabetes and its associated complications. The work has led to the implementation of a locally owned and tested pre-diabetes protocol ahead of implementation of the National Diabetes Prevention Programme (NDPP) in April 2018. Help2Change is creating a digital education platform which will greatly increase the reach to Shropshire residents with pre-diabetes, and which will also be developed into a commercial offer outside Shropshire.

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<u>Committee and Date</u>
Council
14 December 2017
10.00 am

ANNUAL REPORT OF HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report covers the period February 2017 to December 2017 and is a summary of the work of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee. (Before the approval of a new Overview and Scrutiny structure on 20 July 2017, the committee was known as the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee).

Since the last Report, considered by Council in February 2017, the Committee has met formally 5 times. It has received an overview of the key functional areas in Adult Services and Health and looked at topics from across its remit:

- CCG Prioritisation and Value for Money
- West Midlands Ambulance Service Performance
- GP provision in Whitchurch
- Delayed Transfers of Care Performance
- Keeping Adults Safe in Shropshire
- Shared Lives and Community Living
- Carers Support and young Carers (with Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee)
- Maternity Services - a Task and Finish Group is looking at the Maternity Services and the Midwife-led Units and has made an interim report to the Committee. It is awaiting the results of the CCG's Midwife Led Unit Review.

Future Work

Significant Topics emerging for the Committee include:

- Resilient Communities/ Healthy Lives linked with the STP Neighbourhoods work-stream and including prevention services, and changes to Services provided by the Community Health Trust;
- Revisit Maternity Services and Proposals for the Midwife-led Units; look at the needs assessment for Community Pharmacy;
- Review progress with Delayed Transfers of Care, the Improved Better Care Fund and Pre-discharge planning and continuity;
- West Midlands Ambulance Service – ongoing focus on the performance in Shropshire

Joint topics with other Overview and Scrutiny Committees include:

- Joined up strategies e.g. Adult Health and Fitness, to consider whether strategies work together to achieve the Council's and partners outcomes and priorities;
- Obesity;
- Look at Housing requirements in Shropshire, taking a view of social housing, key worker housing, affordable housing, housing appropriate for future health needs and the needs of older people

Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Joint HOSC continues its role in scrutinising the development of the proposals for the Future Fit Programme and the continued safety of hospital services.

The Committee will carry out its statutory function to scrutinise and respond to the proposals agreed by the Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Groups during the formal period of public consultation, now expected to commence in December 2017 or January 2018. It has already provided feedback on the Pre-Consultation Business Case and draft consultation documents at a number of meetings.

It will be receiving the updated Consultation documents and Consultation Plan at its meeting on 5 December 2017.

<p>List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information) Reports to Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee February 2017 – December 2017</p>
<p>Cabinet Members Councillor Lee Chapman – Portfolio holder for Health and Adult Social Care</p>
<p>Local Member/s All</p>
<p>Appendices None</p>



Committee and Date

Cabinet
13 December 2017

Council
14 December 2017

SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX TAXBASE FOR 2018/19

Responsible Officer James Walton

e-mail: james.walton@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel:(01743)258915

1. Summary

- 1.1. In order to determine the appropriate Council Tax levels for Shropshire Council, it is necessary to determine the Council Tax taxbase for the area. The budget requirements of the various precepting authorities are divided by this figure to arrive at the Band D Council Tax.
- 1.2. For 2018/19 the Council Tax taxbase will be 109,095.60 Band D equivalents, this is an increase of 2.37% from 2017/18.
- 1.3. The Council Tax taxbase has a direct impact on the Council Tax that will be levied by the Council for 2018/19.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked:

- 2.1 In accordance with the Local Government Act 2012 to approve the removal of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy awarded in respect of vacant properties undergoing major repair for the 2018/19 financial year, i.e. removing the discount of 50% for up to 12 months and, therefore, inclusion of an additional 114.37 Band D equivalents in the taxbase.
- 2.2 In accordance with the Local Government Act 2012 to approve the revised discretionary Council Tax discount policy awarded in respect of vacant properties i.e. former Class C exempt properties for the 2018/19 financial year i.e. continuation of 100% for one month, and the resulting exclusion of 257.66 band D equivalents from the taxbase, and the removal of the 25% discount for the remaining five months and the resulting inclusion of 268.00 Band D equivalents in the Council Tax taxbase.

- 2.3 To approve the publication of a notice regarding the new discretionary Council Tax discount policy awarded in respect of vacant properties within 21 days of the determination.

On the assumption that the changes to the discount policy in relation to vacant dwellings detailed in Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 7.2 of this report have been approved and the changes to the Council's localised Council Tax Support scheme detailed in the Shropshire Council - Council Tax Support Scheme 2018-19 report presented earlier to Council has been approved, members are asked:

- 2.4 To approve, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Shropshire Council as its Council Tax taxbase for the year 2018/19, as detailed in Appendix A, totalling 109,095.60 Band D equivalents.
- 2.5 To note the changes to the Council's localised Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme in 2018/19. The scheme is attached at Appendix B.
- 2.6 To note the exclusion of 9,353.67 Band D equivalents from the taxbase as a result of localised Council Tax Support.
- 2.7 To note continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy of 0% in respect of second homes (other than those that retain a 50% discount through regulation as a result of job related protection) and note the inclusion of 670.95 Band D equivalents in the Council Tax taxbase as a result of this discount policy.
- 2.8 To note continuation of the "six week rule" in respect of vacant dwellings, i.e. former Class C exempt properties.
- 2.9 To note continuation of the discretionary power to levy a Council Tax premium of 50% in relation to dwellings which have been empty for more than two years and the resulting inclusion of 245.89 Band D equivalents in the Council Tax taxbase.
- 2.10 To approve a collection rate for the year 2018/19 of 97.8%.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 Expression of Council Tax Support in terms of Band D equivalents results in a higher potential for inaccuracies in the determination process as Council Tax Support is a significantly more volatile discount element.

- 3.2 Details of the potential risk in relation to establishing a collection rate allowance is detailed within this report in Section 9.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Council Tax taxbase figure impacts on the Council Tax that will be levied by the Council for 2018/19.
- 4.2 The implication of the Council's localised Council Tax Support scheme are detailed in Section 6.
- 4.3 The implications of maintaining the discount in respect of second homes at 0% are detailed in Section 7.1.
- 4.4 The implications of removing the 50% discount in respect of vacant dwellings undergoing major repair at are detailed in Section 7.2
- 4.5 The implications of maintaining the 1 month exemption in respect of vacant dwellings, but removing the 25% discount from months 2 to 6 are also detailed in Section 7.2.
- 4.6 The implications of maintaining a 50% premium in respect of properties which have been empty for more than two years are detailed in Section 7.3.
- 4.7 The implications regarding the determined collection rate are detailed in Section 9.

5. Background

- 5.1 Shropshire Council has responsibility for determining the Council Tax taxbase for the Council's geographical area.
- 5.2 The taxbase for Council Tax must be set between 1 December 2017 and 31 January 2018 in relation to 2018/19, as prescribed by the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012.
- 5.3 The Council is also required to inform the major precepting authorities, West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner and Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority, of the taxbase in order to enable the calculation of Council Tax for the following year. Each town and parish council is also notified of its own Council Tax taxbase.
- 5.4 The purpose of this report, therefore, is to determine and approve the Council Tax taxbase for Shropshire Council for 2018/19.

6. Council Tax Support

- 6.1 The 2010 Spending Review announced the localisation of council tax support and The Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolished Council Tax Benefit from 31 March 2013 and required that Local Government created a localised Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme effective from 1 April 2013, accommodating a reduction in funding of 10%.
- 6.2 Shropshire Council's localised CTS scheme was approved in October 2012. Changes to the scheme are proposed for 2018/19 which are detailed in a separate report. The amended scheme is attached at Appendix B.
- 6.3 From 2013, therefore, council tax support has taken the form of reductions within the council tax system, replacing national council tax benefit. Making reductions part of the council tax system reduces a billing authority's Council Tax taxbase. Billing and major precepting authorities receive funding (Council Tax Support Grant) which reduce their council tax requirement and, depending on the design of the local council tax scheme, can help offset the council tax revenue foregone through reductions.
- 6.4 An estimate of the effect of the local Council Tax Support Scheme on the Council Tax taxbase has been determined for Shropshire. It is estimated that the Council Tax Support Scheme will reduce the Council Tax taxbase by 9,353.67 Band D equivalents.
- 6.5 As Council Tax Support entitlement will vary throughout the year and this will affect the taxbase it is more likely that the amount of Council Tax collected in 2018/19 will vary from the estimate.

7. Discretionary Discount Policies

7.1 *Second Homes*

- 7.1.1 Second homes are defined as furnished properties which are not occupied as a person's main residence and include furnished properties that are unoccupied between tenancies.
- 7.1.2 The Local Government Act 2003 gave councils new discretionary powers to reduce the 50% Council Tax discount previously awarded in respect of second homes to between 10% and 50% with effect from 1st April 2004. Councils retain the additional income raised by reducing the second homes Council Tax discount.
- 7.1.3 The Local Government Act 2012 further extended billing authorities' discretion over the second homes discount to between 0% and 50%. On 17 October 2012

Cabinet approved the reduction of the second homes Council Tax discount from 10% to 0%.

- 7.1.4 The figures used for the 2018/19 Council Tax taxbase incorporate a 0% Council Tax discount in respect of second homes (other than those that retain a 50% discount through regulation as a result of job related protection). Implementation of this policy results in the inclusion of 670.95 Band D equivalents in the taxbase.

Vacant Properties

7.2 Former Class A & Class C Exempt Properties

- 7.2.1 The Local Government Act 2012 abolished both Class A and Class C exemptions and gave billing authorities' discretion to give discounts of between 0% and 100%. Class A exemptions were previously available for up to 12 months in respect of a vacant property which required, was undergoing, or had recently undergone major repair work to render it habitable, or structural alteration. Class C exemptions were previously available for up to six months after a dwelling became vacant.
- 7.2.2 On 17 October 2012 Cabinet approved the award of a 50% Council Tax discount in respect of vacant dwellings undergoing major repair, i.e. former Class A exempt properties.
- 7.2.3 Members are asked to approve a revised policy to not award any discount in respect of vacant property which requires, or is undergoing, or has recently undergone major repair work to render it habitable, or structural alteration. (former class A exempt).
- 7.2.4 In respect of former Class A exempt properties the figures used for the 2018/19 Council Tax taxbase do not account for 50% discount for up to 12 months. Amendment to this policy results in the inclusion of 114.37 Band D equivalents in the taxbase.
- 7.2.5 On 17 October 2012 Cabinet also approved the award of a 25% Council Tax discount in respect of vacant dwellings, i.e. former Class C exempt properties.
- 7.2.6 Implementation of this policy resulted in a large number of low value Council Tax demands being raised primarily in relation to landlords whose properties are between tenants. A significant number of landlord complaints were received in relation to these Council Tax demands and these small amounts proved to be very difficult to collect. It was, therefore, proposed and approved that a 100% discount be awarded for one month, i.e. effectively reinstating the exemption, and then a 25% discount be awarded for the remaining five months.

- 7.2.7 In order to avoid fraudulent 100% claims in respect of these types of properties it was also proposed and approved that the “six week rule” be applied, i.e. if a dwelling which is unoccupied and unfurnished is either exempt or entitled to a discount, becomes occupied or substantially furnished for a period of less than six weeks, after which it falls empty again, it will only resume exemption or discount for any of the original exemption or discount period which remains.
- 7.2.8 Members are asked to approve continuation of the policy to award one month exemption when a property becomes unoccupied and unfurnished (subject to the six week rule) and approve a revised policy to remove the 25% for the following five months. This would mean that when a property becomes unoccupied and unfurnished it would attract one month exemption, then pay full charge for the following twenty three months, then attract an additional 50% council tax premium after two years.
- 7.2.9 In respect of former Class C exempt properties the figures used for the 2018/19 Council Tax taxbase incorporates a discount of 100% for one month but no longer incorporates a 25% discount for the remaining five months. Continuation of this policy to continue the 1 month exemption results in the exclusion of 257.66 Band D equivalents from the taxbase, and removal of the 25% discount for the remaining five months results in the inclusion of 268.00 to the taxbase.

7.3 ***Empty Homes Premium***

- 7.3.1 The Local Government Act 2012 also gave billing authorities’ discretion to levy an empty homes premium of 50% after a dwelling has been empty and unfurnished for at least two years. In December 2013 Shropshire Council chose to enact this discretionary power with effect from April 2014.
- 7.3.2 The figures used for the 2018/19 Council Tax taxbase incorporate a 50% Council Tax premium in respect of dwellings which have been empty for more than two years. Implementation of this policy results in the inclusion of 245.89 Band D equivalents in the taxbase.

8. **Taxbase Calculation**

- 8.1 Based on the valuation list, the Council Tax taxbase is the number of properties in the area falling within each council tax property valuation band, modified to take account of the adjustments set out below. Taxbase is expressed as a Band D equivalent.

8.2 An analysis of Council Tax bands within Shropshire Council is detailed below:

Property Band	House Value	Ratio to Band D	Analysis of Dwellings on the Valuation List (%) (as at 11 th September 2017)	% Increase / (Decrease) over 2016/17
A	Under £40,000	6/9	18.8	1.0
B	40,001 - 52,000	7/9	25.8	1.2
C	52,001 - 68,000	8/9	20.7	1.5
D	68,001 - 88,000	9/9	14.4	1.3
E	88,001 - 120,000	11/9	11.0	2.5
F	120,001 - 160,000	13/9	5.8	1.8
G	160,001 - 320,000	15/9	3.2	1.1
H	Over 320,000	18/9	0.2	0.3

8.3 There are 141,074 properties in the valuation list for the Shropshire Council area. This compares with a figure of 139,098 in the list at the same time last year. There has been an increase of 1,976 properties overall, which equates to 1.42%. The number of properties in property bands A – H has increased.

8.4 The methodology followed for calculating the taxbase is as follows:

- Ascertain the number of properties in each Council Tax band (A to H) shown in the valuation list as at 11 September 2017.
- Adjust for estimated changes in the number of properties through new build, demolitions and exemptions.
- The number of discounts and disabled relief allowances which apply as at 2 October 2017.
- Convert the number of properties in each Council Tax band to Band D equivalents by using the ratio of each band to Band D and so arrive at the total number of Band D equivalents for the Council.
- Adjust the total number of Band D equivalents by the estimated Council Tax collection rate for the year

These calculations are undertaken for each property band in each parish.

9. Collection Rate

9.1 In determining the taxbase, an allowance has to be made to provide for changes to the taxbase during the year (e.g. due to new properties, appeals against banding, additional discounts, Council Tax Support award changes, etc.) as well as losses on collection arising from non-payment. This is achieved by estimating a Council Tax collection rate for the year and must be common for the whole of Shropshire.

- 9.2 A collection rate of 98.2% was assumed for the 2017/18 financial year and it is recommended that a collection rate of 97.8% should be assumed for the purpose of determining the Council Tax taxbase in 2017/18.
- 9.3 Actual in year collection rates in 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 were 98.3%, 98.4% and 98.4% respectively. The collection rate for 2017/18 is currently projected to outturn at around 98.4%.
- 9.4 A survey of other Councils that have introduced a minimum payment to their Council Tax Support scheme has shown that there is a detrimental effect on their overall council tax collection rate. This has varied among different Councils between 0.3% and 0.7% in the first year, but gradually improving over subsequent years. Therefore the proposed collection rate for 2018/19 includes a reduction of 0.4% for the potential impact of the changes to the Council Tax Support scheme.
- 9.5 A rate of 97.8% is considered prudent given the current level of recovery, the collection rates of the last 3 years and the potential impact of the Council Tax Support scheme changes.
- 9.6 If the actual rate exceeds 97.8% a surplus is generated, which is shared between the Unitary Council, West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner and Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority, pro rata to their demand on the Collection Fund for the relevant year. Conversely, any shortfall in the collection rate results in a deficit, which is shared in a similar manner. The surplus or deficit is taken into account in setting the Council Tax in the following year.

10. Council Tax Base

- 10.1 The estimated Council Tax taxbase for the whole of the area will be used by this Council to calculate its Council Tax Levy. It will also be used by West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner and Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority to calculate the levy in respect of their precepts.
- 10.2 The Council Tax taxbase for this purpose in 2018/19 is 109,095.60 Band D equivalents, an increase of 2.37% from 2017/18. The detailed build of this figure analysed by both parish and town council and Environment Agency region is shown in Appendix A.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does

not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

N/A

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

David Minnery

Local Member

N/A

Appendices

Appendix A: 2018/19 Parish and Town Council Tax Taxbase Summary for Shropshire Council.

Appendix B: Shropshire Council's Localised Council Tax Support Scheme

2018/19 Parish and Town Council Council Tax Taxbase Summary for Shropshire Council	APPENDIX A
Parish / Town Council	Council Tax Taxbase (Band D Equivalents)
Abdon & Heath	104.38
Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford, Ruckley & Langley	242.81
Acton Scott	37.55
Adderley	193.77
Alberbury with Cardeston	368.48
Albrighton	1,498.97
All Stretton, Smethcott & Woolstaston	168.93
Alveley & Romsley	835.40
Ashford Bowdler	37.73
Ashford Carbonel	187.82
Astley	198.21
Astley Abbotts	238.81
Aston Bottrell, Burwarton & Cleobury North	113.42
Atcham	98.97
Badger	54.92
Barrow	259.91
Baschurch	1,037.50
Bayston Hill	1,781.03
Beckbury	151.61
Bedstone & Bucknell	308.91
Berrington	395.94
Bettws-Y-Crwyn	86.54
Bicton	430.79
Billingsley, Deuxhill, Glazeley & Middleton Scriven	161.30
Bishops Castle Town	639.08
Bitterley	344.10
Bomere Heath & District	791.80
Boningale	139.98
Boraston	73.58
Bridgnorth Town	4,549.05
Bromfield	117.03
Broseley Town	1,497.61
Buildwas	101.80
Burford	429.05
Cardington	203.40
Caynham	495.05
Chelmarsh	222.27
Cheswardine	391.54
Chetton	156.69
Childs Ercall	293.63
Chirbury with Brompton	334.77
Church Preen, Hughley & Kenley	124.31
Church Pulverbatch	167.08
Church Stretton & Little Stretton Town	2,139.43
Claverley	846.10
Clee St. Margaret	69.65
Cleobury Mortimer	1,154.36
Clive	234.82
Clun & Chapel Lawn	498.10
Clunbury	241.84

2018/19 Parish and Town Council Council Tax Taxbase Summary for Shropshire Council	APPENDIX A
Parish / Town Council	Council Tax Taxbase (Band D Equivalents)
Clungunford	145.98
Cockshutt-cum-Petton	290.45
Conover	855.13
Coreley	131.87
Cound	211.41
Craven Arms Town	801.06
Cressage, Harley & Sheinton	403.92
Culmington	167.77
Diddlebury	267.19
Ditton Priors	326.63
Donington & Boscobel	564.04
Eardington	236.54
Easthope, Shipton & Stanton Long	199.94
Eaton-Under-Heywood & Hope Bowdler	183.50
Edgton	47.90
Ellesmere Rural	894.72
Ellesmere Town	1,397.62
Farlow	177.41
Ford	296.76
Great Hanwood	379.05
Great Ness & Little Ness	440.73
Greete	49.69
Grinshill	111.62
Hadnall	308.05
Highley	1,051.58
Hinstock	434.10
Hodnet	559.35
Hope Bagot	28.96
Hopesay	241.04
Hopton Cangeford & Stoke St. Milborough	162.11
Hopton Castle	40.70
Hopton Wafers	277.11
Hordley	100.07
Ightfield & Calverhall	188.50
Kemberton	115.03
Kinlet	402.52
Kinnerley	488.85
Knockin	113.10
Leebotwood & Longnor	198.01
Leighton & Eaton Constantine	205.46
Llanfairwaterdine	98.70
Llanyblodwel	268.32
Llanymynech & Pant	659.11
Longden	517.68
Loppington	276.23
Ludford	246.95
Ludlow Town	3,426.26
Lydbury North	220.96
Lydham & More	127.07
Mainstone & Colebatch	87.72

2018/19 Parish and Town Council Council Tax Taxbase Summary for Shropshire Council	APPENDIX A
Parish / Town Council	Council Tax Taxbase (Band D Equivalents)
Market Drayton Town	3,757.62
Melverley	51.95
Milson & Neen Sollars	121.04
Minsterley	575.15
Montford	237.34
Moreton Corbett & Lee Brockhurst	124.91
Moreton Say	195.87
Morville, Acton Round, Aston Eyre, Monkhopton & Upton Cressett	346.01
Much Wenlock Town	1,186.97
Munslow	175.01
Myddle & Broughton	597.33
Myndtown, Norbury, Ratlinghope & Wentnor	257.09
Nash	136.21
Neen Savage	151.55
Neenton	63.64
Newcastle	129.25
Norton-In-Hales	284.28
Onibury	130.57
Oswestry Rural	1,586.39
Oswestry Town	5,185.28
Pontesbury	1,181.42
Prees	1,057.35
Quatt Malvern	92.28
Richards Castle	136.52
Rushbury	271.43
Ruyton-XI-Towns	453.40
Ryton & Grindle	79.35
Selattyn & Gobowen	1,216.54
Shawbury	821.88
Sheriffhales	322.42
Shifnal Town	2,895.52
Shrewsbury Town	24,061.06
Sibdon Carwood	47.52
St. Martins	897.76
Stanton Lacy	164.05
Stanton-Upon-Hine Heath	231.00
Stockton	133.56
Stoke-Upon-Tern	466.87
Stottesdon & Sidbury	322.49
Stowe	47.35
Sutton Maddock	110.86
Sutton-Upon-Tern	407.66
Tasley	407.99
Tong	118.92
Uffington	105.29
Upton Magna	155.61
Welshampton & Lyneal	357.34
Wem Rural	665.52
Wem Town	1,957.42
West Felton	541.83

2018/19 Parish and Town Council Council Tax Taxbase Summary for Shropshire Council		APPENDIX A
Parish / Town Council		Council Tax Taxbase (Band D Equivalents)
Westbury		531.42
Weston Rhyn		844.03
Weston-Under-Redcastle		122.95
Wheathill		73.98
Whitchurch Rural		572.77
Whitchurch Town		3,175.86
Whittington		834.39
Whitton		57.49
Whixall		331.49
Wistanstow		332.75
Withington		103.47
Woore		577.42
Worfield & Rudge		907.31
Worthen with Shelve		774.92
Wroxeter & Uppington		159.39
Shropshire Council Total		109,095.60
Environment Agency - Severn Trent Region		102,511.99
Environment Agency - Welsh Region		4,159.74
Environment Agency - North West Region		2,423.87
Shropshire Council Total		109,095.60

APPENDIX B

SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL – BENEFITS SERVICE

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT (CTS)

Introduction

The current Council Tax Benefit scheme is a means tested benefit that helps people with a low income to pay their Council Tax.

From April 2013 this will be abolished and all local authorities will provide a new scheme called 'Council Tax Support'. The funding that is provided for this scheme will be reduced by 10% and therefore it is likely that some people will have to pay more towards their Council Tax bill.

The changes will not affect pensioners even though they will move into the new scheme. The Government have confirmed that all pensioners will be protected and receive the same amount of benefit they do now under the current Council Tax Benefit Scheme.

Each local authority will be able to provide Council Tax support in a different way depending on local needs, funding available and how it can be administered. Each Council is expected to devise a new scheme and then put this to public consultation by the end of 2012.

Our new scheme was devised and published on the Shropshire Council website for customers, stakeholders and other agencies to comment on. Public consultation closed on the 14th December and the new scheme was formally adopted by the Council on 16th January 2013.

Anyone of working age will now be subject to the new scheme from April 2013. The differences that you will see in the new Council Tax Support Scheme are: -

- Removal of second adult rebate
- Reduction of the capital limit from £16,000 to £10,000
- Removal of earnings disregards
- Removal of child benefit disregard
- Increase in non-dependant deductions

Please note the following amendments are for the calculation of Council Tax Support only and do not affect Housing Benefit calculations.

Removal of Second Adult Rebate

Second Adult Rebate (2AR) is awarded to a customer based on the circumstances of a second adult living in the property. Under the new scheme this has been abolished and will no longer be effective from 01.04.13.

Reduction of the capital limit

For working age people the capital limit will reduce to £10,000 from 01.04.13. This will mean that if a customer's savings amounts to more than £10,000 they will not be entitled to CTS. The lower capital limit of £6,000 remains the same.

Tariff income calculations remain as is i.e. from the total amount if capital £6,000 is deducted, the remainder is then divided by 250 if the result is not an exact multiple of £1 the result is rounded up to the next whole £1

All other capital rules including static savings, land and property, shares, etc remain the same.

Removal of Earnings disregards

All income disregards for working age people will cease from the 01.04.13.

Removal of Child Benefit disregards

Child benefit will no longer be disregarded from the calculation of CTS from the 01.04.03.

Increase in non-dependant earned income deductions (working age only)

From 01.04.13 non dep deductions will increase to the following: -

£5 for anyone earning under £100,
 £10 for anyone earning between £100 and £150
 £20 for anyone earning over £150 per week

This deduction will only be made from their earned income. It won't affect any other income they receive.

Non-dependant earned income deductions (pension age only)

Gross income less than £186.00	=	£3.65
Gross income £186.00 to £321.99	=	£7.25
Gross income £322.00 to £400.99	=	£9.15
Gross income £401.00 or above	=	£10.95

Unearned income will attract the following disregards (working age and pension age):

Others aged 18 or over incl. JSAC & ESAC = £3.65
In receipt of Pension Credit, IS, JSA (IB), ESA(IR) = nil

(If nil income is added to the claim for the non-dep it appears to take the maximum deduction).

(This disregard will be up-rated annually in line with figures provided annually by DCLG)

A new minimum earnings threshold will be introduced with effect from 01/04/15 to reflect the current arrangements in the Housing Benefit scheme.

This minimum earnings threshold will help to determine whether a European Economic Area (EEA) national's previous or current work can be treated as genuine and effective for the purposes of deciding whether they have a right to reside in the UK as a worker or self-employed person.

The minimum earnings threshold has been set at the level at which workers start to pay National Insurance Contributions (NICs), currently £153 a week in the 2014/15 tax year. If an EEA national can prove that they have been earning at least this amount for a period of 3 months immediately before they claim CTS their work can be treated as genuine and effective and they will have a right to reside as a worker or self-employed person.

If they do not satisfy the minimum earnings threshold criteria, a further assessment will be undertaken against a broader range of criteria (such as hours worked, pattern of work, nature of employment contract etc.) to determine whether their employment is genuine and effective.

Ultimately, if an EEA national's income does not meet the minimum earnings threshold or the additional criteria to be classified as genuine and effective employment they will not be eligible for CTS.

Special Educations Needs Allowance – to be disregarded in full with effect from 01/09/14

War Pensions / Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Guaranteed Income Payments – to be disregarded in full with effect from 01/04/13 (and to be consistent with Housing Benefit)

From 01/04/15 the CTR scheme will include changes to the habitual residency test to reflect changes to the Housing Benefit (HB) regulations.

The amendments to the CTS scheme removes access to CTS for EEA jobseekers who make a new claim for CTS on or after 1 April 2015. EEA nationals who are self-employed, are workers or who are unemployed but retain their worker status have the same rights to CTS as a UK national and their situation remains unchanged.

EEA jobseekers who are entitled to CTS and JSA(IB) on 31 March 2015 will be protected until they have a break in their claim for CTS or JSA. If their JSA ends because they have started work, then as long as we can be satisfied that their employment is genuine and effective they will be able to access in-work CTS as either a worker or a self-employed person. Claimants receiving in-work CTS beyond 1 April will continue to be able to access CTS, if they become entitled to JSA(IB) on or after that date, but only if they retain their worker status. If they are a jobseeker then their CTS entitlement ends from the Monday following the cessation of work.

Changes with effect from 1 April 2018 to bring the scheme in line with Housing Benefit changes

- **2 child cap**
The Government has announced that they will limit benefit support by only taking into account a maximum of two dependent children per family. It affects all claims where new children are born after April 2017. This will apply in Housing Benefit to families that make a new claim from April 2017
- **Loss of the family premium**
The Government removed the family premium for new claims within the assessment of Housing Benefit with effect from May 2016
- **Bereavement Support Payments to be disregarded in full**
This was introduced into Housing Benefit with effect from April 2017
- **Any payments from the 'We love Manchester Fund' and the 'London Emergency Trust' to be disregarded in full**
- **Maximum backdate period of 1 month**
- **Absence from home limited to 4 weeks when outside GB**
The temporary absence rules for Housing Benefit were amended in 2015 reducing the allowable period of temporary absence outside Great Britain from 13 weeks to 4 weeks.

The limit applies to new periods of absence only. Exceptions are when an absence is in relation to

- Death of a partner, child or close relative
- Receiving medical treatment
- A person who has fled their home due to fear of violence

- A member of Her Majesty's forces posted overseas
- **Beneficial changes in circumstances to be reported within one month of the change in order for the claim to be updated from the date of change, otherwise changes will take effect from the Monday following date notified.**
- **All working aged claimants who receive Council Tax Support (unless they are a pensioner or classed as vulnerable) will pay 20% of their council tax liability, (after appropriate discounts have been awarded)**

An example of this change is as follows:

- 1) Current scheme (which allows for 100% reduction)
The customer's liability is £20.00 per week. As they are in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance they are entitled to full Council tax reduction making their council tax balance for the year £0.00
- 2) Proposed new scheme (20% minimum payment)
The customer liability is £20.00. Before any calculation takes place 20% of this amount is reduced from the liability to be used. This means that any calculation will be carried out on a figure of £16.00. Again the customer is on Jobseekers Allowance and so they are entitled to a full award. This will mean their council tax balance for the year will be £208.00 (£4.00 x 52).

- **De Minimis change amount of £10.00 per week for claimants in receipt of Universal Credit**
- **Claimants who meet the specific criteria of severe disablement contained within the policy will be protected from any percentage reduction in council tax support. Claimants in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance will be protected from any percentage reduction in council tax support. This will also apply to customers who meet the criteria for receiving a war compensation related benefit or pension. Specifically this includes**

Criteria to be awarded for the severe disability premium:

- The customer has to be in receipt of
 - 1) Attendance allowance or
 - 2) Higher or middle rate care component of disability living allowance or
 - 3) The daily living allowance rate of personal independence payments
- They must not have a resident non-dependant

- No person is entitled to, and in receipt of, carers allowance in respect of caring for the customer and;
- If the customer has a partner they must also meet all above criteria

Criteria to be awarded the support component of employment and support allowance –

It is accepted that some people's difficulties or disabilities are such that not only is the person not expected to look for work but are also not expected to undertake an work related activities or plan for starting work due to the severity of their difficulties

Criteria to qualify for the war pension's exemption

The customer and/or partner has to be in receipt of either:

- War pension
- War disablement pension
- War service attributable pension
- War widows pension
- War mobility supplement

SUMMARY OF CHANGES FROM 01.04.13

Current Council Tax Benefit Scheme (CTB)	Council Tax Support (CTS)
Second Adult Rebate - Awarded to the customer based on the circumstances of 'second adult'. Can be awarded due to a 'better buy' comparison	No award due for second person. On 'better buy' calculation customer will only be awarded any CTS due.
Reduction of the capital limit - Upper capital limit of £16,000. Above this limit the person would not qualify for CTB. Lower capital of £6,000. Below this figure amount is ignored. Amounts above £6,000 attract tariff income at £1 for every £250 or part of above the lower capital limit	Upper capital limit of £10,000. Above this limit the person would not qualify for CTB. Lower capital of £6,000. Below this figure amount is ignored. Amounts above £6,000 attract tariff income at £1 for every £250 or part of above the lower capital limit
Removal of earnings disregards – Permitted work - £97.50 Lone parents - £25.00 Disabled, carers or special occupations - £20.00 Couples - £10 Single £5	Permitted work - £0 Lone parents - £0 Disabled, carers or special occupations - £0 Couples - £0 Single £0
Removal of Child Benefit disregard – Child Benefit is fully disregarded for the calculation of CTB	Child benefit is fully included for the calculation of CTS
Increase in non-dependant deductions (using current figures) On pass ported benefit - £0.00 On JSA C/ESAC - £3.30 Works less than 16 hours on maternity, paternity, adoption or sick leave - £3.30 Income more than £394.00 per week – £9.90 £316.00 to £393.99 per week – £8.25 £238.00 to £315.99 per week - £6.55 £183.00 to £237.00 per week - £3.30 £124.00 to £182.99 per week – £3.30 Under £124.00 – £3.30	On pass ported benefit - £0.00 On JSA C/ESAC - £3.30 Works less than 16 hours on maternity, paternity, adoption or sick leave - £3.30 Earnings less than £100 - £5.00 Earnings between £100 and £150 - £10.00 Earnings above £150 - £20.00

APPEALS

There will be no joint HB/CTR appeals – they will be heard separately by different bodies. First Tier Tribunals will hear the Housing Benefit appeals (as now) and the Valuation Tribunals Service will hear Council Tax Support appeals.

The legislation is contained within the Local Government Finance Act. Appeals against the local Council Tax Support Scheme will be covered by Regulation 16(b).

Process:

- The customer firstly needs to write to the Council saying they disagree with the decision. There is no time limit to do this. They can request this at any time.
- If we do not alter our original decision the customer has the right to appeal to the Valuation Tribunal.
- To appeal to the Valuation Tribunal the customer will need to do this on line at www.valuationtribunal.gov.uk
- The customer must complete the on line appeal application within two months of the date of the decision notice sent by ourselves upholding the original decision

As local schemes are not legislation, but are locally defined schemes, the Valuation Tribunal will not consider an appeal against a billing authority's actual scheme, as that is beyond their jurisdiction. However, the Valuation Tribunal will advise dissatisfied claimants of their right to apply to the billing authority for a discretionary discount under section 13 (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. They will also hear appeals where the authority refuses to exercise this discretion.

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Committee and Date

Council

14 December 2017

10.00am

SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL – COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2018-19

Responsible Officer James Walton

e-mail: James.walton@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: (01743)
257775

1. Summary

- 1.1 In 2017/18 Shropshire Council is one of only 20% of Councils that still provide 100% protection through its local Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme. In 2018/19, it is highly likely that this percentage will fall further. Authorities across the country currently provide protection as low as 70%. Shropshire Council is facing an extremely challenging financial future and central government has been clear that councils should look to maximise locally generated income to help manage this situation and to support the continued delivery of key and critical services now and into the future.
- 1.2 Under the current CTS scheme it is necessary to administer minor awards that, for an individual, may amount to only a few pence per week. Furthermore, working age individuals not in employment or on low income can receive 100% protection against their council tax liability. It is proposed to implement two key changes:
 - Set a minimum award threshold of £1.50 per week to simplify the process and help reduce administration
 - To limit protection under CTS to 80% rather than 100%, while ensuring the design of the scheme still provides 100% protection to the most vulnerable in society.
- 1.3 Together these proposals could generate almost £1.2m additional revenue per annum, generated by asking a greater proportion of Shropshire's population to contribute towards the cost of delivering local services.
- 1.4 It is proposed to make no changes to the Revenue and Benefits Team as a result of these proposals (the increased cost of collection caused by reducing protection to 80% would be partially offset by implementing the minimum award threshold of £1.50). It is likely, however, that the overall collection rate will fall in the short-term. Shropshire Council currently has one of the highest collection

rates in the country and while this is anticipated to be maintained in the long term, there may be a short to medium term impact as a result of these changes. Nevertheless, the impact of these proposals would be financially positive for the Council, even in the short term, and this would be reflected within the Council's Financial Strategy by an immediate and increasing reduction in the existing funding gap.

- 1.5 This report proposes some changes to the existing council tax support scheme for Shropshire Council, and also details options for introducing a minimum council tax payment for all council tax support claimants.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to

- A. Agree option 4 as Shropshire Council's council tax support scheme for 2018-19 and associated exemptions with an estimated gross saving of £1,190,000
- B. Approve arrangements for consideration of discretionary requests and the utilisation of DHP fund and set aside a total fund of £300,000 for 2018/19 to help transition in these changes
- C. Members are asked to note that Shropshire Council's proposed full draft CTS scheme for 2018/19 is available on the Council's website at

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/benefits/what-help-can-i-claim-from-the-council/council-tax-support-and-housing-benefit/>

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 The authority has a statutory duty to make a council tax reduction scheme. The authority must make any revision to its scheme or replace it with another scheme, no later than 31 January in the financial year preceding that for which the revision or replacement is to have effect.
- 3.2 The Government reduced the amount of funding it provided for council tax support by 10% when responsibility for localised council tax support was passed to billing authorities in 2013. It has been necessary for the Council to find ways to accommodate this shortfall ever since.
- 3.3 The 90% funding made available for council tax support is ostensibly included within the overall grant funding that the Council receives from central government (that is, it was rolled into Revenue Support Grant), but is not separately identifiable within the grant. It follows as government funding continues to be cut there is less funding available for council tax support. Furthermore, with RSG being removed entirely by April 2020 there will be no government support for Council Tax Support in future.

- 3.4 The Council continues to face unprecedented cuts in central government funding, and ever increasing pressure to maximise its own resources to cover the cost of services locally provided.
- 3.5. The Council's key strategic risk is the ability to set a sustainable budget. The changes proposed within this report could form part of a long-term sustainable solution.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Option 1 – do nothing and retain the existing Council Tax Support Scheme. Saving £0.

For the 2017-18 financial year the Council provides in excess of £7 million council tax support to working age claimants. Option 1 would provide no saving against this £7m.

- 4.2 Option 2 – Make changes to the existing scheme to align with Housing Benefit and apply a minimum award of £1.50 a week. Saving £206,000

This option would remove entitlement to claimants that only qualify for a relatively small amount of council tax support, and associated administration costs. It is estimated that these changes would save the Council at least £206,000 per year. These amendments are detailed in the Shropshire Council Tax Summary document at Appendix A.

- 4.3 Option 3 - Make changes to existing scheme to align with Housing Benefit and introduce a minimum award of £1.50 per week and apply 10% minimum payment in Council Tax Support. Saving £694,000

It is estimated that this would save the Council at least £836,000 per year. With the exemptions from the minimum payment percentage detailed below this would reduce to £694,000.

- 4.4 Option 4 – Make changes to existing scheme to align with Housing Benefit and introduce a minimum award of £1.50 per week and apply a 20% minimum payment in Council Tax Support. Saving £1,190,000

It is estimated that this would make a gross saving to the Council of £1,480,000 per year, offset by exemptions as set out below.

- 4.5 It is proposed that the following categories would be exempt from the 20% minimum payment in the proposed scheme at the following cost. For more details of the exemption criteria please refer to the summary document at Appendix A.

- Claimant or partner in receipt of the severe disability premium. To exempt these claimants from the proposed 20% minimum payment in council tax support would cost an estimated £245,000
 - Claimant or partner in receipt of the support component of Employment and Support Allowance. The support component Employment and Support Allowance is for people with a 'limited capacity for work'. To exempt these claimants from the proposed 20% reduction in council tax support would cost an estimated additional £45,000
 - Claimant or partner in receipt of war pension exemption – This would cost a minimal amount in the region of £200
- 4.6 The net saving to the Council of aligning its scheme with Housing Benefit changes, applying a £1.50 per week minimum award, applying a 20% minimum payment, but exempting claimants in receipt of the severe disability premium and the support component of Employment and Support Allowance and war pensions would be £1,190,000.
- 4.7 A survey of other Council that have introduced a minimum payment to their Council Tax Support scheme has shown that there is a detrimental effect on their overall council tax collection rate. This has varied among different Councils between 0.3% and 0.7% in the first year, but gradually improving over subsequent financial years.
- 4.8 For the 2015-16 and 2016-17 financial years Shropshire Council has reported a collection rate of 98.4%. The Council's overall council tax debit for 2017-18 is £175 million. Shropshire Council keep around 78% of this as its precept. If the collection rate fell by 0.1%, that would mean a loss of income to Shropshire Council of £136,500 (£175,000 loss overall). If the collection rate fell by 0.4% that would mean a loss of income in year to Shropshire Council of £546,000 (£700,000 loss overall).
- 4.9 The majority of the impact of the initial changes, following the 2013 introduction of the Council's scheme, was felt by claimants in employment. The impact of the proposed changes will be consistent with that felt in other parts of the country. In Shropshire, it is anticipated that less than 7% of the impact of the new proposals will fall on working age claimants in work, with the remainder of the impact falling on working age claimants not in employment. The majority of claimants will continue to receive support, albeit at a lower level. Some examples of the potential impact of the changes for individuals is included at Appendix C.
- 4.10 It should be noted that Shropshire Council's Revenues Team would continue to collect these amounts during subsequent financial years. It should also be noted that any decision to create additional council tax debit, particularly among lower income groups, will increase administration and recovery costs within the Revenues and Benefits Teams. This may mean, for example, that within existing resources there would be reduced capacity to focus on collection of council tax arrears, which could impact on the overall council tax collected by Shropshire Council.

4.11 At its meeting on 18 October 2017 the Council's Cabinet met and agreed Option 4 above as the preferred option for amending Shropshire Council's council tax support scheme for 2018/19, with the associated exemptions listed. Cabinet also agreed the consultation options set out in the report.

4.11 Discretionary Fund

4.12 A council tax support scheme must state the procedure by which a person may apply for a reduction under section 13A (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 which provides delegation to a billing authority to reduce the amount of council tax to nil, either in relation to particular case, or by determining a class of dwellings.

4.13 As the local council tax support scheme is classed as a council tax discount, any appeals against council tax support awards are heard by the Valuation Tribunal. As local schemes are not legislation, but are locally defined schemes, the Valuation Tribunal will not consider an appeal against a billing authority's actual scheme, as that is beyond their jurisdiction. The Valuation Tribunal can, however, advise dissatisfied claimants of their right to apply to the billing authority for a discretionary discount under section 13 (1) (c) above. They will also hear appeals where the authority refuses to exercise this discretion, and will potentially overturn a billing authority decision to award discretionary discount on appeal.

4.14 It follows that any decision to apply a uniform minimum percentage payment in respect of council tax support awards is likely to see a marked increase in requests for discretionary discount considerations.

4.15 Currently, the discretion to award discretionary discounts has been delegated to the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance (Section 151 Officer), and requests are considered on an ad hoc basis. There is no policy to guide awards of this nature, nor is there any funding to cover the cost of such awards. Therefore the cost of any discretionary discount is picked up by the wider taxpayer.

4.16 To cater for an increase in requests for discretionary council tax discount, some Councils have developed a policy document against which requests can be verified, and also a hardship fund from which any discretionary awards are paid.

4.17 It should be noted that the Council is currently allocated Government grant each year to make Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) where Housing Benefit or Universal Credit claimants require further assistance towards housing cost or rent liability. It is probable that a high number of claimants that will be adversely affected by proposed changes to the CTS scheme and request additional discretionary assistance might also be legitimately considered for a DHP where they have a shortfall in their rent. Given that the DHP fund is often substantially underspent, a combined approach to administering both funds within Revenues and Benefits would enable a more

holistic view of the claimant and would provide opportunity for discretionary payments to be administered under the policy, but not necessarily at direct cost to the Council and the local taxpayer.

- 4.18 It is recommended to follow this approach and that a total £300,000 be set aside for discretionary requests, combined from the DHP fund for 2018/19 (final figures for 2018/19 are not yet available) and £50,000 for discretionary discounts for claimants that would not qualify for DHP.

5. Background

- 5.1 The former national Council Tax Benefit scheme was abolished on 31 March 2013 and replaced with a new system of localised Council Tax Support, which requires each billing authority to design and implement its own scheme for awarding council tax discounts to working age customers on low incomes, while accommodating a 10% reduction in Government funding.
- 5.2 Shropshire Council's scheme was approved by Cabinet on 17 October 2012. Effectively the scheme agreed by Shropshire Council continued to be means tested but made a number of adjustments to the existing council tax default scheme, namely
- Removal of second adult rebate
 - Increase the value of non-dependant deductions
 - Removal of child benefit and earnings disregards
 - Reducing the upper capital limit to £10,000
 - Minimum earnings threshold for EEA
 - Special education needs allowance disregarded in full
 - War pension/armed forces compensation scheme guaranteed income payments disregarded in full
 - Changes to habitual residency test to fall in line with Housing Benefit
- 5.3 Crucially, the Shropshire Council scheme did not implement a minimum payment percentage across all claimants. That means that certain claimants in receipt of passported benefits still receive 100% protection and pay no council tax.
- 5.4 Legislative changes have continued to be made in relation to Housing Benefit, which is currently assessed alongside Council Tax Support as part the same assessment process. These changes have not been reflected in the Council Tax Support scheme. As Housing Benefit and the Council Tax Support scheme have diverged it has made the assessment process more confusing for claimants, and more administratively challenging for staff. It would therefore be advantageous for the Council to agree to amend the Council Tax Support scheme with effect from 1 April 2018 to align it with Housing Benefit changes.
- 5.5 Shropshire Council went live with Universal Credit in April 2015. This change, however, only affected new claims from single working age claimants. Shropshire Council is currently scheduled to move to full service with Universal Credit in May 2018. This has recently been put back from February 2018. This

means that all new claims for working age claimants will move to Universal Credit with effect from May 2018. There are currently no plans for pensioners to move off Housing Benefit. Due to the way Universal Credit works the experience from other Councils that have already moved to full service is that they are receiving a high number of notifications from DWP of small changes to Universal Credit entitlement each month in respect of people that have moved to Universal Credit. The effect on Council Tax Support is that their entitlement is being recalculated each month, meaning their council tax instalments are continually being recalculated and pushed into the future. One way to avoid this problem would be to introduce a minimum change amount for Universal Credit. This would mean that there would be no change in entitlement to Council Tax Support if the change in Universal Credit is less than £10.00 per week.

5.6 While Shropshire Council has continued to offer 100% council tax reduction support to certain passported claimants, the majority of other billing authorities have required all claimants to make a minimum payment contribution to council tax. For 2016-17 out of 326 billing authorities only 67 authorities (of which Shropshire was one) continued to offer 100% protection from council tax. Members are asked to consider implementing an option which would reduce the overall cost of the scheme.

5.7 While there remains uncertainty about the continued roll out of Universal Credit it is recommended to continue with a Council Tax Support scheme that remains means tested as the calculation is linked to Housing Benefit.

5.8 If the roll out of Universal Credit continues as planned it may be sensible to consider further changes to the Council Tax Support scheme, possibly from April 2019. One option to consider for future years if the planned roll out of Universal Credit for Shropshire continues as scheduled, is implementation of an income banded scheme that is simplified and operates more as a Council Tax discount.

5.9 Consultation

5.10 Before making a scheme the authority must (in the following order)

- Consult any major precepting authority which has power to issue a precept to it
- Publish a draft scheme in such manner as it thinks fit, and
- Consult such other persons as it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme

5.11 Case law has determined that any consultation undertaken to change the Council Tax Support scheme must refer to alternative methods to absorb the shortfall in government funding.

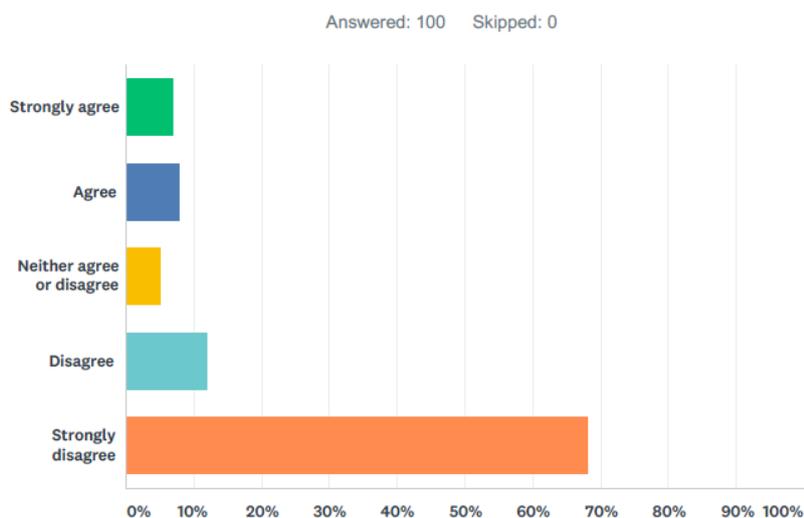
5.12 As agreed by Cabinet on 18 October 2017 we have undertaken a six week consultation that ran from 19 October 2017 to 26 November 2017. The consultation was published on the Council's website. All affected council tax

support claimants (over 7,747) were sent a letter detailing these changes and were invited to respond. Internal and external partners and advice agencies were also contacted and asked to respond.

5.13 In total we received 100 responses to the consultation. This is a very low response level (1.29%) considering we had sent 7,747 letters. Of those that responded, 67% stated that they currently paid council tax to Shropshire Council. 52% stated that they were currently in receipt of Council Tax Support.

5.14 Responses to the three specific questions asked as part of the consultation are below.

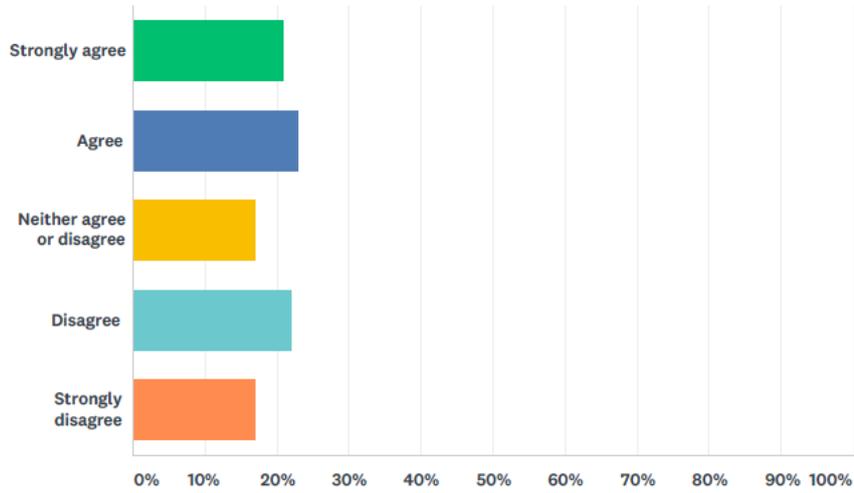
Q1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the council’s preferred option of updating the current scheme and introducing a minimum payment of 20% to be paid by working age people?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly agree	7.00% 7
Agree	8.00% 8
Neither agree or disagree	5.00% 5
Disagree	12.00% 12
Strongly disagree	68.00% 68
TOTAL	100

Q2 Do you believe that the council should cut other council services in order to continue with the current level of contribution from its own finances to fund the existing Council Tax Support Scheme?

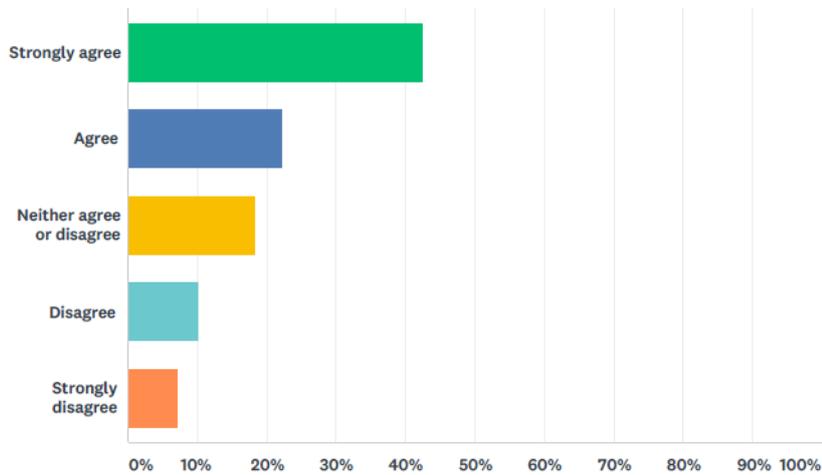
Answered: 100 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	21.00%	21
Agree	23.00%	23
Neither agree or disagree	17.00%	17
Disagree	22.00%	22
Strongly disagree	17.00%	17
TOTAL		100

Q3 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the council’s preferred option of exempting the following groups from the proposed 20% minimum payment: claimants in receipt of severe disability premium, claimants in receipt of the support component of employment and support allowance, claimants in receipt of war pension?

Answered: 99 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	42.42%	42
Agree	22.22%	22
Neither agree or disagree	18.18%	18
Disagree	10.10%	10
Strongly disagree	7.07%	7
TOTAL		99

5.15 Comments from respondents to the consultation can be made available for Members on request.

5.16 An Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment has been completed and the result is that this change is not likely to have an adverse impact on any particular group. The ESIIA is at Appendix B.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does

not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

N/A

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

David Minnery

Local Member

N/A

Appendices

Appendix A: Council Tax Support Summary Document

Appendix B: ESIIA

Appendix C examples

Appendix A: Council Tax Support Summary Document

SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL – BENEFITS SERVICE

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT (CTS)

Introduction

The current Council Tax Benefit scheme is a means tested benefit that helps people with a low income to pay their Council Tax.

From April 2013 this will be abolished and all local authorities will provide a new scheme called 'Council Tax Support'. The funding that is provided for this scheme will be reduced by 10% and therefore it is likely that some people will have to pay more towards their Council Tax bill.

The changes will not affect pensioners even though they will move into the new scheme. The Government have confirmed that all pensioners will be protected and receive the same amount of benefit they do now under the current Council Tax Benefit Scheme.

Each local authority will be able to provide Council Tax support in a different way depending on local needs, funding available and how it can be administered. Each Council is expected to devise a new scheme and then put this to public consultation by the end of 2012.

Our new scheme was devised and published on the Shropshire Council website for customers, stakeholders and other agencies to comment on. Public consultation closed on the 14th December and the new scheme was formally adopted by the Council on 16th January 2013.

Anyone of working age will now be subject to the new scheme from April 2013. The differences that you will see in the new Council Tax Support Scheme are: -

- Removal of second adult rebate
- Reduction of the capital limit from £16,000 to £10,000
- Removal of earnings disregards
- Removal of child benefit disregard
- Increase in non-dependant deductions

Please note the following amendments are for the calculation of Council Tax Support only and do not affect Housing Benefit calculations.

Removal of Second Adult Rebate

Second Adult Rebate (2AR) is awarded to a customer based on the circumstances of a second adult living in the property. Under the new scheme this has been abolished and will no longer be effective from 01.04.13.

Reduction of the capital limit

For working age people the capital limit will reduce to £10,000 from 01.04.13. This will mean that if a customer's savings amounts to more than £10,000 they will not be entitled to CTS. The lower capital limit of £6,000 remains the same.

Tariff income calculations remain as is i.e. from the total amount if capital £6,000 is deducted, the remainder is then divided by 250 if the result is not an exact multiple of £1 the result is rounded up to the next whole £1

All other capital rules including static savings, land and property, shares, etc. remain the same.

Removal of Earnings disregards

All income disregards for working age people will cease from the 01.04.13.

Removal of Child Benefit disregards

Child benefit will no longer be disregarded from the calculation of CTS from the 01.04.03.

Increase in non-dependant earned income deductions (working age only)

From 01.04.13 non dep deductions will increase to the following: -

- £5 for anyone earning under £100,
- £10 for anyone earning between £100 and £150
- £20 for anyone earning over £150 per week

This deduction will only be made from their earned income. It won't affect any other income they receive.

Non-dependant earned income deductions (pension age only)

Gross income less than £186.00	=	£3.65
Gross income £186.00 to £321.99	=	£7.25
Gross income £322.00 to £400.99	=	£9.15
Gross income £401.00 or above	=	£10.95

Unearned income will attract the following disregards (working age and pension age):

Others aged 18 or over incl. JSAC & ESAC	=	£3.65
In receipt of Pension Credit, IS, JSA (IB), ESA(IR)	=	nil

(If nil income is added to the claim for the non-dep it appears to take the maximum deduction).

(This disregard will be up-rated annually in line with figures provided annually by DCLG)

A new minimum earnings threshold will be introduced with effect from 01/04/15 to reflect the current arrangements in the Housing Benefit scheme.

This minimum earnings threshold will help to determine whether a European Economic Area (EEA) national's previous or current work can be treated as genuine and effective for the purposes of deciding whether they have a right to reside in the UK as a worker or self-employed person.

The minimum earnings threshold has been set at the level at which workers start to pay National Insurance Contributions (NICs), currently £153 a week in the 2014/15 tax year. If an EEA national can prove that they have been earning at least this amount for a period of 3 months immediately before they claim CTS their work can be treated as genuine and effective and they will have a right to reside as a worker or self-employed person.

If they do not satisfy the minimum earnings threshold criteria, a further assessment will be undertaken against a broader range of criteria (such as hours worked, pattern of work, nature of employment contract etc.) to determine whether their employment is genuine and effective.

Ultimately, if an EEA national's income does not meet the minimum earnings threshold or the additional criteria to be classified as genuine and effective employment they will not be eligible for CTS.

Special Educations Needs Allowance – to be disregarded in full with effect from 01/09/14

War Pensions / Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Guaranteed Income Payments – to be disregarded in full with effect from 01/04/13 (and to be consistent with Housing Benefit)

From 01/04/15 the CTR scheme will include changes to the habitual residency test to reflect changes to the Housing Benefit (HB) regulations.

The amendments to the CTS scheme removes access to CTS for EEA jobseekers who make a new claim for CTS on or after 1 April 2015. EEA nationals who are self-employed, are workers or who are unemployed but retain their worker status have the same rights to CTS as a UK national and their situation remains unchanged.

EEA jobseekers who are entitled to CTS and JSA(IB) on 31 March 2015 will be protected until they have a break in their claim for CTS or JSA. If their JSA ends because they have started work, then as long as we can be satisfied that their employment is genuine and effective they will be able to access in-work CTS as either a worker or a self-employed person. Claimants receiving in-work CTS beyond 1 April will continue to be able to access CTS, if they become entitled to JSA(IB) on or after that date, but only if they retain their worker status. If they are a jobseeker then their CTS entitlement ends from the Monday following the cessation of work.

Changes with effect from 1 April 2018 to bring the scheme in line with Housing Benefit changes

- **2 child cap**
The Government has announced that they will limit benefit support by only taking into account a maximum of two dependent children per family. It affects all claims where new children are born after April 2017. This will apply in Housing Benefit to families that make a new claim from April 2017
- **Loss of the family premium**
The Government removed the family premium for new claims within the assessment of Housing Benefit with effect from May 2016
- **Bereavement Support Payments to be disregarded in full**
This was introduced into Housing Benefit with effect from April 2017
- **Any payments from the ‘We love Manchester Fund’ and the ‘London Emergency Trust’ to be disregarded in full**
- **Maximum backdate period of 1 month**
- **Absence from home limited to 4 weeks when outside GB**
The temporary absence rules for Housing Benefit were amended in 2015 reducing the allowable period of temporary absence outside Great Britain from 13 weeks to 4 weeks.

The limit applies to new periods of absence only. Exceptions are when an absence is in relation to
 - Death of a partner, child or close relative
 - Receiving medical treatment
 - A person who has fled their home due to fear of violence
 - A member of Her Majesty’s forces posted overseas
- **Beneficial changes in circumstances to be reported within one month of the change in order for the claim to be updated from the date of change, otherwise changes will take effect from the Monday following date notified.**
- **All working aged claimants who receive Council Tax Support (unless they are a pensioner or classed as vulnerable) will pay 20% of their council tax liability, (after appropriate discounts have been awarded)**

An example of this change is as follows:

- 1) Current scheme (which allows for 100% reduction)

The customer's liability is £20.00 per week. As they are in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance they are entitled to full Council tax reduction making their council tax balance for the year £0.00

2) Proposed new scheme (20% minimum payment)

The customer liability is £20.00. Before any calculation takes place 20% of this amount is reduced from the liability to be used. This means that any calculation will be carried out on a figure of £16.00. Again the customer is on Jobseekers Allowance and so they are entitled to a full award. This will mean their council tax balance for the year will be £208.00 (£4.00 x 52).

- **De Minimis change amount of £10.00 per week for claimants in receipt of Universal Credit**
- **Claimant or partner who meet the specific criteria of severe disablement contained within the policy will be protected from any percentage reduction in council tax support. Claimant or partner in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance will be protected from any percentage reduction in council tax support. This will also apply to customers who meet the criteria for receiving a war compensation related benefit or pension. Specifically this includes**

Criteria to be awarded for the severe disability premium:

- The customer has to be in receipt of
 - 1) Attendance allowance or
 - 2) Higher or middle rate care component of disability living allowance or
 - 3) The daily living allowance rate of personal independence payments
- They must not have a resident non-dependant
- No person is entitled to, and in receipt of, carers allowance in respect of caring for the customer and;
- If the customer has a partner they must also meet all above criteria

Criteria to be awarded the support component of employment and support allowance –

It is accepted that some people's difficulties or disabilities are such that not only is the person not expected to look for work but are also not expected to undertake an work related activities or plan for starting work due to the severity of their difficulties

Criteria to qualify for the war pension's exemption

The customer and/or partner has to be in receipt of either:

- War pension
- War disablement pension
- War service attributable pension
- War widows pension
- War mobility supplement

SUMMARY OF CHANGES FROM 01.04.13

Current Council Tax Benefit Scheme (CTB)	Council Tax Support (CTS)
Second Adult Rebate - Awarded to the customer based on the circumstances of 'second adult'. Can be awarded due to a 'better buy' comparison	No award due for second person. On 'better buy' calculation customer will only be awarded any CTS due.
Reduction of the capital limit - Upper capital limit of £16,000. Above this limit the person would not qualify for CTB. Lower capital of £6,000. Below this figure amount is ignored. Amounts above £6,000 attract tariff income at £1 for every £250 or part of above the lower capital limit	Upper capital limit of £10,000. Above this limit the person would not qualify for CTB. Lower capital of £6,000. Below this figure amount is ignored. Amounts above £6,000 attract tariff income at £1 for every £250 or part of above the lower capital limit
Removal of earnings disregards – Permitted work - £97.50 Lone parents - £25.00 Disabled, carers or special occupations - £20.00 Couples - £10 Single £5	Permitted work - £0 Lone parents - £0 Disabled, carers or special occupations - £0 Couples - £0 Single £0
Removal of Child Benefit disregard – Child Benefit is fully disregarded for the calculation of CTB	Child benefit is fully included for the calculation of CTS
Increase in non-dependant deductions (using current figures) On pass ported benefit - £0.00 On JSA C/ESAC - £3.30 Works less than 16 hours on maternity, paternity, adoption or sick leave - £3.30 Income more than £394.00 per week – £9.90 £316.00 to £393.99 per week – £8.25 £238.00 to £315.99 per week - £6.55 £183.00 to £237.00 per week - £3.30 £124.00 to £182.99 per week – £3.30 Under £124.00 – £3.30	On pass ported benefit - £0.00 On JSA C/ESAC - £3.30 Works less than 16 hours on maternity, paternity, adoption or sick leave - £3.30 Earnings less than £100 - £5.00 Earnings between £100 and £150 - £10.00 Earnings above £150 - £20.00

APPEALS

There will be no joint HB/CTR appeals – they will be heard separately by different bodies. First Tier Tribunals will hear the Housing Benefit appeals (as now) and the Valuation Tribunals Service will hear Council Tax Support appeals.

The legislation is contained within the Local Government Finance Act. Appeals against the local Council Tax Support Scheme will be covered by Regulation 16(b).

Process:

- The customer firstly needs to write to the Council saying they disagree with the decision. There is no time limit to do this. They can request this at any time.
- If we do not alter our original decision the customer has the right to appeal to the Valuation Tribunal.
- To appeal to the Valuation Tribunal the customer will need to do this on line at www.valuationtribunal.gov.uk
- The customer must complete the on line appeal application within two months of the date of the decision notice sent by ourselves upholding the original decision

As local schemes are not legislation, but are locally defined schemes, the Valuation Tribunal will not consider an appeal against a billing authority's actual scheme, as that is beyond their jurisdiction. However, the Valuation Tribunal will advise dissatisfied claimants of their right to apply to the billing authority for a discretionary discount under section 13 (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. They will also hear appeals where the authority refuses to exercise this discretion.

Appendix B: ESIIA**Shropshire Council Part 1 ESIIA: initial screening and assessment**

Please note: prompt questions and guidance within boxes are in italics. You are welcome to type over them when completing this form. Please extend the boxes if you need more space for your commentary.

Name of service change

Change to local Council Tax Support scheme. Proposed change is to align the scheme with changes that have been made to Housing Benefit legislation, and apply a 20% minimum payment in council tax support to apply to all working age claimants. Pensioners are protected in law from these changes, and continue to have their council tax support assessed against the former council tax benefit rules.

Certain groups are proposed as being exempt from these changes.

Aims of the service change and description

The authority has a statutory duty to make a council tax reduction scheme. The authority must make any revision to its scheme or replace it with another scheme, no later than 31 January in the financial year preceding that for which the revision or replacement is to have effect.

The Government reduced the amount of funding it provided for council tax support by 10% when responsibility for localised council tax support was passed to billing authorities in 2013.

Funding for council tax support is included within the overall grant funding that the Council receives from central government, but is not separately identifiable. It follows as government funding continues to be cut, that there is less funding available for council tax support.

Shropshire Council's council tax support scheme was approved by Cabinet on 17 October 2012. Effectively the scheme agreed by Shropshire Council continued to be means tested but made a number of adjustments to the existing Council Tax Default scheme, namely

- Removal of second adult rebate*
- Increase the value of non-dependant deductions*
- Removal of child benefit and earnings disregards*
- Reducing the upper capital limit to £10,000*
- Minimum earnings threshold for EEA*
- Special education needs allowance disregarded in full*
- War pension/armed forces compensation scheme guaranteed income payments disregarded in full*
- Changes to habitual residency test to fall in line with Housing Benefit*

Crucially, the Shropshire Council scheme did not implement a minimum percentage across all claimants. That means that certain claimants in receipt of pass ported benefits still receive 100% protection and pay no council tax.

Legislative changes have continued to be made in relation to Housing Benefit, which is currently assessed alongside Council Tax Support as part the same assessment

process. These changes have not been reflected in the Council Tax Support scheme. As Housing Benefit and the Council Tax Support scheme have diverged it has made the assessment process more confusing for claimants, and more administratively challenging for staff. It would therefore be advantageous for the Council to agree to amend the Council Tax Support scheme with effect from 1 April 2018 to align it with Housing Benefit changes. These amendments are detailed in the Shropshire Council Tax Support Summary document at appendix A.

Shropshire Council went live with Universal Credit in April 2015. However, this only affected new claims from single working age claimants. Shropshire Council is currently scheduled to move to full service with Universal Credit in February 2018. This means that all new claims for working age claimants will move to Universal Credit with effect from February 2018. There are currently no plans for pensioners to move off Housing Benefit. Due to the way Universal Credit works the experience from other Councils that have already moved to full service is that they are receiving a high number of notifications from DWP of small changes to Universal Credit entitlement each month in respect of people that have moved to Universal Credit. The effect on Council Tax Support is that their entitlement is being recalculated each month, meaning their council tax instalments are continually being recalculated and pushed into the future. One way to avoid this problem would be to introduce a minimum change amount for Universal Credit. This would mean that there would be no change in entitlement to Council Tax Support if the change in Universal Credit is less than the £10.00 per week.

While Shropshire Council have continued to offer 100% council tax reduction support to certain pass ported claimants the majority of other billing authorities have required all claimants to make a minimum payment contribution to the council tax. For 2016-17 out of 326 billing authorities only 67 authorities (of which Shropshire was one) continued to offer 100% protection from council tax.

Shropshire Council is now considering proposals to align its council tax support scheme with housing benefit, and apply a 20% minimum payment percentage in council tax support for working age claimants. The following groups will be exempt from this proposal.

- *Claimants in receipt of the severe disability premium.*
- *Claimants in receipt of the support component of Employment and Support Allowance. The support component Employment and Support Allowance is for people with a 'limited capacity for work'.*
- *Claimants in receipt of war pensions*

While there remains uncertainty about the continued roll out of Universal Credit it is recommended to continue with a Council Tax Support scheme that remains means tested as the calculation is linked to Housing Benefit.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

- *Members of the public*
- *Members*
- *Registered Social Landlords*
- *Working age claimants*
- *Other Council departments*

<i>- Advice agencies</i>
Evidence used for screening of the service change
<i>The Council has had significant cuts in funding and needs to explore ways to reduce costs. For 2016-17 the majority of other Councils (79%) have implemented a minimum payment percentage into their council tax support scheme.</i>

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change
<i>A consultation on the proposed amendments to Shropshire Council’s council tax support scheme will commence on 19 October 2017 and run for six weeks. As well as a consultation document being published on the internet, all affected claimants will be contacted about the proposed changes to the new scheme and invited to respond.</i>

Potential impact on Protected Characteristic groups and on social inclusion

Using the results of evidence gathering and specific consultation and engagement, please consider how the service change as proposed may affect people within the nine Protected Characteristic groups and people at risk of social exclusion.

1. Have the intended audiences and target groups been consulted about:
 - their current needs and aspirations and what is important to them;
 - the potential impact of this service change on them, whether positive or negative, intended or unintended;
 - the potential barriers they may face.
2. If the intended audience and target groups have not been consulted directly, have their representatives or people with specialist knowledge been consulted, or has research been explored?
3. Have other stakeholder groups and secondary groups, for example carers of service users, been explored in terms of potential unintended impacts?
4. Are there systems set up to:
 - monitor the impact, positive or negative, intended or intended, for different groups;
 - enable open feedback and suggestions from a variety of audiences through a variety of methods.
5. Are there any Human Rights implications? For example, is there a breach of one or more of the human rights of an individual or group?
6. Will the service change as proposed have a positive or negative impact on:
 - fostering good relations?
 - social inclusion?

Initial assessment for each group

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through inserting a tick in the relevant column. Please add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Protected Characteristic groups	High negative	High positive	Medium positive or	Low positive or
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and other groups in Shropshire	impact Part Two ESIIA required	impact Part One ESIIA required	negative impact Part One ESIIA required	negative impact Part One ESIIA required
Age (please include children, young people, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group eg child for whom there are safeguarding concerns eg older person with disability)			This change will have a negative impact on working age claimants as they will receive less council tax support. Pensioners are protected in legislation. The council retain power to award council tax discounts on an ad hoc basis through discretionary powers and will exempt certain vulnerable groups from these changes.	
Disability (please include: mental health conditions and syndromes including autism; physical disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; HIV)			Exempt from minimum payment percentage where claimant or partner is in receipt of severe disability premium, support component of Employment Support Allowance and War pensions	√
Gender re-assignment (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				√
Marriage and Civil Partnership (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				√
Pregnancy & Maternity (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				√
Race (please include: ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, gypsy, traveller)				√
Religion and belief (please include: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Non conformists; Rastafarianism; Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				√
Sex (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				√
Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects:				√

safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				
Other: Social Inclusion (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; people with health inequalities; households in poverty; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable)				√

Guidance on what a negative impact might look like

High Negative	Significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place or no evidence available: urgent need for consultation with customers, general public, workforce
Medium Negative	Some potential impact, some mitigating measures in place but no evidence available how effective they are: would be beneficial to consult with customers, general public, workforce
Low Negative	Almost bordering on non-relevance to the ESIIA process (heavily legislation led, very little discretion can be exercised, limited public facing aspect, national policy affecting degree of local impact possible)

Decision, review and monitoring

Decision	Yes	No
Part One ESIIA Only?	√	
Proceed to Part Two Full Report?		√

If Part One, please now use the boxes below and sign off at the foot of the page. If Part Two, please move on to the full report stage.

<p>Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change</p> <p><i>This is the section where you can explain what the service area is already planning to do. Check: for the groups who may be affected, what actions will you now take to mitigate or enhance impact of the service change? For example, if you are reducing a service there may be further use you could make of publicity and awareness raising through social media and other channels to reach more people who may be affected.</i></p>
--

<p>Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change</p> <p><i>This is the section where you can explain what actions the service area will be</i></p>
--

taking to review and monitor the impact of the service change, and with what frequency. Check: what arrangements will you have in place to continue to collect evidence and data and to continue to engage with all groups who may be affected by the service change, including the intended audiences? For example, customer feedback and wider community engagement opportunities, including involvement of elected Shropshire Council councillors for a locality.

Scrutiny at Part One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer carrying out the screening</i>	Phil Weir	28 September 2017
<i>Any internal support*</i>		
<i>Any external support**</i>		
<i>Head of service</i>	James Walton	28 September 2017

**This refers to other officers within the service area*

***This refers either to support external to the service but within the Council, eg from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist, or support external to the Council, eg from a peer authority*

Sign off at Part One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer's name</i>	Phil Weir	28 September 2017
<i>Head of service's name</i>	James Walton	28 September 2017

Appendix C

Changes to Council Tax Support (CTS) means that individuals currently eligible to receive 100% protection through this scheme would now receive a lower level of protection. This means that those affected will pay more towards their council tax bill than they currently do. Some individuals who currently do not pay anything towards their council tax bill would now be expected to make some contribution. The examples below give some illustrations of the impact this could have on individuals and households as a result of the proposed changes.

Example 1: Someone in receipt of Job Seekers allowance will have their income assessed against an ‘applicable amount’. Where there is no excess of income over their applicable amount they would currently make no minimum payment under CTS. Under the new proposals they would instead pay 20% of their council tax bill. Full council tax payable in this example would be £1040.00, or £20.00 per week (an average band A liability).

	current	proposed
Weekly council tax bill = £20.00. Contribution under CTS proposed to be 20% of bill	£0.00	£4.00
Total weekly payment	£0.00	£4.00
Total council tax payable (total payment figure X 52 weeks)	£0.00	£208.00

Example 2: Someone with an excess of income over their applicable amount would currently make a contribution of 20% of this excess income, but no minimum payment under CTS. Under the proposals they would also pay 20% of their council tax bill. Full Council Tax payable in this example would be £1040.00 or £20.00 per week (an average band A liability). Excess of income in this example is £17.50 per week

	current	proposed
Weekly contribution towards council tax (20% of excess income of £17.50)	£3.50	£3.50
Weekly council tax bill = £20.00. contribution under CTS proposed to be 20% of Bill	£0.00	£4.00
Total weekly payment	£3.50	£7.50
Total council tax payable (total payment figure X 52 weeks)	£182.00	£390.00

Example 3: Someone with an excess of income over their applicable amount would currently make a contribution of 20% of this excess income, but no minimum payment under CTS. Under the proposals they would also pay 20% of their council tax bill up to the value of their council tax bill. Full Council Tax payable in this example would be £1040.00 or £20.00 per week (an average band A liability). Excess of income in this example is £83.00 per week

	current	proposed
Weekly contribution towards council tax (20% of excess income of £83.00)	£16.60	£16.60
Weekly council tax bill = £20.00. contribution under CTS proposed to be 20% of Bill	£0.00	£4.00
Total weekly payment	£16.60	£20.00
Total council tax payable (total payment figure X 52 weeks)	£863.20	£1,040.00

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Committee and Date

Council

14 December 2017

10.00am

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Responsible Officer Claire Porter

e-mail: claire.porter@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 252763

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Political Structures Monitoring Group has met to consider amendments to the constitution.
- 1.2 The Monitoring Officer has authority to make some of the minor amendments to the Constitution but others require approval by Council.
- 1.3 In addition, it was noted that the Articles of the Constitution had been updated to accurately reflect the current scrutiny arrangements.
- 1.4 Part 3 – Responsibility for Functions – The responsibility for functions was updated and it is proposed that the Political Structures Monitoring Group be replaced with the Constitution Working Party with a membership consisting of the Leader, Deputy Leader and other Group Leaders (or their deputy).
- 1.5 Part 4 – Council Procedure Rules – The Political Structures Monitoring Group considered that it would be appropriate to amend the scheme for public questions. It is proposed that the scheme be amended as follows:
 - a) Notice of the question should be received 24 hours' prior to the commencement of the relevant meeting.
 - b) The member of the public should ask the question at the meeting
 - c) The response should be provided verbally at the meeting
 - d) No supplementary question to be permitted.
- 1.6 At its meeting held on 24th November 2016, the Audit Committee agreed that its terms of reference should be amended to provide for the appointment of an independent member where elected members considered that such an appointment would be of benefit to the Committee.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Part 3 of the Constitution, Responsibility for Functions, be amended by the replacement of the Political Structures Monitoring Group with the Constitution Working Group with a membership consisting of the Leader, Deputy Leader and other Group Leaders (or their deputy).
- 2.2 That that the scheme for Public Questions set out in the Constitution be amended as follows:
 - a) Notice of the question should be received 24 hours' prior to the commencement of the relevant meeting.
 - b) The member of the public should ask the question at the meeting
 - c) The response should be provided verbally at the meeting
 - d) No supplementary question to be permitted.
- 2.3 That the terms of reference for the Audit Committee be amended by the inclusion of the following additional paragraph:

"3. The Committee has the option to recruit an independent member where there is an identifiable benefit."

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

The Council needs to keep its procedures under review in order to ensure that they provide a legal basis for decision making in a manner that best suits the Local Authority.

4. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications to the Council as a result of this report.

5. Background

- 5.1 A review of the Constitution has been commenced by the Political Structures Monitoring Group. At a meeting held on the 21st September 2017 a number of minor amendments were agreed which have been implemented by the Monitoring Officer. Additionally, it was agreed to make amendments to the Political Structures Monitoring Group and to the Councils scheme for public questions.
- 5.2 It is proposed that the Political Structures Monitoring Group be replaced with the Constitution Working Party with a membership consisting of the Leader, Deputy Leader and other Group Leaders (or their deputy).
- 5.3 It is proposed that the scheme for Public Questions be amended as follows:
 - e) Notice of the question should be received 24 hours' prior to the commencement of the relevant meeting.
 - f) The member of the public should ask the question at the meeting
 - g) The response should be provided verbally at the meeting
 - h) No supplementary question to be permitted.

5.5 At its meeting held on 24th November 2016, the Audit Committee agreed that its terms of reference should be amended to provide for the appointment of an independent member where elected members considered that such an appointment would be of benefit to the Committee. At its meeting held on 30th November 2017, it was agreed that the following paragraph be inserted into its terms of reference:

“The Committee has the option to recruit an independent member where there is an identifiable benefit.”

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information) Constitution Audit Committee papers
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Councillor Nutting
Local Member All Members
Appendices

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MEMBER QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1

COUNCILLOR DAVID TURNER will ask the following question to the Leader

The Council's financial position has recently been branded as "a catastrophe" by the Opposition. Would the Leader agree with me that, far from being catastrophic, the numbers in the financial strategy speak for themselves - they are broadly the same now as they were a year ago and further back for that matter?

COUNCILLOR PETER NUTTING the Leader will reply:

Thank you for your question.

The fundamental principles and underlying trends identified in the Financial Strategy have been consistent for a number of years. Savings have been, and continue to be, made and earmarked reserves have been freed up to protect, as far as possible, services that are so valuable to our communities.

The Financial Strategy comprises of projections which are refreshed and reviewed on a regular basis and reported, transparently, through to Cabinet and Council. Increased demand for Social Care (in Children's and Adults) alongside other pressures have escalated costs, and with falling Government funding have increased the projected funding gap. As reported in the media, this is consistent with national trends and so this is not isolated to Shropshire. The issue of expenditure exceeding income remains and this cannot be sustained by 'one off' measures. We have been clear about this in the Financial Strategy and we have set out our approach to tackle this over the coming months. In short, we are taking action to address this.

The claim of our finances being 'catastrophic' referred to an in-year projected budget overspend of £5 million. This, again, is in the main due to increased demands in Social Care and represents a projected overspend of less than 1% (0.90%) against our gross budget. We have also taken action to address this and this has been laid out in detail in the Financial Monitoring Report approved by Cabinet on 15 November; identifying that with planned action we can reduce the overspend to £0.428m. In summary, I have every confidence in our Officers that they can bring the budget back into balance as far as possible.

QUESTION 2

COUNCILLOR HEATHER KIDD will ask the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services.

Could the portfolio holder tell me

- i. How many local needs affordable houses have been built in rural areas since 2012 listed by year.
- ii. How many local needs affordable houses have been given planning permission since 2012 listed by year.
- iii. How many single plot affordable dwellings have been built in rural areas since 2012 listed by year.
- iv. How many single plot affordable dwellings have received planning permission and how many have been refused since this policy was first adopted.

In answer to the above questions I would like to use the definition of Rural Areas as villages where the total electorate is less than 3,000. These are affordable houses to rent or buy or both.

COUNCILLOR ROBERT MACEY the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services will reply:

Q i. How many local needs affordable houses have been built in rural areas since 2012 listed by year.

2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017 Q1
21	21	60	45	46	46

Q ii. How many local needs affordable houses have been given planning permission since 2012 listed by year.

2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017 Q1
170	123	177	225*	133	26

*Holyhead Rd (S'bury) Extra Care scheme for 85 units is in Bicton Parish.

Qiii. How many single plot affordable dwellings have been built in rural areas since 2012 listed by year.

2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017 Q1
19	20	15	20	17	1

Q iv. How many single plot affordable dwellings have received planning permission and how many have been refused since this policy was first adopted.

Planning Approval	401
Planning refusal	9

QUESTION 3

COUNCILLOR PAM MOSELEY will ask the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support

Could you answer the following questions relating to the use of agency employees by Shropshire Council in the 2017/18 financial year, excluding those who work in Shropshire Council's schools?

- i) what has been the total cost to the authority per month (for each calendar month of the current financial year to date) for agency staff?
- ii) how many individual agency staff members have been employed by Shropshire Council to date in this financial year; what is the average length of contract; and what is the longest period that any agency staff member working during this year has worked for the authority?
- iii) what is the total forecast expenditure for the entirety of this financial year on the salaries of agency staff?
- iv) how many agency social workers have been employed during this year?

COUNCILLOR STEVE CHARMLEY the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support will reply:

Agency staff have an important role in providing flexible and knowledgeable staff to teams who need extra support. When teams are undergoing service redesign or peaks in workflow or staff absence, temporary agency staff gives managers another resource to help deliver the necessary service function. Some of our teams are also facing areas of recruitment shortages, where it is difficult to attract permanent staff.

With the introduction of the Agency Worker Regulations in October 2011, temporary workers have the same employment terms and conditions as our permanent employees after 12 weeks of continuous employment in the same role.

We currently use Matrix SCM as our managed service provider, which is a portal for managers to advertise to a wide supply chain and manage the appointment and timesheets in an efficient manner. Not all placements are on Matrix, so the management information we have on these placements is not as detailed.

- i) what has been the total cost to the authority per month (for each calendar month of the current financial year to date) for agency staff?

Temporary Agency Staff Spend 2017/18							
April - September 2017	1	2	3	4	5	6	Grand Total
Matrix - Contracted Provider	£208,979	£245,083	£248,821	£417,974	£251,769	£295,034	£1,667,660
Maverick - Off Contract Spend	£26,594	£62,858	£66,910	£64,154	£106,375	£75,827	£402,718
Grand Total	£235,573	£307,940	£315,731	£482,128	£358,145	£370,861	£2,070,378

- ii) how many individual agency staff members have been employed by Shropshire Council to date in this financial year;

There have been 202 total placements through Matrix, of which 63 have ended. We are unable to give a breakdown of roles employed outside of Matrix.

what is the average length of contract;

The median length of placements through Matrix is 34 weeks

what is the longest period that any agency staff member working during this year has worked for the authority?

The longest active placement is currently 111.

- iii) what is the total forecast expenditure for the entirety of this financial year on the salaries of agency staff?

Current straightline forecast is £4.1 million

- iv) how many agency social workers have been employed during this year?"

94 through Matrix

Job Title & Manager	No of Agency Workers Apr-Nov
Best Interests Assessor	19
Early Help Social Worker	1
Qualified Social Worker	42
Senior Social Worker	1
Service Manager	2
Social Worker	25
Team Manager	4
Grand Total	94

QUESTION 4

COUNCILLOR STUART WEST will ask the following question to the Leader

In recognising that, following the very welcome recent Ofsted report, Shropshire Councils Children's Services are now in the top 30% nationally and that all of those involved should be congratulated on this achievement. Does the Leader also recognise the fine work undertaken by staff and partners in many other areas? For instance, on delayed transfer of care, Shropshire Council's Adult Social Care is the 2nd best performing authority within the West Midlands.

In respect of the proportion of adults with a learning disability in paid employment, Shropshire Council are within the top performing authority for this measure. This measure is important for health and wellbeing of people with learning disabilities. Shropshire is at 13%, the West Midlands is 4.2% and all of England 57%. Shropshire is therefore ranked 12th out of 152 local authorities.

In respect of the proportion of the adults with a learning disability who live in their own home or with family, Shropshire Council are within the 2nd quartile performing authorities for this measure. This measure is important for health and wellbeing for people with learning disabilities. Shropshire is at 83.3%, the West Midlands 70.3% and all of England 76.2%. Shropshire is ranked 56th out of 152 local authorities.

As the Leader will know, the Care Quality Commission publish the latest rating for social care providers each year. These include residential homes, nursing homes and domiciliary care providers. The quality of care provision within Shropshire is generally rated good, and no fewer than 91% of providers good or outstanding. Shropshire is among the best for the proportion of Council Tax and Business Rates collected.

Finally, in England only Bath and North East Somerset have a lower teenage conception rate than Shropshire, and Shropshire is amongst the best for both male and female life expectancy.

Will the Leader join me in recognising the good outcomes achieved by staff in these, and the many other areas of the Council's activities and services, and offer the Council's thanks during this season of goodwill.

COUNCILLOR PETER NUTTING the Leader, will reply:

I am delighted to join you in recognising the achievements of the Council across a range of services we provide. I was also very pleased that when I met the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, the Rt Hon Savid Javid MP, he congratulated Members and Officers of the Council for the high quality, low cost services we deliver. He said we are an example to others for doing so well with the funds we receive.

I am ambitious to inspire us to do even better and for us to become more self-sufficient so that services can be sustained. I am confident that the Conservative Group will deliver this.

I am very grateful to all of the Members and staff of the Council for the great work that we do. I hope everyone enjoys a well-deserved break over Christmas and recognise that many of our vital services work through regardless to keep our communities safe.

QUESTION 5

COUNCILLOR ANDY BODDINGTON will ask the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services

- a) How much plastic that is collected for recycling is incinerated and how much of this is black plastic? (Tonnage and % of all plastics and of black plastics collected from households). What plans does the council have for reducing this?
- b) A significant contributor to litter on residential streets is plastic blowing out of recycling boxes on collection day. What plans does the Council have for introducing wheelie bins or other sealed containers to reduce this?
- c) Does the Council intend to introduce charges for collecting green waste? What impact will this have on recycling rates?

COUNCILLOR ROBERT MACEY the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services will reply:

- a) On average 3.5%, about 400 tonnes, of the material collected in the kerbside boxes is rejected by the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) and sent to an adjacent plant where it is burned to generate electricity. This includes material that cannot be recycled, material that could be recycled but has become contaminated, and material which cannot be sorted effectively (mainly black plastic). The composition of the rejects is not broken down so we cannot provide an exact tonnage or percentage of plastic or black plastic.

Black plastic is a nationwide issue and the solutions are in the hands of manufacturers and MRF operators. Both groups are working on this. It is already possible to produce black plastic which the existing MRF technology can sort, but the two groups have yet to agree on how this material should be used and the exact specification.

In Shropshire our approach to black plastic is driven by the fact that it does not contaminate other material and evidence that concern over how to deal with it has put people off separating any plastics out for recycling. Our crews are instructed not to reject boxes with black plastic as overall this will lead to a

higher quantity of recyclable plastic being collected. However, we do not list it as being recycled on our leaflets as we do not want to mislead people.

- b) Plastic has been collected from boxes for the last five years and while some material is blown out of the boxes, litter tonnages before and after the service launch do not suggest that there is a significant impact. Generally, residents do act responsibly and stack boxes or use other methods to prevent this, particularly in windy conditions.

The introduction of wheeled bins for recycling was discussed with Veolia before the rollout of the new recycling service in 2016. However, the cost of around £600,000 p.a. could not be justified due to other budget pressures. The vehicles that Veolia have purchased for the new service can operate efficiently with bins, so if the opportunity arises in the future we can make that change. We will continue to look for a cost effective approach to resolving this issue.

- c) It is true that green waste collection is not a statutory duty and many other councils have introduced a charge to cover this. As with any other service we monitor and discuss the approach of others to decide if it is something which Shropshire should consider. At this time no decisions have been made on whether to introduce such a scheme.

The impact on the recycling rate would be determined by the proportion of total garden waste presented by the residents who take part in the scheme and the choices made by those who don't. The experience of other Councils that have introduced a charge suggest that there are three routes for the garden waste to no longer be collected

- Delivered to Household Recycling Centres – no impact on recycling rate, different delivery point
- Residual waste bins – negative impact on recycling rate as this is removed from the composting tonnage and added to the disposal side
- Home composting – positive impact as it reduces the total amount of waste against which the recycling rate is calculated.

Modelling indicates a likely reduction of between 1 and 3.5 percentage points in the recycling and composting rate if charges were made for collecting garden waste i.e. the current Shropshire rate of around 54% would fall to somewhere between 50.5% and 53%. However, evaluation of this initiative would also include ways of increasing dry recycling and food waste composting to mitigate this.

QUESTION 6

COUNCILLOR ROGER EVANS will ask the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services

Can Council be informed how much in each of the years since it was introduced has Shropshire Council collected in CIL payments and how much has been spent in each of these years on various projects.

What is the balance held by Shropshire Council as at 1st December please?

COUNCILLOR ROBERT MACEY the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services will reply:

The current way that CIL revenue is allocated geographically means that, although the global amount of unspent CIL seems significant (c. £10 million), it is spread across a very large number of parishes, with two-thirds of parishes accruing less than £50,000 to date;

Given the above, it has taken some time to accumulate sufficient CIL revenue to fund appropriate infrastructure (which often requires significant sums) **which explains why there has been a lower level of spend to date.**

CIL Revenue has currently been raised from development in 61% of Shropshire's Parish and Town Councils. (To date 9 Town and Parish Councils have spent some of their Neighbourhood Fund on locally important projects, mostly on carparks, street lighting and recreation facilities. In addition Shropshire Council have agreed to spend some of the remaining CIL money within 2 other Parish Council areas.)

In addition to the CIL which has been spent, a further £4.6m is already allocated to specific projects, mainly to transport improvements in Shrewsbury.

In terms of figures being reported, an annual summary of CIL revenue is regularly published here: <http://shropshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/community-infrastructure-levy-cil/distribution-of-cil-payments/> and we understand that the last update was in Jan / Feb 2017, but we are about to upload the very latest version.

SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) SUMMARY 2012/13 ONWARDS				
	Balance Brought Forward As At 1 st April £	Payments Received £	Funds Applied £	Balance Carried Forward As At 31 st March £
2012/13	-	131,987.89	(6,599.40)	125,388.49
2013/14	125,388.49	580,854.00	(29,042.73)	677,199.76
2014/15	677,199.76	1,711,480.59	(103,644.24)	2,285,036.11
2015/16	2,285,036.11	3,902,563.30	(405,998.61)	5,781,600.80
2016/17	5,781,600.80	5,099,082.52	(666,887.43)	10,213,795.89
2017/18	10,213,795.89			

QUESTION 7

COUNCILLOR ROGER EVANS will ask the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support

How many contracts have been commissioned by Shropshire Council in each of the last three financial years where present staff have been transferred and so subject to the TUPE regulations?

How many (former) staff were subject to TUPE in each of the last three financial years.

Were any known vacancies included in these transfers and if so how many were there in each of the last three financial years.

What action was included in these contracts to ensure any recruitment of staff to fill these known vacancies were employed on terms similar to those who were subject to the TUPE transfer terms and conditions.

COUNCILLOR STEPHEN CHARMLEY the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support will reply:

How many contracts have been commissioned by Shropshire Council in each of the last three financial years where present staff have been transferred and so subject to the TUPE regulations?

How many (former) staff were subject to TUPE in each of the last three financial years.

Financial Year	Corporate		Schools	
	Total TUPE Post count	Teams TUPE transferred	Total TUPE post count	School count transferred
2014/15	70	11	549	13
2015/16	151	26	249	14
2016/17	189	26	740	25

Notes:

- Multiple teams may form one TUPE transfer
- TUPE in Schools may occur in 3 incidents in Schools on academisation, transfer of cleaning and catering staff to Shire Services or an external provider - we do not hold information centrally relating to the TUPE transfer destination
- All posts counts may contain multiple post holders.
- The above information may be a mix of 'commissioned' and 'other' TUPE transfers (other including where contracts are lost i.e. Shire Services)

Were any known vacancies included in these transfers and if so how many were there in each of the last three financial years.

Unknown.

What action was included in these contracts to ensure any recruitment of staff to fill these known vacancies were employed on terms similar to those who were subject to the TUPE transfer terms and conditions.

External contractors would be need to engage new staff of its own terms and conditions and in this context the Council could not require the new provider to fill vacancies on terms similar to existing Council terms.

QUESTION 8

COUNCILLOR ANDY BODDINGTON will ask the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Finance

- a) How much of the £1,308,000 Shropshire Council was allocated for 2017/18 under the discretionary business rate relief scheme had been distributed as of 1 December 2017.
- b) What criteria were used to allocate this money and when did distribution commence?
- c) What is the council's estimate of how many businesses eligible for all forms of business rate relief have not applied for relief at 1 December 2017 (number and percentage by category of relief)?

COUNCILLOR DAVID MINNERY the Portfolio Holder for Finance will reply:

- a) We initially awarded £1,324,278 relief to 1,000 businesses identified as qualifying in line with the Council's criteria below. As at 28 November 2017 we had awarded £1,295,666 to 987 businesses. This has reduced due to RV changes, businesses vacating, and nine businesses sending the relief back because they did not want it.
- b) The main points of relief scheme devised by Shropshire Council are as follows:-
 - For the financial year 2017-2018 the relief has been set at 87% of any rates increase compared to the 2016-2017 financial year;
 - Aimed at occupied hereditaments with a Rateable Value of between £15,000 and £199,999 inclusive;
 - Charities and national businesses are excluded from receiving the relief;
 - Relief will end when a hereditament becomes unoccupied;
 - Relief is not transferred to subsequent new occupiers;
 - This new relief will only be awarded after any other relief entitlements have been applied;
 - Any business that qualifies for the relief that has a reduction in RV with effect from 1 April 2017 will have the new discretionary rate relief reduced accordingly, potentially to zero.

We started distributing the relief in October 2017.

- c) As these reliefs are awarded under discretionary powers, businesses should make an application for relief. Applications were sent to those businesses identified as potentially qualifying for supporting small business rate relief, and support for pub relief. Applications were sent in July 2017 but responses were initially quite low. Reminders were sent in respect of these reliefs and staff continue to chase the remaining businesses to draw their attention to the relief.

As take up of these reliefs had been low, we took a different approach to awarding the discretionary business rate relief. For this, we awarded the relief to businesses identified as qualifying for the relief, and sent an amended bill showing the reduction, with a covering letter that explained our scheme and stated that if the business did not want to apply for the relief then they should advise us within two weeks. So far, nine businesses have come back to us to say that they do not wish to have the relief.

Total value of relief awarded for **Supporting Small Business**

Relief awarded as at 28 November 2017	= £202,855.51
Number of qualifying businesses	= 166
Number of applications sent	= 199
Percentage	= 83.4%

Estimate total value of relief awarded for **Support for Pubs**

Relief awarded as at 28 November 2017	£174,592.05
Number of qualifying businesses	= 212
Number of applications sent	= 249
Percentage	= 85.1%

Estimate total value of relief awarded for **Discretionary Business Rate Relief**

Relief awarded as at 28 November 2017	= £1,295,666
Number of qualifying businesses	= 987
Number of applications sent	= 1,000
Percentage	= 98.7%

QUESTION 9

COUNCILLOR DAVE TREMELLEN will ask the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services

As the Planning Task & Finish Group chaired by Councillor Steve Davenport appears to have been abandoned, would the portfolio holder with responsibility for Planning confirm what the situation is regarding its current status?

And if it is the case that Council Leader Peter Nutting's declaration to Full Council of his intention to retain three planning committees has, indeed, led to

that Task & Finish Group being abandoned, given that we have been led to believe by earlier Planning Task & Finish Groups that the cost of a decision by committee is eight times that of an officer-delegated decision, could either the portfolio holder responsible for planning or Councillor Nutting himself justify that decision by providing Council with the calculations on which that decision was based?

COUNCILLOR ROBERT MACEY the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services will reply:

The delivery of an effective and efficient Planning Service across Shropshire is central to the delivery of economic growth, one of the Council's key objectives.

Planning will always be a service that generates a lot of interest - from the development sector, from communities as well as key stakeholders and the role of planning is to mediate interests that sometimes conflict with one another to facilitate sustainable outcomes. Most applications for planning permission in Shropshire are ultimately granted, whether by Planning Committee or those delegated to officers for consideration.

Given the importance of and interest in the planning process Members have convened through recent task and finish groups, to look at planning processes, performance and committees. Our key challenge has been in delivering processes efficiently and consistently across the large rural geography of Shropshire. The cost of service delivery is of course a relevant factor and an application reported to Committee will inevitably cost more to process than an item delegated to officers for consideration. In terms of costs it is perhaps more important to recognise that planning performance is dependent not only on the planning team, but also on the resource and capacity of internal and external consultees to the process. Failure at any point in the process can contribute to delays and uncertainty which does not benefit the applicant or those with an interest in a planning application. This was a key point endorsed by the last Task & Finish group in a report presented to Enterprise & Growth Scrutiny on 23rd March this year.

Planning is a service area where there may be perceptions about performance, quality or process arising of the different and potentially conflicting sector interests highlighted earlier. It is for this reason I have previously reported to Council some headline and generally very positive performance figures to provide the facts of the matter.

In terms of the number and delivery of planning committees this remains an option for the Council to revisit in the future and this was also endorsed by the task and finish group in March. Again I suggest that if changes are made to the number of planning committees or how these function in practice, that this assessment should be informed by evidence and what works best for Shropshire rather than by perception or speculation.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
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