

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

Date: Friday, 11 May 2018

Committee:
Communities Overview Committee

Date: Monday, 21 May 2018

Time: 2.00 pm

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

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

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

Members of Communities Overview Committee

Cecilia Motley

Nick Hignett

Andy Boddington

Ted Clarke

Rob Gittins

Roger Hughes

Vivienne Parry

Keith Roberts

Leslie Winwood

Tina Woodward

Your Committee Officer is:

Amanda Holyoak Committee Officer

Tel: 01743 257714

Email: amanda.holyoak@shropshire.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 Election of Chairman

2 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

3 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

4 Declarations of Interest

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.

5 Minutes of Last Meeting (Pages 1 - 4)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2018 as a correct record, attached marked: 5

6 Public Question Time

To receive any public questions or petitions from the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. The deadline for this meeting is 2.00 pm on Friday 18 May 2018.

7 Member Question Time

To receive any questions of which members of the Council have given notice. The deadline for this meeting is 2.00 pm on Friday 18 May 2018.

8 Preliminary Report on the Local Joint Committees Task and Finish Group (Pages 5 - 8)

Report attached marked: 8

9 Update on Environmental Maintenance Grants (Pages 9 - 14)

Report attached marked: 9

10 Work Programme Update (Pages 15 - 20)

Report attached marked: 10



Communities
Overview Committee

21 May 2018

Item

Public

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON
23 APRIL 2018
2.00 - 3.15 PM**

Responsible Officer: Amanda Holyoak
Email: amanda.holyoak@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257714

Present

Councillor Cecilia Motley (Chairman)
Councillors Nick Hignett (Vice Chairman), Andy Boddington, Ted Clarke, Vivienne Parry,
Keith Roberts, Leslie Winwood and Tina Woodward

34 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies were received from Councillor Rob Gittins.

35 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Councillor Les Winwood reported that he was a Trustee of Bridgnorth Community Transport Group.

36 Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2018

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2018 were confirmed as a correct record.

37 Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

38 Member Question Time

There were no questions from members.

39 Community Transport

James Willocks, Transport Commissioning Group Manager, and Chris Purcell, Principal Review and Procurement Officer were welcomed to the meeting.

The Chair said that at this stage the purpose of the meeting was to gather information on community transport and on the potential outcome of a current Department for Transport consultation on the Shropshire Community Transport Groups.

Officers provided a presentation summarising the report circulated to members (copies of report and presentation attached to signed minutes). The presentation covered: the role of community transport in providing a key safety net in the county; how community transport operated; maps showing the current local bus service network, location of the population and significant gaps between these; the Community Transport Consortium; Community Transport Grant Payments; and the potential outcome of the current Department for Transport Section 19/22 consultation.

The Committee heard that community transport groups had not received an inflationary price rise to their grants from Shropshire Council in many years and had looked for opportunities for development to offset this, particularly as for many of them activity had increased significantly. They had bid for and now operated some contracted routes, such as school transport and old Shropshire Link routes. They were providing an excellent service and was not for profit activity that subsidised other community activities.

The Transport Commissioning Manager explained that although community transport groups operate within a light-touch regulatory framework compared to commercial operators, they had nonetheless been bidding for, winning and operating contracted council services such as school transport. This was because the Department for Transport had until recently viewed such groups as being exempt from the full suite of commercial regulation as they were non-profit organisations. This resulted in a legal challenge from some commercial operators, who felt that community transport groups were winning contracts unfairly against operators burdened by full commercial regulation.

As a result of the legal action, the Department for Transport recently issued a decision notice that confirmed that any community transport group that undertook commercial contract work would be subject to full commercial regulation, even if it operated as a non-profit organisation. This had led to concern in particular for three of the largest community transport groups in Shropshire, all of whom operate contracted services for Shropshire Council. If they were not able to operate these routes there would be a funding shortfall which would bring into doubt their operation.

Members heard that Shropshire's unique geography meant that community transport was not displacing commercial operators, who were in fact understanding and supportive of community transport. The Committee were concerned that the consultation was the government seeking a blanket solution which would be completely unacceptable in Shropshire. They heard the Transport Select Committee had already suggested that the proposal was misguided and did not anticipate the potential impact.

It was anticipated that the outcome of the consultation would be known late summer and it would then be known if it would be necessary to retender contracts held by community transport operators to see if any other bidders were interested before they could be awarded. The burdens of commercial operation would be significant and it was highly unlikely that volunteers would be secured and could mean potentially having to employ staff.

Members asked if Town and Parish Councils had been directly involved in the consultation. The committee felt that they should be alerted to it as soon as possible.

The discussion also went on to cover why some organisations sat outside of the Community Transport Consortium, whether apportioning funding differently could help ensure sustainability of community transport and if any other funding revenue streams could be available if the contracts had to be given up. These were all areas a Task and Finish Group would need to consider and it was confirmed that the Group would seek to hear directly from community transport organisations.

Officers reported that help would be provided in helping community transport organisations with their sustainability whether these contracts had to be given up or not. Adult Social Care, the Clinical Commissioning Group and other partners were being drawn into these discussions and asked to assess the impact of the loss of community transport - which often enabled people to stay independent in their homes.

Attention was also drawn to the great benefits experienced by volunteer drivers through social contact and purpose. A recent report commissioned by Community Transport Consortium had shown that annual value was in excess of £0.5m and for every £1 invested, £12 was obtained in social value.

It was agreed that:

Town and Parish Councils be alerted to the consultation as soon as possible, in advance of their annual meetings

The Committee recommend that a response be made to the consultation from the Council emphasising that regulation proposed was likely to result in unintended consequence of community transport organisations ceasing to be sustainable and that this would have a severely detrimental impact and result in increasing costs to the public sector.

That a Task and Finish Group of seven members be set up to consider how to improve sustainability of community transport in the medium to long term and address the outcomes of the DfT consultation, with the work to start in early summer, ahead of the consultation outcome.

Signed (Chairman)

Date:

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Communities Overview
Committee

21st May 2018

Item

Local Joint Committees Review Task & Finish Group Interim Report

Responsible officer

Kate Garner, Locality Commissioning Manager

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[01743 252344](tel:01743 252344)

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This paper provides an update on the work of the Review of Local Joint Committees Task and Finish Group

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report, which is provided for information only.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Local Joint Committees (LJCs) have been meeting and providing a forum for public engagement since 2009 and provide the structure for local partnership working and locality commissioning. There are now 23 LJCs across Shropshire organised and facilitated by the Community Enablement Team with some support from Legal & Democratic Services.
- 3.2 The core membership of the LJCs as stated in the Constitution is Shropshire councillors and town or parish councillors. Representatives of local organisations can be co-opted into membership but do not have voting rights
- 3.3 Currently, the LJC Constitution states that each LJC will hold a minimum of 2 public meetings each year and can organise as many as desired over and above this number. Each public meeting is preceded by a planning/working meeting and many LJCs are choosing to hold a greater number of working meetings than public meetings to benefit from meeting as a place based partnership working through specific issues

Changes were last made to LJC geographies in December 2014 and these went

- 3.4 some way to align LJC and Place Plan area boundaries. These changes also saw a reduction in the number of LJC's through the conversion of some to Neighbourhood Forums and the merging of others.

From 2009 to 2014 each LJC had its own grant funding budget and received

- 3.5 applications from voluntary and community groups in its area that members considered and made recommendations on.

A number of LJC's currently oversee the locality commissioning of youth activities –

- 3.6 making recommendations and monitoring delivery alongside CEOs acting as commissioners.

Across the county there is now a range of approaches to the design and delivery of

- 3.7 LJC's and local evolution has resulted in them looking very different from area to area. In some cases the LJC Constitution is not being adhered to.

The Communities Scrutiny Overview Committee met on 27th November 2017 and

- 3.8 confirmed the scope and terms of reference for a Task & Finish Group to review the current purpose and delivery of the Local Joint Committees.

Task & Finish Group Workshops

4.0

The T & F Group held half-day workshops on 18th and 27th April 2018. The summary

- 4.1 of the information shared with and discussed by members at the workshops is attached as Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

At the first workshop members from a number of LJC's, with the Community

- 4.2 Enablement Officers supporting these committees were invited to give feedback on the design and delivery of their LJC.

Summary of the key points from the workshops

5.0

- 5.1 There is an opportunity for a new model of joint local meetings to be aligned with the purpose and boundaries of the Place Plan areas.

- 5.2 There is an opportunity to pick up the feedback from the recent council Peer Challenge Review and respond to a recommendation to strengthen the relationship between Shropshire Council and local councils

- 5.3 The future resource and role of the Community Enablement Team needs to be confirmed to inform the design and delivery of any future model.

- 5.4 There is an opportunity for pooling financial resources within an area, e.g. individual small grant pots.

- There is an opportunity for co-ordinating and using the resources of an area, e.g.
- 5.5 the corporate social responsibility of businesses, voluntary activity, and social action to get things done locally.

6.0 Agreed next steps from the workshops

- 6.1 Cllr Cecilia Motley – chair of the T & F Group will discuss the opportunity described at 5.1 with Cllr Gwilym Butler - chair of the Place Overview Scrutiny to assess the potential for aligning the different Scrutiny discussions.

List of Background Papers Terms of Reference Shropshire Local Joint Committees Task and Finish Group November 2017
Cabinet Member Cllr Joyce Barrow, Portfolio Holder for Communities
Local Members All Members
Appendices Appendix 1: Communities Overview Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group Workshop 1 Presentation Appendix 2: Communities Overview Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group Workshop 2 Presentation



Communities Overview
Committee

21st May 2018

Item

Environmental Maintenance Grant Programme Update

Responsible officer

Kate Garner, Locality Commissioning Manager

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[01743 252344](tel:01743 252344)

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This paper provides an update on the development of Shropshire Council's Environmental Maintenance Grant Programme.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report, which is provided for information only.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Shropshire Council's Highways and Transport team has operated the Environmental Maintenance Grant (EMG) programme for the last 8 years. The programme has operated successfully and is seen as delivering a number of benefits.
- 3.2 The recipients of the grants are overwhelmingly rural parish councils and a small number of town councils. There is one community group using a grant to enable local residents to carry out litter picks and environmental tidy-ups.
- 3.3 At its meeting of 4th September 2017, Shropshire Council's Communities Overview Committee confirmed terms of reference for a time limited Task and Finish Group to review the EMG programme.
- 3.4 The group's considerations were made in the context of Shropshire Council's extremely challenging financial position. Members of the Task and Finish Group wanted to consider if continuing the grant programme was a sustainable position at a time of declining revenue budgets, and what added, social and preventative impact is enabled through the investment of the grant.

- 3.5 The work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group and the recommendations confirmed at its workshop on 16th November 2017 were confirmed at a meeting of the Communities Overview Committee on 27th November 2017. The recommendations from the committee were made to Cabinet on 21st March 2018 where they were agreed.
- 3.6 The Task and Finish Group recommended that the programme should continue with the following changes to its design and delivery:
- **Changes to eligible activity** - The activity eligible for funding from the programme should be the activity that brings most added value to the delivery of Shropshire Council's Highways term maintenance contract. Highways officers should advise what this activity should be.
 - **Application eligibility** - The eligible applicants should be limited to Shropshire's rural town and parish councils. Urban town councils a population of over 10,000 should be ineligible to apply.
 - **Value for money and incentivising added value** - The grant should not be used to top up core budgets but should be used for discrete maintenance purposes. Applications should be scored according to how they demonstrate value for money and provide added value to the core funding and activity. Examples of VFM and added value should be
 - Councils demonstrating that they are committed to their effective delivery of environmental maintenance works in their areas by contributing to or matching grant funding.
 - Demonstrating that councils are working together to provide economies of scale and reduce costs, e.g. multiple parishes let 1 contract.
 - The design of activity that clearly creates social value, the appropriate use of volunteers to add value to the core activity.
 - **Design of the funding programme** - Funding decisions should be made for a three year period, for example 2018 - 2021. This will reduce bureaucracy associated with the application process and provide more time for monitoring and evaluation of applications. It should also enable local councils to let three year contracts that offer greater value for money with confidence. It is recommended that the EMG programme is reviewed in year 2 and a decision then made about the future of the scheme, from the end of year 3. If the decision is made to end the EMG programme at this point, a 12 month notice period should be given.
 - **Annual value of the funding programme** - The annual value of the programme should be £75,000. There will be no increase to this amount.
 - **Value of individual grants** - The maximum value of individual grants should be £1,500 per year. There should be no increase to this amount.
 - **Application criteria, guidance notes and monitoring** - The guidance notes accompanying the application process should be reviewed and rewritten to

ensure that there is absolute clarity about the design and delivery of the grant funded activity. There should be a particular focus on health and safety. This should also include a more robust approach to monitoring the funded activity through the completion and submission of an annual report from each recipient, and a process for this should be designed and implemented. A process should be put in place to ensure appropriate signing off of the annual reports.

- **Consultation on proposed changes to the EMG programme** - A recommendation should be made to Cabinet that it approves the delivery of a six week consultation period in early 2018 on the recommended changes to the EMG programme based on previous Committee Overview Committee reports.
- **Delegated authority** - A recommendation should be made to Cabinet to delegate authority to the Head of Infrastructure and Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport to implement the revised EMG programme detailed specification following the consultation.

3.6 Within the 2017/18 EMG application paperwork Shropshire Council advised potential applicants that the EMG programme would be reviewed and that the outcome of this review would be consulted on. A consultation on the proposed redesigned scheme based on the recommendations made by Cabinet is taking place between 9th April and 21st May 2018. This consultation is attached as Appendix 1.

List of Background Papers
Cabinet report from the Communities Overview Committee on the Environmental Maintenance Grant Programme, 21 st March 2018
Cabinet Member
Highways and Transport
Local Members
All Members
Appendices
Recommendations from Communities Overview Committee task and finish group on the Environmental Maintenance Grant Programme

Appendix 1

Consultation on Shropshire Council's Environmental Maintenance Grant Programme

Q1

Changes to eligible activity criteria

The activity eligible for funding by the Environmental Maintenance Grant will be as detailed below and will take place on Shropshire Council owned land and assets only.

Eligible activity	Comments
Grass tidy	Risk assessment must be undertaken and appropriate control measures implemented. Only if it is an area not currently being maintained on behalf of SC either to a standard or on instruction
Weed control	Risk assessment must be undertaken and appropriate control measures implemented. e.g. pulling ragwort, - not to involve the use of chemicals
Clear leaves / debris from grids	Risk assessment must be undertaken and appropriate control measures implemented.
Clear vegetation from culverts	Risk assessment must be undertaken and appropriate control measures implemented.
Straighten and clean road signs	Risk assessment must be undertaken and appropriate control measures implemented.
Remove obstructing tree and hedge growth	Risk assessment must be undertaken and appropriate control measures implemented.
Litter picking	Risk assessment must be undertaken and appropriate control measures implemented.
Street sweeping	Risk assessment must be undertaken and appropriate control measures implemented. Footways only
Maintain street furniture	Risk assessment must be undertaken and appropriate control measures implemented. Not to include electrical works.
Maintain closed church yards	Risk assessment must be undertaken and appropriate control measures implemented.

Q2

Applicant eligibility

The eligible applicants will be rural town and parish councils. Councils can work in partnership with local community groups to submit applications. Town councils with a population of over £10,000 will not be eligible.

Q3

Providing value for money and added value

The total cost of the activity to be delivered will have to be funded in part by the applicant to be eligible for support from the EMG programme – the total cost cannot

be funded wholly by the grant, for example if the total cost of the activity to be delivered is £1,000, an application to the EMG programme could be for £500 with the additional £500 coming from the applicant.

Applications should demonstrate how the delivery of the activity is providing economies of scale, e.g. local councils working together and pooling resources to let one contract.

Applications should demonstrate how the delivery of the activity creates social, economic or environmental value, e.g. the involvement of volunteer time to add value to the core activity

Q4

Design of the funding programme

Funding decisions will be made for a three year period with annual reporting and monitoring. A review will be undertaken in the second year.

Q5

Annual value of the funding programme

The annual value of the programme will be £75,000.

Q6

Value of individual grants

The maximum value of annual individual grants will be £1,500.

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Communities Overview
Committee

21st May 2018

Item

Communities Overview Committee draft Work Programme 2018 – 2019

Responsible officer

Danial Webb, Overview and Scrutiny Officer

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[01743 258509](tel:01743 258509)

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This paper presents a draft work programme for the Communities Overview Committee. It also includes strategic priorities for the committee, as identified during the development of the Overview and Scrutiny strategic work programme 2018 – 2019.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:

- note the identified strategic priorities
- agree the ongoing work programme and
- suggest other topics for the committee to consider.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Each year, Shropshire Council's overview and scrutiny committees jointly review, co-ordinate and update their work programmes for the year ahead. This review allows overview and scrutiny to ensure that:

- its work programme takes into account Shropshire Council's strategic priorities; and
- effective arrangements are in place to look at topics that are relevant to more than one committee.

- 3.2 Shropshire Council's strategic priorities are contained within its corporate plan. This plan, which lists the council's strategic priorities and medium-term objectives for the next two years in a strategic action plan, provides an ideal basis on which overview and scrutiny can plan the strategic elements of its work programme for the year ahead.

- 3.3 At a recent work programme planning session, overview and scrutiny committee members, portfolio holders, elected members and officers used the strategic action plan to identify a shortlist of strategic priorities for each committee to incorporate into their work programme for the year ahead. This work will provide each committee with a core strategic work programme, contributing to overview and scrutiny's scrutiny of the council's strategic priorities. Appendix 1 includes the strategic priorities identified for the Communities Overview Committee
- 3.4 A meeting of overview and scrutiny chairs and members of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee on 11 May 2018, after this report has been published, will confirm the core strategic work programme.
- 3.5 In addition, the committee has other topics, which are not necessarily strategic priorities, which it will wish to consider during the course of the year. Some of these topics have already been agreed by the committee. These are listed as the committee's agreed work programme in Appendix 2.
- 3.6 Members are therefore asked to:
- note the identified strategic priorities
 - agree the ongoing work programme and
 - suggest other topics for the committee to consider..

Background Papers Shropshire Council Corporate Plan and Strategic Action Plan
Cabinet Member Communities Highways and Transport
Local Members All Members
Appendices Identified priorities from the Shropshire Council Corporate Plan Strategic Action Plan Proposed Communities Overview Committee Work Programme 2018

Appendix 1

Overview and Scrutiny work programme 2018 to 2019

Identified priorities from the Shropshire Council Corporate Plan Strategic Action Plan

Possible Topic	Committees identifying this as a priority	Comments
Community Hubs	Performance Management	Opportunity to consider the development of plans for the creation of five Community Hubs.
	Communities	The Communities Overview Committee has agreed to set up a task and finish group to focus on community transport.
Housing development by the Council	Performance Management	Scrutinise progress with the development of housing that incorporates technology to enable people to remain in their own homes and live independently, and delivers housing appropriate to meet needs. The People Overview Committee has identified supported housing a priority for its work programme.
	Communities	
	People	
Transforming the Council – Digital Transformation and Workforce	Performance Management	Once new systems and operating structures are implemented there is the opportunity to track and scrutinise the delivery of programme benefits against the expected profile.
	Communities	
Opportunities for Looked After Children to achieve their potential	Communities	Scrutiny of the implementation of the Looked After Children Plan and the delivery of improved outcomes.

Possible Topic	Committees identifying this as a priority	Comments
Place Shaping – maintaining a clean and attractive environment	Communities Place	Considering the development of the new Local Transport Plan and how it relates to the delivery of the Council's priorities, improving air and water quality, and progress with waste management and recycling including the impact and benefits arising from the Energy Recovery Facility and other developments to help manage waste and reduce landfill.
Place Shaping – balancing housing and the economic growth.	Communities Place	Consider how housing development and economic growth activity are considered together and progress hand in hand, ensuring that the right homes are built in the right places for the workforce for current and future employers.

Appendix 2: Proposed Communities Overview Committee Work Programme 2018

Topic	Intended outcomes/ objectives	What information is required?	Who needs to be heard from?	Expected impact/ added value	Start date of the work
Findings of the Local Joint Committees task and finish group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To discuss the findings of the Local Joint Committees task and finish group. To agree a way forward for the committee's work. 	<p>Report from supporting officer</p> <p>Verbal update from group chair</p>	Community Enablement Team	To help ensure Shropshire Council has appropriate and meaningful local governance.	21 May 2018
Update on the Environment Maintenance Grant task and finish group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To receive an update on the Environment Maintenance Grant, following the committee's task and finish group on the matter. 	Verbal update	Community Enablement Team	Contributing to cost-effective local environmental maintenance.	21 May 2018
Flood risk management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand the council's role in flood risk management. To understand the risks to transport and the economy resulting from flooding. To scrutinise the role of flood risk management in place shaping. 		Environmental Maintenance	Scrutiny of flood risk management to ensure effective arrangements.	16 July 2018
Community Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To create a task and finish group that considers options for the development of community transport in Shropshire. 		<p>Highways and Transport</p> <p>Local Community Transport Groups</p>		16 July 2018

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