



Environment and  
Services Scrutiny  
Committee

1<sup>st</sup> February 2016

2.00 pm

Item

**3**

Public

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2015  
2.00 PM - 3.50 AM**

**Responsible Officer:** Tim Ward  
Email: [tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk) Tel: 01743 257713

**Present**

Councillor Vince Hunt (Chairman)  
Councillors Peter Adams, Ted Clarke, Roger Hughes, Christian Lea, Pamela Moseley,  
Vivienne Parry and Arthur Walpole

**32 Apologies for absence and substitutions**

32.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nigel Hartin and Keith Roberts.

32.2 Councillor Hannah Fraser attended as substitute for Councillor Nigel Hartin.

**33 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

33.1 None were declared.

**34 Minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2015**

**34.1 RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2015 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**35 Public Question Time**

35.1 Two questions were received from members of the public;

- Mr B Wills of Quarry Swimming and Fitness Forum; and
- Mr D Kilby of the Shropshire Playing Field Association.

35.2 Mr B Wills of the Quarry Swimming and Fitness Forum asked the following questions and the written response was tabled.

**35.3 None of the options in the report show an increase in participation, Given that 75% of current users that go to the quarry complex live in and around the town centre. How and would the current users travel to an out of town facility?**

*Users of an edge of town facility would travel via car, foot, cycle or public transport in the same way that they travel to existing edge of town facilities.*

*The Council recognises the concerns raised by the Forum and that transport, access, carbon footprint, car parking etc. are key considerations within any future decision. The Council anticipates the need to do further detailed work on these areas*

**2. What the carbon miles/footprint impact will be when most people give up cycling and go by vehicular transport and how they balance this against a so called 'low cost' solution. Makes 'going green' seriously challenged.**

*As detailed above, the Council recognises the concerns raised by the Forum and that transport, access, carbon footprint, car parking etc. are key considerations within any future decision. The Council anticipates the need to do further detailed work on these areas*

**3. The new build options do not fulfil the "vision" at a time of austerity?**

*The new build options will all deliver the core vision and facility mix proposed within the recent consultation. In terms of capital costs all of the options are between £9,007m to £12, 808m excepting the refurbishment of the existing pool, which is considerably less expensive. However, from a revenue perspective the detailed modelling suggests that the largest saving (to the Council) comes from a new build and in particular from the co-location of new provision alongside existing facilities, i.e. at the Shrewsbury Sports Village or the Shrewsbury College.*

**4. What has been done around travel planning & congestion modelling?**

*As has been referenced above the Council recognises the concerns raised by the Forum and that transport, access, carbon footprint, car parking etc. are key considerations within any future decision. The Council anticipates the need to do further detailed work on these areas.*

35.4 Mr Wills stated that he would welcome the opportunity to present the Quarry and Swimming and Fitness Forum response document to the Committee at a future meeting.

35.5 Mr D Kilby of the Shropshire Playing Field Association asked the following questions and the written response was tabled.

**35.6 The Health and Wellbeing Board are developing wider physical activity strategy of which play will form a key strand within it, could someone provide more detail as to what this will entail and who will be responsible for putting this key play strand in place and then delivering it?**

*The wider Physical Activity Strategy is essentially pulling all of the key areas of work across the Council under this umbrella of which Play will be one area of it. The work*

*that is planned to be commissioned in 2016 will inform this particular strand. In terms of delivery it will involve colleagues from Leisure Services, Outdoor Partnerships and Planning Policy, but will also no doubt involve the wider Town & Parish Councils and in some instances the Voluntary & Community Sector.*

**2. Could someone provide me with details where I can access:**

- a. the public open space and recreation investment strategy and action plan;**
- b. the evidence to demonstrate participation by local parish and town councils has taken place to support this process;**

*Following the Scrutiny Committee in which this particular topic was discussed in developing a Play Strategy, Officers have since met and have pulled together a brief for a specialist Commissioner to undertake the Investment Strategy and Action Plan for the county.*

*It is anticipated that this brief will produce a Public Open Space and Recreational Investment Plan to identify and prioritise projects for inclusion within the 18 Place Plans, and to establish an up to date evidence base for the planned Local Plan Review. The Strategy will use previous PPG17 data for Shropshire produced by PMP in 2009.*

*The Investment Plan will also be informed by Shropshire Council, Local Joint Committees and relevant Town & Parish Councils to ascertain potential opportunities for enhanced and new provision relating to the relevant Place Plans and the use of CIL Funding in their area.*

*We are also looking to align this piece of work alongside a Playing Pitches Strategy (refresh) for the remaining 12 Place Plans (the first six Place Plans were undertaken in the summer – Shrewsbury, Whitchurch, Ludlow, Bridgnorth, Market Drayton & Oswestry).*

- c. where in this process have robust open space needs assessments been implemented across Shropshire as required by the national planning policy framework and lobbied for by Shropshire Playing Fields Association at the meeting in March?**

*In accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, Shropshire Council is continuing to assemble updated information about the need for public open space across Shropshire as a contribution to the evidence base for the forthcoming review of its Local Plan which will start during 2016. Updated information concerning local need for sports playing pitches for Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Market Drayton, Oswestry, Shrewsbury and Whitchurch has already provided as part of an update to the Council's Playing Pitch Action Plan Phase 1 and this information was used to update the relevant 'Place Plans' for these areas in May 2015. Phase 2 of this work is expected to start during 2016 and will be supplemented by further work to identify the need for additional play provision.*

*In the meantime, Shropshire Council has continued to negotiate substantial developer contributions towards play provision from new development schemes, including financial contributions towards play equipment in Market Drayton and Wem*

*and both land and substantial financial contributions towards play provision in Shrewsbury.*

35.7 Mr Kilby offered his assistance to Officers for the preparation of the Play Strategy.

35.8 Mr Kilby expressed concern regarding the Council's lack of a Play Strategy and needs assessment. He continued that he had further concerns relating to the Council's use of CIL funding to implement its Playing Pitch Strategy which concentrated on a limited number of predominantly male orientated sports and did not meet the needs of the wider community.

35.9 The Director for Commissioning responded that CIL funding for the Playing Pitch Strategy was a result of evidenced needs identified in Place Plans which were informed by local communities and Town and Parish Councils. He continued that the Playing Pitch Strategy would be aligned with the Play Strategy once it was developed.

### **36 Member Question Time**

36.1 There were no questions from Members.

### **37 Scrutiny of The Financial Strategy**

37.1 The Committee noted the content of the Financial Strategy but commented that without detail it was difficult to scrutinise the Strategy or anticipate its impact on services. The Director of Commissioning confirmed that this was a dynamic document and would be updated before being considered by Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2015 to include the most up to date figures available for 2016/17.

37.2 Members expressed concern regarding unintended consequences which were likely to arise from the protection of some services at the expense of others. Members commented that only having the finance to fund statutory requirements would preclude preventative work being undertaken. This approach could result in higher expenditure.

37.3 Members requested further information regarding what was included in the Price Inflation calculation in section 6.12. The Director of Commissioning agreed to provide this information.

37.4 The Chairman commented that the Committee already closely monitored all the areas within its remit and had been working closely with Officers where redesign work was being undertaken. Once more detail was known a meaningful Work Plan could be developed.

37.5 Members recognised the importance of the Big Conversation and hoped that there would be meaningful engagement from the public.

### **38 Review of DEFRA Recommendations on the Waste Contract**

38.1 The Contracts Manager (Waste Management) introduced the Review of DEFRA recommendations on the Waste Contract Management report. He drew Members'

attention to the only outstanding item; the production of the Contract Management Manual.

- 38.2 Members voiced concerns regarding the failure to complete the Contract Management Manual. They observed that this document was an essential tool in the implementation and provision of the service and without it the Committee were unable to assess if necessary actions had been undertaken at the correct time.
- 38.3 The Contract Manager (Waste Management) informed Members that he would be meeting with DEFRA representatives and would discuss whether they intended to restart work on a generic Contract Management Manual. It was intended that this would provide the framework for the Council's own document. He agreed to inform Members of the outcome of these discussions.
- 38.4 Members asked for further information on the impact of the staff reduction within the team. The Contracts Manager (Waste Management) confirmed that 4.4 full time equivalent staff posts remained in the team, one of which was the full time career development post. In response to a Member's query, he replied that there had formerly been 6 FTE posts associated with contract management, and that this reduction had been driven by the Council's unprecedented budget pressures. He confirmed that DEFRA were aware of the staff reduction and understood the Council's position. The Contracts Manager (Waste Management) outlined the provisions made for staff absences and workload management.
- 38.5 In response to Member's question, the Contracts Manager (Waste Management) confirmed that the problems with the IT systems had now been satisfactorily resolved and further problems were not anticipated.
- 38.6 Members requested information on the provision of new vehicles which would enable kerb side collection of waste cardboard. The Contracts Manager (Waste Management) confirmed that negotiations were ongoing with Veolia, and if these were successful, roll out of the new vehicles would take place in late 2016 or early 2017.

### **39 Update on the Provision of New Swimming Facilities in Shrewsbury**

- 39.1 The Local Commissioning Manager introduced the Shrewsbury Swimming Pool – Update report. Members noted that the work was on-going on the development of future swimming provision within Shrewsbury and it was noted that the public consultation period had been extended and there had been strong engagement with it from both the public and stakeholders. He continued that he was encouraged by the strong interest in the consultation as this should lead to robust outcomes.
- 39.2 Members were referred to pages 6 and 7 of the report where the Stakeholder Engagement and Main Comments were set out. He explained that more work needed to be undertaken with the stakeholders to draw together their comments. He continued that the information received had been rich and it was important to fully understand all the comments made, which may require the employment of specialists with technical expertise.

- 39.3 The Local Commissioning Manager confirmed that a report would be considered by Cabinet Members in Spring 2016.
- 39.4 A Member commented that the swimming pool had greater significance than just being a facility to enable swimming. He continued that relocation out of the town centre would have huge social and economic consequences as well as impacting on the character of the town. He continued that he had concerns that the consultants employed on the project did not show an understanding that 90% of people using the facility accessed it by foot or bike and that should be preserved. He queried the need for a large underground carpark, stating that encouraging car use would add to the traffic problems within the town centre. The Director of Commissioning stated that respondents to the consultation had raised these issues and they were being considered.
- 39.5 A Member asked whether consideration had been given to the increased number of students who would be resident in the town following the establishment of the University Centre Shrewsbury and their potential use of the pool. The Director of Commissioning responded that a recognised facilities planning model had been used to understand demand and this had factored in population growth. It was recognised that this data may need to be refreshed to align the input data with SAMdev proposals, and projected University Centre growth.
- 39.6 Members queried the financial predictions contained in the report and suggested that it was unrealistic to expect that all current gym members would transfer their membership to a location out of the town. The Director of Commissioning confirmed that the primary driver was swimming provision.
- 39.7 Members expressed concern that population growth projections contained within the report only went to 2026 and that it was unlikely that the pool would be completed until 2021. Members queried whether the proposed 2 pool model would be sufficient to meet demand should the population continue to grow past 2026. The Director of Commissioning explained that the report noted the requirement for more work on the financial projections. He continued that the report was aligned to SAMDev which went to 2026 and data beyond this point was not available. He added that he was confident that the facility would be completed before the 2021 date suggested by a Member.
- 39.8 In response to a Member's request the Director of Commissioning agreed to provide the raw data from the surveys, provided it did not conflict with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.
- 39.9 In reply to a Member's query about dates for alterations to the final report, the Director of Commissioning explained that further analysis had to be done on the questionnaire responses as well as the collection of other information to ensure the accuracy of all the details contained in the final report. It was anticipated that this would require an additional six weeks.
- 39.10 A Member commented that Shrewsbury's population was around 75,000 but only 25,000 used Shrewsbury's swimming pool, and 75% of current users favoured the facility remaining in the town. He continued that the majority of residents were not using the pool. Referring to the obesity crisis, he asked that if the facility remained

within the town centre what steps would be taken to attract more people from outside the town centre to use it. The Director of Commissioning responded that the Council would work with Shropshire Community Leisure Trust to encourage users.

39.11 In response to a Member's comment the Director of Commissioning explained that Cabinet would make the final decision based on a number of facts:

Cost to build and run;  
Accessibility;  
Economic impact; and  
Participation.

39.12 A Member queried whether the proposed two pool model would cater for the same range of users and provide the same level of service available with the current facility.

**39.13 RESOLVED:**

That the Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee continue to scrutinise the proposals for the development of future swimming provision within Shrewsbury as the continues in 2016.

**40 Update on the Development of a Play Strategy**

40.1 The Director of Commissioning gave a verbal update on the development of a Play Strategy. Members noted that this formed part of the investment strategy in relation to public open spaces. He anticipated that the work would be commissioned at a cost of around £10,000 and would draw on the work undertaken by PMP and would reflect a changing world following the introduction of Place Plans and the Community Infrastructure Levy. He agreed that whoever was commissioned to develop the Strategy would need to work closely with a wide range of external stakeholders.

40.2 Members noted that the Playing Pitch Strategy had also been refreshed and he was hoping that the Play Strategy would pull together the Playing Pitch Strategy and the Public Open Spaces Strategy into a single piece of work. It was anticipated that work on this would start in January 2016.

40.3 A Member commented that the provision of recreational areas needed to be embedded into planning decisions and that there was a need to ensure that planning policies included the scope for this. The Director of Commissioning agreed that Planning Policy Guidance 17 should be reviewed although there were already various means to utilise existing public spaces rather than the provision of additional ones. Members observed that specific guidance would be useful for Members of the Planning Committees. A Member noted that the policy document recommended the provision of open space based on the number of bedrooms in a dwelling and suggested that many Members were unaware of this.

40.4 Members commented on the quality of the work undertaken in Church Stretton by David Kilby representing Shropshire Playing Fields Association, which had been very thorough, and included an examination of the needs of the community members not currently using the facilities provided. The Director of Commissioning stated that Church Stretton Town Council had commissioned the work and David Kilby had undertaken it without payment.

40.5 David Kilby was invited to comment and explained that he offered to undertake similar work in other areas of the County but had not received a response from Council Officers. The Director of Commissioning stated that he would be very happy to work with Mr Kilby.

40.6 **RESOLVED:**

- i. That Officers invite representatives of the Shropshire Playing Fields Association to discuss ways in which they could assist with the work to be undertaken;
- ii. That further training for members of the Planning Committees be provided on the provision of recreational area.

41 **Date/Time of next meeting**

41.1 It was noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee would be held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016 at 2.00pm.