

SHOPSHIRE COUNCIL

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2016

2.00 - 3.35 pm in the Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury,
Shropshire, SY2 6ND

Responsible Officer: Julie Fildes

Email: julie.fildes@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257723

Present

Councillor Claire Wild (Chairman)

Councillors Steve Davenport (Vice Chairman), Gerald Dakin, Roger Evans, Vince Hunt, Miles Kenny, David Lloyd, Alan Mosley, Peggy Mullock and Dave Tremellen

34 Election of Chairman

RESOLVED:

That Councillor C Wild be elected as Chairman of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee for the remaining municipal year.

35 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Barrow for whom Councillor P Mullock attended as substitute.

36 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None were declared.

37 Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December 2015

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee held on 2nd December 2015 be approved as a correct record.

38 Public Question Time

No public questions were received.

39 Member Question Time

There were no questions from Members.

40 Budget 2016/17 Task and Finish Group Report (To Follow)

Councillor Hannah Fraser, Chairman of the Budget 2016/17 Task and Finish Group, was invited to present the Group's report. She observed that they had been tasked to consider

the budget for 2016/17 but they had been informed by the wider financial strategy going forward. The specific ongoing financial challenges had been noted and they recognised the difficulties and challenges these presented. She described the Budget for 2016/17 as precarious, with details regarding the impacts of funding reductions still unclear and hard to assess. She continued that the Group had received a lot of detailed information but had had insufficient time to fully consider it. The Group recommended that a standing group was established to enable more time to be given to the consideration of future budgets.

Councillor Fraser continued that the Group had noted a strong reliance on new working practices to allow services to continue and a presumption that Town and Parish Councils and 3rd sector organisations would be able to deliver services. She continued that it was unclear whether the necessary support networks were in place to enable this. The Group had also been made aware of the number of discretionary services which supported or decreased the requirement for the statutory ones. Concern was expressed regarding the unintended consequences of ending the discretionary services, and the impact this would have on statutory services leading to budget implications which would need to be given consideration.

She continued that the Council needed a clear vision for the future, it needed to define its future role, purpose and structure. The reduction in the establishment risked the loss of knowledge, experience and assets if this was done in an uncontrolled manner.

A Member thanked Councillor Fraser for the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group, and commented that there were still many unanswered questions which required directing. He continued that he had noted that the Group had found difficulties with partnership working as all public sector bodies were experiencing similar funding reductions, it was important that the seriousness for partnership working was demonstrated.

Councillor Hunt, a Member of the Task and Finish Group, commented that the work had been challenging with both Senior Officers and Portfolio Holders tightly scrutinised. He continued that the Group could have produced a more considered report if the work had started earlier and supported the report's recommendation for a standing Task and Finish Group.

Councillor Evans expressed dissatisfaction that not all Members of the Task and Finish Group attended all meetings. It was agreed that attendance information would be provided. Councillor Hunt commented that he had not been able to attend one of the meetings but had received the relevant paperwork beforehand and forwarded his comments for consideration. Councillor Evans suggested the appointment of substitutes for future meetings.

Members considered a number of alterations to the text of the report:

Recommendation B: the wording should be changed to read that the Financial Strategy would be the main focus of the work programme, not that the work programme be built around the Strategy.

Recommendation D: that Cabinet be asked to highlight the risk and impact of the budget proposals for 2016/17.

Recommendation G: remove the word continue from the phrase "... must continue to be a priority" as communications have not always been a priority.

Recommendation F: this recommendation should be strengthened to include that the Council should invest to save and generate future income to create income.

In response to Member's request for clarification of recommendation I, Councillor Fraser explained that this recommendation was aimed at community engagement and ensuring that support was offered to Town and Parish Councils to enable them to take on the provision of services. Recommendation H referred to partner organisations.

A Member commented that the effect of climate change was missing from the report.

In response to a Member's query, the Commissioning Director confirmed that to his knowledge commissioning would continue. He added that with the current budget constraints the Council could not continue to be the solo finance provider and cost pressures had to be shared. Members expressed concern that Town and Parish Councils were unaware that they were being expected to provide services previously provided by the Council and were not being given sufficient guidance on what they need to precept for. Members commented that some of this communication would be done through the Big Conversation work, but much work needed to be done to ensure continuity of provision for services.

Councillor Evans raised the issue of Task and Finish Groups being private meetings. The Senior Solicitor advised that the purpose of this was to allow Members to discuss difficult topics freely but if Members wished to scrutinise a topic in public this could be done through the setting up of a Sub-Committee, although Sub-Committees did not have the flexibility of Task and Finish Groups.

Agreed: that subject to the agreed rewording of Recommendations, the Budget 2016/17 Task and Finish report be accepted and formally presented to the Cabinet for consideration.

41 **Future Work Programme for the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee**

Members discussed the future work programme. The importance of continuing dialogue with Town and Parish Councils identified in the Budget 2016/17 Task and Finish Group Report was considered. It was noted that the Leader would be meeting with Town and Parish Council Clerks the following week. A Member commented that the already well established LJs were a place of shared interest and could be utilised further. Members expressed concern about the consequences for areas where Town or Parish Councils had no interest in taking on Services. The importance of supporting other bodies to provide services was acknowledged.

The Chair proposed that the Committee should consider ways in which the community could be encouraged to provide support for the elderly and reduce the cost of adult social care. The Director of Adult Services stated that he welcomed assistance with the two major areas of budget pressure; which were the cost of service demand following hospital discharge and support for individuals experiencing capital reduction. Members queried

whether the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee was the correct forum to look at this subject.

Councillor Evans suggested that a Task and Finish Group should be established to examine budget slippage and the continued use of one off funds to bridge gaps in budgets. He continued that this had a knock on effect which created issues in following years. Councillor Fraser commented that the Budget Task and Finish Group had identified that this should be widened to consider the impact of commissioning, also the impact of changes in preventative services on statutory ones. She added that this may be where the Committee could consider how the forecasting of demand in adult social care was undertaken and whether a more accurate method could be found. She continued that a further topic identified by the Task and Finish Group had been to examine ways in which the Council could improve its income generation.

Members noted that the Budget 2016/17 Task and Finish Group had recommended the establishment of a standing Task and Finish Group to report to the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee.

42 Additional Information for Quarter 2 Performance Report 2015/16

The Performance Manager introduced the Additional Information for Quarter 2 Performance Report 2015/16. In response to a Member's query, the Performance Manager explained that this was the first meeting of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee following consideration of the Report by Cabinet in December. A Member questioned the practice of reports going to Cabinet before Scrutiny and suggested that if the reports came to the Scrutiny Committee first then the Committee's observations could be considered by Cabinet at the same time as they received the report. Members questioned the purpose of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee.

The Performance Manager drew Members' attention to a selected number of Slides.

Job Seekers Allowance Claimant Count 12+ Months: Members noted a steady decline in claimant numbers but observed that it remained well above the December 2008 figure.

The Number of Referrals to Children's Social Care: Members noted that the reduction in referrals compared to the previous year reflected changes in the referral process with families coming into the system at an earlier stage and preventative work being undertaken.

Looked After Children – Rate per 10.000: The Performance Manager commented that this graph showed stabilisation in the numbers coming in the system. He continued that in reality the numbers were very small and a small increase had a huge impact. In response to a Member's query, he agreed that Shropshire was a net importer of young people, with other authorities placing children in the County.

Permanent Admission of Adults into Residential/Nursing Care homes, per 100,000 Population: The Performance Manager confirmed that the Health Scrutiny Committee had considered this in more detail in December 2015. It was interesting to note that the expected winter pressures had continued into the summer months which was unusual.

Delayed Transfers of Care from Hospital which are Attributable to Adult Social Care per 100,000 population: Members noted that numbers were continuing to rise and this issue had been noted by the Budget 2016/17 Task and Finish Group. Meetings were taking place to identify the reasons for the increase.

In response to a Member’s question, the Performance Manager confirmed that the other Scrutiny Committees could consider these topic areas in greater detail.

RESOLVED:

That the Additional Information for Quarter 2 Performance Report 2015/16 be noted.

43 Date/Time of next meeting of the Committee

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to be held at 2.00pm on Wednesday 16th March 2016.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: