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Council
24 th September 2015
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11
<u>Public</u>

PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORT FOR TRANSFORMATION & PERFORMANCE

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1. Introduction

In writing this Report to Council I have taken the opportunity to include mention of some of the other areas in which I am involved as I believe Members will find it of interest.

Turning first to the matters outside my Portfolio, I believe that most Members will be aware that I Chair the Armed Forces Community Covenant Partnership and act as Lead Member for matters to do with our relationship with the Armed Forces. You will note from reading the paragraphs in this report dealing with this area that we can be justifiably proud of the work the Council does and the support it gives to serving and veteran members of the Armed Forces (and for clarity I hope that we are already aware that veterans of the Reserve Forces, such as myself and a number of other Members, are included within the scope of the Covenant). I am extremely grateful for the help and assistance given by the officer in the Community Enabling Team without whom much of what we have achieved would not have been possible.

The Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership, which governs the operational team looking after the landscape and interests of a very large area of the South of the County, is the Body on which I have served as an appointee of this and its' predecessor Council since 2007. For the last few years I have taken the role of Local Authority nominated Vice-Chair and in that time, myself and the rest of the Management Board have enabled access to European Funding into the area via the first LEADER Programme. The second programme is in the course of being finalised and again we expect (our application having been approved) to enable some €2.4M of grant funding. For the second programme these grants will be targeted towards economic activity rather than social fabric as was the case in the first programme. I have recently asked to be taken off the AONB as I will then be better able to take a part in this scheme.

The Housing Governance Board which I Chair is the way in which Shropshire Council provides assurance to senior council officers and the Housing Portfolio Holder (effectively the Commissioners) that our Arms Length Management Organisation, Shropshire Towns & Rural Housing (ST&RH) delivers what we as a Council require of it under the Agreement under which it manages our remaining Council owned housing stock. I am helped in this by John Cadwallader who acts as Vice-Chair.

Turning now to specific Portfolio matters, Members will see that most of the areas of work are strongly connected to Commissioning and Transformation.

The Performance Team provides Business Intelligence, information, data and statistics to those who already commission services to quasi-commissioners and to our in-house service providers. Recently the Commissioning Support Team has been augmented by the transfer of procurement and contract management, both important parts of the Commissioning process.

Moving further on a similar theme Partnership Working is already an important part of how the Council functions and this will become more significant with moves towards increased work with the Voluntary Sector, Town and Parish Councils and the Clinical Commissioning Group and other Public Sector partners.

The Town and Parish Council network is the bedrock of our local democracy and as such a key partner for us. As Members are aware these Councils vary in size from the very large (Shrewsbury and the other major Town Councils) to the really quite small with electors numbering in the low 100's. The Shropshire Association of Local Councils works well to co-ordinate our relations and general communications but dealing directly with these Councils is important if we are to retain our current good relationships.

SHROPNET

For the most part, our support for Town and Parish Councils is for those on ShropNET, and mostly admin-related (creating new accounts/sites, resetting passwords, etc.), with the technical support coming from the suppliers (Cooperative Web).

With regard to the support Shropshire Council's Digital Services gives to parish and town councils and community groups via ShropNET, we create new sites upon request, give new user and refresher training and maintain existing sites in partnership with Cooperative Web, the supplier.

This partnership takes the form of giving day-to-day admin help, e.g.

- password changes
- help with uploading of attachments/images
- page creation
- page deletion

- site deletion
- advice on structure and content

and ShropNET resolving more technical issues, e.g. ensuring that the platform works with new versions of existing operating systems.

A review on SHROPNet is due to be discussed shortly and the outcomes of this will be communicated out widely to all current customers and stakeholders this coming autumn.

Our Community Enabling Team already provides support to these Partners and to local communities and Members. Their role in moving forward with what can be loosely described as “locality based commissioning” is crucial as well as in the evolution of Local Joint Committees and their role in providing a stronger local influence on Commissioning processes (an example being the recent Youth Services activities – some areas having had great success, others less so).

I hope that Members will find this Report useful and informative and I look forward to dealing with any matters arising out of it at Council on the 24th September.

I would also encourage any Member who has any specific or general enquiries to make on the matters I have covered to contact me directly.

REPORT

2. Armed Forces Community Covenant

Background

Shropshire Council signed the Covenant pledge at a meeting of Full Council on Thursday 3rd May 2012. Having signed this pledge to support our local armed forces the Covenant portfolio has grown significantly as central Government looks to implement more measures of support to our existing and ex-forces community. This support includes a new £10million annual grant fund set in perpetuity to help fund integration projects and wider support for other priorities.

The Shropshire Covenant partnership has now grown to include 18 separate organisations with the coordination happening centrally through Shropshire Council with myself acting as Chair of the partnership group. Priorities now need to be set for the group for the next five years up to 2020.

Shropshire Council continues to take its pledge to our armed forces seriously with a recent Ombudsman ruling about Devonshire Council ensuring local authorities remain vigilant against poor practice. As ever, the aim is to ensure no serving or ex-member of HM Armed Forces or their families faces disadvantage through accessing public service provision.

Housing

Shropshire Council are committed to ensuring up to 5% of properties for each Partner Social Landlord may be targeted by former members of the British Armed Forces as defined in S.364 Armed Forces Act 2006, where the application is made within 5 years of discharge, they have a local connection to Shropshire and have served a minimum of 4 years with the British Armed Forces. Those that have been dishonourably discharged will be considered individually based upon the circumstances and reasons for the discharge.

In terms of allocations for social housing - If you are a member of the Armed Forces and are going to be discharged within 6 months, and you have a local connection, Shropshire Council will award you 'gold banding' in recognition of your service to the country. This is still no guarantee of housing but you stand a better chance of getting a house.

Thus far additional preference has been awarded to:

Awarded Discharge from Armed Forces Banding	- 15 persons
Awarded Former Armed Forces Criteria	- 4 persons
Awarded Priority Band and Previously Served	- 3 persons

During 2014/15 31 current or previously served HM Armed Forces personnel have been rehoused by the local authority.

Changes to the online Housing Solutions Action Plans (HomePoint) will incorporate adding another housing option to the existing 16 options to provide advice specifically for former members of H.M. Armed Forces. We expect this to be available from October 2015 and will in the meantime be working with groups such as the Army Families Federation and other forces groups.

Education

Shropshire Council have encouraged the take up of Service Pupil Premium within Schools by promoting it on armed forces bases and through School networks. On top of this, we have also promoted best practice within Schools ensuring the Premium is spent correctly. Idsall School has recently been the recipient of a national award for their work with Service Pupil premium.

Benefit & Council Tax Support

At Shropshire Council we operate a local procedure whereby we disregard 100% of the income from the following pensions:

- War Disablement Pensions
- Service Attributable Pensions (but only if the reason for discharge from service specifically relates to the service)
- War Widows Pensions / War Widowers Pensions

We believe that this extra level of support ensures that Veterans receive a fair deal and that they are not disadvantaged by their Service.

Shropshire Council HR Policy

During 2015 and in partnership with the forces/employment organisation SaBRE, Shropshire Council updated its HR policy to support employees who choose to be Reservists within HM Armed Forces. The Policy ensures line managers are aware that their staff are Reservists and that two weeks extra leave are permitted for training linked to Armed Forces work. Equally, should the employee be asked to deploy, the Policy ensures that staff and management know what is expected both before and following deployment.

Customer Services

During April 2015 forces family charities and Royal British Legion volunteers came in to Shropshire Council Customer Services department to train staff about their services, what they offer and why veterans access their services. From this, Shropshire Council Customer Services have already correctly signposted 7 Veterans to those organisations who were in a better position to support the Veteran in need other than the local authority.

Covenant Fund

Since the Covenant's inception, Shropshire Council has acted as the responsible body for Ministry of Defence (MOD) funds distributed to Shropshire projects. £294,000 worth of external funding has been brought in to the County by the Shropshire partnership in respect of integration projects between our local armed forces and civilian communities.

From August 2015, Shropshire Council will no longer be required to distribute funds on behalf of the MOD. Instead, Shropshire Council will act as an enabler of partnership working and ensure data is captured to aid potential applicants for the £10 million Covenant fund recently designed by the MOD to support integration and a wide range of other priorities.

3. Voluntary & Community Sector

As Shropshire Council has made significant changes over the last year we have continued to work closely with Shropshire's voluntary sector through the Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly (VCSA). This ongoing partnership work has been valuable in providing external challenge and feedback and further developing commissioner/ provider relationships as new service delivery and commissioning models are introduced.

Volunteering has been an area of focus for many service areas over the last 12 months as work takes place to make the most effective use of available resources, to embed service delivery within community settings and to involve local people in service design and delivery in order to generate resilience and self reliance within communities. Shropshire VCS Assembly has worked to communicate how volunteering is changing in Shropshire. Research undertaken by Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership has been shared to highlight that whilst national support for volunteer brokerage has been lost, the profile of the volunteer population has changed. Increasing proportions of new volunteers are now benefit claimants required to take on voluntary work

by the Department for Work and Pensions (and in need of support themselves rather than ready to deliver support to others).

VCS engagement has focused on key policy changes including the Care Act, Children and Families Act, SEND Reforms and the implementation of the Better Care Fund. The VCSA Forums of Interest have worked to understand and communicate changes along with the VCSA Board. Events and workshops have been delivered to develop local understanding and ensure that public sector and voluntary sector service providers are able to work together to communicate to people using local services and make changes to the way services are provided.

Shropshire's VCS Assembly has also responded to changes in the delivery and management of EU funding by working closely with the Marches LEP in order to deliver robust voluntary sector engagement in the development and delivery of the European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF) strategy. The work has focused on the Social Inclusion priority and its resource allocation through the Big Lottery Building Better Opportunities Programme. The size of the opportunities in the new programme are considerable and early engagement has been necessary in order to allow smaller local providers the time to establish the consortia and delivery partnerships necessary to compete with larger out of area and private sector providers. Where VCS engagement has not taken place it is likely that the economic trickle down of resources and the generation of social value through local provision will not be achieved.

Recent changes in the commissioning of criminal justice services meant that a focus of work within 2014/15 was the provision of support for Shropshire's Criminal Justice Forum and the development of Employ with Conviction, a project designed to secure employment opportunities for ex-offenders and those with criminal convictions. The work resulted in improved cross sector working within the field of criminal justice, increased sharing of information and knowledge, joint project delivery and the establishment of more robust relationships with local employers.

Part of the cross sector working that takes place in Shropshire involves research to understand the challenges faced by VCS service providers and assess the impact of future change. This type of information is likely to remain a feature of future work to assess market resilience and provide market intelligence for commissioners. An annual State of the Sector survey provides a valuable insight into the resilience of the voluntary sector in the face of economic pressures.

- In the last year (2014/15) 25% of VCS organisations had made redundancies.
- 35% highlighted that they had posts at risk of redundancy.

- Respondents stated that expenditure and hours of work had increased due to the economic climate. Staffing levels and income had decreased.
- The reduction in sources of funding and other income (external and local funding and charitable donations) was considered a major barrier.

As the way Shropshire Council works with the voluntary sector evolves, different forms of data will need to be used to provide a more robust understanding of provider resilience and provision of services.

The last year has seen the delivery of a wide range of cross sector projects and initiatives. A few examples are used below to highlight the diversity of the engagement activity that has been in place and some of the results of that work.

- The VCSA has been working with Locality Commissioners and ALC (under the Community Hubs programme) to develop a package of support for town and parish Councils and VCS organisations interested in community asset and service transfer. To date the project has been successful in securing the local delivery of a national body specialising in asset and service transfer (Locality). Outputs will include a resource pack, training and specialist mentoring support.
- The VCSA has supported CCG leads in work to engage the wider voluntary sector in the development of a new CCG Grant Framework. The result of that work has been widespread understanding of the new system in place and a high volume of grant applications.
- Work has also continued over the last year to support the Shropshire Compact Group and to ensure the Compact is implemented as good practice in cross sector working. A local project was shortlisted for the National Compact Engagement Award 2015 (Shropshire won the category in 2014). See: <http://vcsvoice.org/the-compact/> It is anticipated that the way the Compact is delivered in Shropshire will change over the next 12 months but its value should not be underestimated as a way of establishing a shared understanding across sectors of commissioner and provider values, roles and responsibilities and how the recognition of good practice can prevent more time consuming processes such as disputes and formal complaints.

Shropshire VCS Assembly has continued to work with the two support bodies established in 2011: Shropshire Providers Consortium and ShropShare. Shropshire Providers Consortium is a Community Interest Company (CIC) that delivers the support needed to enable VCS providers of all shapes and

sizes to collaborate to win, manage and collectively deliver grants and contracts. See: <http://shropshireprovidersconsortium.co.uk/>

ShropShare offers a support and brokerage service to assist local businesses in their work to demonstrate Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and to build rewarding and mutually beneficial relationships with VCS groups and organisations. Examples of work include employee volunteering, dragons den (knowledge and skills transfer) and charity challenge (business advice). See: <http://shropshare.org/> The two bodies allow the voluntary and community sector in Shropshire the opportunity to work more collaboratively to access opportunities and share skills and resources.

In the last year a group known as the Change Group has been established to enable joint working between Shropshire Council and the VCSA at the strategic level, sharing skills, knowledge and resources to co-design change proposals and new ways of working. The group takes a lead on cross sector engagement with an emphasis on co-design. As the way Shropshire Council works continues to evolve, and as the new Commissioning Support Unit becomes more established, it is likely that future VCS engagement will be overseen by this group.

4. Performance

New performance dashboards and reporting were launched in 2014/15 following development work with Members to identify the outcomes and performance measures and preferred methods of presentation. For Cabinet we introduced a focused infographic to help communicate progress and key corporate performance messages in an accessible format, underpinned by the comprehensive dashboards for the Council's outcomes which are presented to Scrutiny each quarter. We have used the past 12 months as an opportunity to learn and refine how the information is presented, e.g. at Scrutiny Committees a smaller number of measures are presented together to help tell the story more clearly. This learning has also highlighted the potential to develop how information is shared and when it could be shared.

Through considering service transformation and development in Adult Social Care the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee highlighted their interest in developing a set of measures that they could use to understand the impact of the Adult Social Care New Operating Model. In order to help facilitate this work was done with officers from Adult Social Care and a Member working group from the Committee to understand the new operating model and to identify the measures that they needed to have presented to them to fulfil their role. The first dashboard report to the Committee took place in June 2015 and resulted in a detailed consideration of the information and what this meant for people enquiring about and/or needing support from Adult Social Care. Regular reports will be made to the Committee on this specific set of measures, and will also take account of other relevant information as it is published such as the Adult Social Care Statutory Survey results which will

be published nationally later in the autumn.

In order to provide a more complete view of service areas and the delivery of the Council's outcomes, reporting on complaints has been developed this year and reports have been presented to both the Young People's Scrutiny Committee and to Adult Social Care Scrutiny alongside reports on the relevant outcome performance dashboards. This supports the opportunity for members to identify specific issues they might want to drill down into, and provides a different view to the performance data.

Proposals are being developed to sharpen the focus of Scrutiny Committees on the delivery of the Councils outcomes by looking at one outcome each quarter in detail, with exceptions from the other outcomes also being reported. With the Council now establishing itself as a commissioning organisation the impact of commissioning decisions on the delivery of the Council's outcomes will increasingly feature in the performance monitoring and constructive challenge role of Scrutiny. This will provide Scrutiny members with the opportunity to explore emerging issues in more detail and identify potential topics to be added to the work programme, as they are involved at all stages around the commissioning cycle.

A continuing focus has been to support the development of performance and management information within Council business areas. Some recent examples are described in the following paragraphs.

- Following the initial feedback from the Safeguarding Peer Review Team support to deliver the identified areas to develop has been taken up. Good progress is being made to define, provide and make accessible the data and information required to enable and evidence the day to day management of services. This is ongoing work and a good example of portfolio holders working together with their lead officers and Director to address shared responsibilities.
- Work has also been progressing with the team developing Strengthening Families; Shropshire's response to the Troubled Families Programme, and Early Help. This has involved providing technical and specialist support to analyse the information from different partners, present the information and understand the key messages, integrate processes, and identify and report measures that will meet the national requirements and also demonstrate the impact achieved.

The Council is continuing to transform into a commissioning organisation. Since the New Year significant thought and activity has gone into developing a commissioning support function for the Council. The new function is well progressed in its development drawing together staff from a range of Council areas to support, challenge and work with those involved in commissioning services.

An essential area that is being developed through this new structure is the strengthening of how the Council uses the feedback from partners and

providers, and people and communities who use or receive Council services. The complaints, compliments and comments that the Council receives are a key component, as are results from surveys and any engagement activity that takes place. This is important information to learn from and to develop insights to understand need and demand, how behaviours can be and need to be changed, and to help understand the quality and effectiveness of services that are provided by or on behalf of the Council.

The feedback and insights will be combined with data from across services to develop information and intelligence that will be used to challenge commissioning and contract management, and ensure that it is effective.

5. Housing

Housing Governance Board of STAR is an asset assurance mechanism and has the primary purpose of supporting the commissioning arrangements between the Council and STAR. It helps to guide and shape the evolving relationship between the two organisations and serves to protect the Council's best interests.

STAR is a key partner within the Social Housing Forum and with a revised Terms of Reference, this is set to be the vehicle for the development of the wider housing strategy for Shropshire. It will address the major priority issues, with a focus on matters of common concern to providers and the Council and with the overarching intention of developing wider collaborative solutions.

Members are probably aware that Shropshire Council's Housing Strategy is currently under review, as it becomes out of date at the end of this year. The Strategy impacts on multiple Council services, and in particular Social Care. As such, I will be involved, together with the relevant portfolio holders (particularly Cllr Price) to ensure that the Council uses its role to maximise performance across the sector.

6. Community Enablement Team and Locality Commissioning Managers LCMs)

Evolving the Local Joint Committees

The Community Enabling Team has continued to work with elected members to deliver the Local Joint Committees over a period that started with the LJsCs thinking about their purpose post-grant funding and ended with many of them working hard to commission youth activity as locality commissioners. LJsCs will need to evolve alongside the changing council, and a working group has created a proposal for a redesigned approach to local governance, which now needs to be considered more widely.

Resilient Communities – building community capacity

Officers from Shropshire Council, the CCG and VCS have been leading on the design and delivery of a Resilient Communities work stream within the Better Care Fund, which aims to build capacity within communities that will

increase self-reliance and the availability of community-based solutions. The Community Enablement Team are integral to the creation of Resilient Communities as they understand local needs and opportunities, are connected into local networks and are working closely with local members. An example is the piloting of the Community Connector role in Craven Arms, which is being co-ordinated by the local team member using her existing relationships to strengthen working relationships between local partners that will improve the provision of early help and prevention advice and support in the town, and the effectiveness of signposting to this.

Community safety

The team continues to co-ordinate Bronze Level Tasking at an area level with the Senior Community Enablement Officers working alongside the local police inspectors to hold monthly community safety partnership meetings and managing the delivery of local action plans.

As Shropshire Council continues its accelerated approach as a Commissioning Council there is a growing appetite to consider commissioning involvement at all levels and in particular on a locality based approach, as has been tested in the last 12 months around Youth Activities. This has enabled the team to further expand their skill sets in enabling such activity to take place, led at a local level by Elected Members.

As the Council continues to evolve, it is anticipated that more locality based commissioning will take place. Therefore the role of the Community Enabling Team will continue to expand beyond those activities in the Commissioning Directorate and start to support wider locality based commissioning across the whole of the Council, in particular Social Care.

In supporting this, a new set of outcomes is detailed below to support the move to outcomes based commissioning. To help describe what these outcomes translate into is also given:

- *To support the Council's move to become a Commissioning Council focused on the delivery of positive outcomes for communities and individuals*
An example of this is the work delivered in the last 12 months involving the Community Enabling Team and the Youth Commissioning as well as involvement in exploring alternative delivery options for Libraries
- *To take the lead in the co-production of local solutions with local communities, people and organisations to meet the Council's aims and objectives*
An example of this is working in Market Towns such as Shifnal alongside a range of partners to explore local solutions e.g. car parking, Libraries and public open spaces.

- To facilitate Shropshire’s communities to be resilient so that they can take ownership of the issues that are important to them, planning and innovating in response to local need and opportunity*
 An example of this is the evolution of Local Joint Committees into more flexible local partnerships that will not only raise and understand local issue, but will have more influence over how local needs are met – using all the assets available in a community, not just those of the council.
- To support transparent, evidence based, locally influenced decision making*
 An example of this is the work done around updating the Place Plans, and working with Town and Parish Councils on an annual basis
- To support Shropshire Council Members in their role at Community Leaders*
 Numerous examples across the county on specific Member Led initiatives

<p>List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Cllr Tim Barker</p>
<p>Local Member All Members</p>
<p>Appendices None</p>