

Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Statement to Council 24 June 2010

1.0 Achievements April to June 2010 (covering meetings 31 March, 12 May and 23 June 2010)

1.1 Services within the remit of the Committee extend across Chief Executive's Office, Legal and Democratic Services, and the Resources Directorate.

1.2 In the performance of statutory functions, the Committee has or will have received and monitored:-

- Service Plans for Chief Executive's - Performance & Partnerships; Legal & Democratic Services; and Resources
- Performance Reports for the Shropshire Local Area Agreement;
- Performance reports for the Corporate Plan – Quarter 4, 2010
- Financial Reports: Revenue and Capital Outturn for 2009/10; Treasury Management – Quarter 4, 2010
- Reserves Provisions and Balances as at 31 March 2010

1.3 The Committee has noted:-

- The work that is being undertaken by the Council in liaison with the Government Office West Midlands, via the West Midlands Public Procurement Framework, to increase access to jobs and skills opportunities for local people through procurement exercises. The aim of the Framework is to enable public and third sector organisations to contribute significantly to tackling worklessness and its consequences by:-
 - Making access to jobs and skills a core requirement of procurement exercises from the outset
 - Addressing specifically the real and perceived legal barriers to the use of jobs and skills clauses in procurement exercises
 - Providing advice and guidance (including bespoke templates) to help embed a focus on jobs and skills throughout the procurement process, from setting strategic priorities to contract implementation and monitoring
 - Signposting procurers and prospective contractors to the range of support and advice that can help both parties deliver on the jobs and skills requirements to be delivered.

The Framework reaffirms the recommendations of the Houghton Report (Stephen Houghton, Leader, Barnsley MBC March 2009) on tackling worklessness around the role of local authorities as employees and procurers.

- Arrangements that are being put in place to ensure that Section 106 monies are collected and used in accordance with the terms of the agreement. Members received an update on Section 106 agreements transferring from the previous district/borough councils and new agreements entered into by Shropshire Council. The Committee also called for a review of procedures in relation to other developer obligations under the new arrangements for community benefit arising in Community Hubs and Clusters, and in addition those which may arise under any Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) arrangements. Such system of control could include local member involvement. A further report detailing the Section 106 monies was also presented.

1.4 The Committee has agreed:-

- The awarding of contracts for the Council's Broadband and Telephony services which would secure services that whilst meeting the Authority's current requirements would also develop as the Council's business needs alter in the coming years. The Committee noted the significant savings that would be made and congratulated the Head of IT and his staff for this achievement and for the service they provide.

1.5 The Committee will have considered:

- Action being taken on a multi-agency basis in response to the major fire at Kingpin Tyres Limited in Wem last September, noting the key challenges for responders in dealing effectively with the incident. There had been concerns regarding the health of the public in Wem as well as concerns for the environment and water. Once the fire had been safely extinguished, all agencies involved undertook a review and have worked together to produce an action plan which the Committee will be requested to endorse, noting steps being taken to take forward the recommendations set out in the action plan.
- A draft paper for Council's response to the Government consultation on Housing Revenue Account, prior to Cabinet on 31 July 2010.

2. Work Programme

- 2.1 Arrangements to develop work programmes for the year ahead, picking up and issues rolling over, will be put in place once Council has considered the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Task & Finish Group and the structures for Overview and Scrutiny Committees have been agreed.
- 2.2 In the meantime certain areas of work have been identified as suitable for examination including customer access to services and the Council; and pathways to procurement for Shropshire small and medium enterprises.

Councillor Tim Barker (Chair)
Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee