



Date: Monday, 19 February 2024

Time: 10.00 am

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

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TRANSFORMATION AND IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TO FOLLOW REPORT (S)

9 Transformation and Medium-Term Financial Strategy Task and Finish Group (Pages 1 - 24)

Members are asked to consider the report of the Transformation and Medium-Term Financial Strategy Task and Finish group, presented by Councillor Roger Evans.

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Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee

19 February 2024

Item

Public



Report of the Transformation and Medium-Term Financial Strategy Task and Finish Group

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Task and Finish Group Chair:	Roger Evans

1. Synopsis

The report and recommendations of the Transformation and Medium-Term Financial Strategy Task and Finish Group.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The Transformation and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Task and Finish Group is a standing task and finish group that will track the development and delivery of Council's transformation programme and MTFS. This is the first report of the group and sets out key findings, conclusions, and recommendations arising from the first stage of their work which prioritised looking at a range of projects led by the People and Place directorates, as well as hearing from the Council's delivery partners, PWC.
- 2.2. The Task and Finish Group carried out their investigation to consider current key transformation programme project areas being led by the Place and People directorates, and also heard from the Council's Transformation partner PWC, developing ten areas for recommendation. In doing so they looked at transformation programmes underway, the relationship between the transformation projects and the delivery of the MTFS, taking account of impacts for service delivery, for communities, and the Council.

3. Officer Recommendations

- 3.1. Members are asked to review, comment on, and adopt the report of the Task and Finish group.

Report

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. This work involved a review of the Transformation Programme alongside the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to consider the relation between the two, and how changing the way that services are being delivered delivers outcomes as well and helping the Council to be financially sustainable.

5. Climate Change Appraisal

- 5.1. As part of this Task and Finish Group investigation members heard about:
- investment in the work of innovative technology at the pyrolysis unit,
 - changes to the Environment Act around recycling and food waste collection,
 - maximising use of technology within social care reducing reliance upon car journeys, and
 - the use of shared working hubs from which a range of services can be delivered at the heart of communities.

6. Background

- 6.1. The Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee identified the Transformation and Medium-Term Financial Strategy as a work programme topic and commissioned a standing Task and Finish Group. This group will report back to the Committee at key points in the year.
- 6.2. The Task and Finish Group identified that their focus would be to understand how transformation was going to contribute to a sustainable financial strategy. To do this they identified a number of transformation projects:
- Reablement
 - Care at Homes
 - Assistive Technology
 - Early Help
 - Family Hubs
 - Waste PFI
 - Temporary Accommodation
 - Third Party Spend – included agency spend across the Council

- 6.3. The Task and Finish Group asked about how transformation projects were identified and enquired about how risk and viability assessments have been used

to plan and identify the scope of the Transformation Programme. Members heard from relevant officers and received case studies to bring to life the benefits and explore aspects of how officers and delivery partners have been involved.

- 6.4. Their key findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group are set out in their report. The ten recommendation areas that have been proposed are as follows:

Recommendation 1 – That information on the Transformation Programme and the planned and realised financial and non-financial benefits should be shared with Members e.g. via the Members Portal.

Recommendation 2 – That the Council continues to develop its work with PWC as the Transformation Partner, tactically utilising their access to skills and knowledge that the Council does not have in house, to help transform services.

Recommendation 3 – That Members are kept informed of the recommendations and actions arising from work with PWC and are updated as to the progress and impact of the adopted transformation work arising from them.

Recommendation 4 – That key measures related to the delivery of the Transformation Programme should be developed and included in the KPIs that are included in the quarterly performance reporting and the quarterly financial reporting.

Recommendation 5 – That the Council continues with its good efforts to increase the number of its foster carers with the benefits that this brings, and that all Shropshire Councillors support and promote this through their social media reach and within their local communities.

Recommendation 6 – That the opportunities offered by technology to social care pursued by the Council, should include exploring how “virtual care” could enable people to work in the sector by providing online care visits and conversations, opening this up to those who are unable to carry out in person homecare visits.

Recommendation 7 – That the Council should continue to work across service areas to ensure that it is possible for people who work in the health and care to live closer to where they work, and that the properties that are developed are suitable to meet the needs of an aging population.

Recommendation 8 - The People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to continue with its focus upon the importance of having sufficient establishment in the social work workforce and the design and commissioning of services realises best value for those receiving the service and the Council.

Recommendation 9 - That the work programming by each Overview and Scrutiny Committee should take account of the Transformation Programme. This may include continuing the focus on transformation by the People Overview Committee or the contract management of the Keir and WSP contracts by the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation 10 - That the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee should consider including Waste in their work programme for 2024/25 in light of upcoming changes to requirements as a result of the Environment Act.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Draft Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2028/29 – Cabinet 13 December 2023

Local Member: All

Appendices

Appendix 1: Report of the Transformation and Medium-Term Financial Strategy Task and Finish Group



Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report of the Transformation and Medium-Term Financial Strategy Task and Finish Group

February 2024

Acknowledgments

The work of the cross-party Transformation and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Task and Finish Group has been undertaken with enthusiasm by the Members involved. They have considered a number of different perspectives and have sought to produce balanced and evidenced conclusions and recommendations regarding the impact of the work of the Transformation Programme upon the medium-term financial strategy. Members would like to express thanks to Council Officers, Portfolio Holders, and Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) who have helped them understand the issues and explore potential opportunities.

The list of those who have helped to inform the work is attached at Appendix 1.

Members of the Task and Finish Group

Cllr Roger Evans (Chair)

Cllr Claire Wild

Cllr Alan Moseley

Cllr David Vasmer

Cllr Julia Buckley

Cllr Julian Dean

Cllr Kevin Pardy

Cllr Nick Bardsley

Cllr Peggy Mullock

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1. Context

2023/24 is a key year for the Council to deliver spending reductions that will help to set the financial foundations for the coming years. The Shropshire Plan has been in place for over 12 months which the 2023/24 budget has been set to deliver.

As part of this work, the Task and Finish Group have taken account of the learning from the in-year budget for 2023/24 and the wider context that the Council operates in, to inform its scrutiny and evidence-based contribution to the medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) and setting the budget for 2024/25.

There are also the medium-term and longer-term views that need to be taken. Shropshire Council is delivering a Transformation Programme that will see the Council changing the way services and outcomes are delivered. This will include maximising the opportunities that technology offers to place the customer at the centre of services, speeding up the provision of solutions and services wherever possible, and making best use of the Council's resources.

2. Scope of the work

The Transformation and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Task and Finish Group have taken a strong focus on the service areas that have the highest budgets, a history of increasing demand pressures, and overspend against the budget. These included Adult Social Care and Childrens Social Care, however the work was not restricted to these services.

This Task and Finish Group will have an ongoing focus running alongside the Transformation Programme. As such it has started with the projects and wider programmes of work that are being progressed as part of the first phase of transformation work. This focus will flex and adapt to the content of the Transformation Programme over its lifetime.

3. Objectives

This is a standing Task and Finish Group that will report back to the Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee at key points in the year. The objectives set out below provide the framework for the standing Task and Finish Group to complete their work.

Transformation

- To shadow the development and delivery of the Transformation Programme
- To research and confirm the requirements that Overview and Scrutiny Committees/Members should see/be looking for in effective transformation work
- To focus on the current first phase of the Transformation Programme and look at the key pieces of work, identifying where they should be linking across into the budget setting and the MTFS e.g. Transformation of Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care
- To identify the degree in which the Transformation Programme and the Council's strategic plans including the Capital Strategy, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the Service Plans/Delivery Plans are aligned and integrated, working together to deliver the priorities and strategic objectives
- To highlight specific issues or topics related to the Transformation Programme that Overview and Scrutiny Committees might want to investigate
- To carry out specified investigations into the overall delivery of the Transformation Programme and topics related to the health and effectiveness of the Council.

Budget/MTFS

- To identify the in-year budget learning from 2022/23 and 2023/24 so far, especially for the high cost and high-risk service areas such as Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care
- To consider how this learning and the learning and plans from the Transformation work has been applied to identify opportunities to inform the budget, service and business planning for 2024/25 and the years beyond this to deliver The Shropshire Plan
- To understand how the Council's budget setting sits within the budget setting being taken across the systems that the Council is operating in
- To consider and comment on the emerging budget for the Council
- To consider and comment on the alternative budgets put forwards by the opposition groups alongside the budget developed by the Administration

4. What has the Task and Finish group done?

The Task and Finish group conducted their work across nine meetings over an eleven-week period. Meetings were held with both transformation partners from PWC as well as officers from a range of service areas, including Adults services, Childrens services and Place, and the relevant Portfolio Holders.

The Group identified key areas of focus to better understand how projects were identified for inclusion within the Transformation Programme and their prioritisation. The expectation of the Group was that through looking at the MTFS alongside the Transformation Programme, they could understand how transformation was going to contribute to the setting and delivering of a sustainable financial strategy. This work would include a review of the expected financial savings as well as the impact to service delivery, and exploration of the potential impacts for communities and the Council.

It was agreed that this work programme should begin with understanding the focus of the work identified as part of the Transformation Programme, and how this programme helps deliver the medium-term financial strategy to budget. Recognising that there are interdependencies within projects, the group identified a range of projects led by the People and Place Directorates to focus upon:

- Reablement
- Care at Homes
- Assistive Technology
- Early Help
- Family Hubs
- Waste PFI
- Temporary Accommodation
- Third Party Spend – included agency spend across the Council

The Task and Finish Group were interested to understand how risk and viability assessments have been used to plan and manage the Transformation Programme. The methodology and criteria used to identify, scope and plan transformation projects together with how these were being monitored, measured, and managed against the whole programme. Members heard from relevant officers and received case studies to bring to life the benefits and explore aspects of how officers and delivery partners have been involved.

Members felt that tracking any maximising or mitigating impacts of transformation on service delivery and those who use the services was as important to their investigation and understanding as the impact on finances.

Through collaborative working and the sharing of documents on the Task and Finish Groups Teams site as well as the various meetings that have taken place, Members

were able to identify the benefits of the work that is underway. Both as a result of transformation, but also how this is being applied to future service delivery and the impact this will have on the MTFS and budget for future years.

5. Key Findings

Working with PWC

Members heard from the Councils transformation partner PWC about the projects they had been involved with, to explore evidence of added value through working together, and to understand how PWC would be working with the Council in future.

Through these discussions the Group learned of the value of savings identified to date as a result of a range of projects underway. One example of which includes contact automation aimed to improve the customer interaction processes. This work is expected to reduce a customers estimated wait times from 2-3 minutes to 2-3 seconds. The first phase of the work will include offering customers the ability to place calls in any language and will allow the Council to operate as a 24/7 organisation. Members heard how the improved customer experience, better data collection and increased performance will lead to significant savings. This is the first phase, but there is potential to achieve further savings as this model is deployed across other services. Members highlighted that the Council needs to learn from its own experiences with the adoption of new technology for customers to contact the Council, identify issues and track actions to address them.

The pilot of the contact automation programme has concluded and in January 82% of calls were correctly routed, the 18% of calls not recognised through artificial intelligence were escalated to be looked at by a staff member to be resolved.

Members also learned from PWC about the Waste contract Private Finance Initiative (PFI) negotiation which has resulted in one-off savings for this year.

PWC explained that through their work with Adult Social Care on reablement and discharge from hospital, referrals to the voluntary and community sector have increased from around 1 to 8 per week. This is helping distribute demand to the most appropriate organisations to provide support within a community setting. It was recognised that there were already significant savings being made.

It was confirmed that the Children's commissioning model has been better designed to manage contract costs and delivery. Savings were expected to be delivered through more effective contract management.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) transport focus was underway including a survey that had been recently launched.

Members learned about the social value programme, PWC are undertaking, and were informed that this is at no cost to the Council. This work is aimed to understand local challenges and context, through supporting disadvantaged children by increasing their confidence and aspirations and introducing them to local

pathways. PWC explained how they have been working with Children's Services to design this programme and target specific cohorts. Those students included in the pilot cohort will undertake practical skills, such as writing CVs over 8 key sessions. This is not in isolation but will present future opportunities, which it is believed will have cost benefits and impact future demand management over time.

PWC explained that they were supporting the Council in developing its strategic target operating model (TOM), with work beginning in early January. This is looking at shaping future ways of working and is receiving good levels of engagement. The target is for this work to conclude at the end of March.

Members were reminded that the Council commissions the work PWC are undertaking and sets their priorities. Members recognised that PWC are a catalyst to initiate this work, however the decision making around execution of the proposals, spend, governance and input are all the responsibility of the Council.

Members learned that a series of recommendations to the council would be made by PWC as a result of the modelling work undertaken. It was recognised that some of these may require minimal investment to drive long term delivery. Members noted the value in tracking the impact of any adopted recommendations as they are rolled out.

People Directorate Led Transformation

Adult Social Care

Members heard where current demand pressures lay, and what expected future demand would be through predicted increases in the older people's (65+) and elderly (85+) populations, increases to numbers of older people living alone, and people presenting with more complex care and support needs. This increase in demand is in conjunction with increased market pressures and increasing complexity of the care and support needed.

The Task and Finish Group considered how reablement would reduce demand and had potential to produce better outcomes for individuals by people being supported for a short period of time to be as independent as they can be. The approach also provided greater equity of access across a rural county whilst meeting a range of differing needs such as advice, support and care. Officers informed the group that the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) are part of this offer, providing personalised community support as well as hospital discharge pathways. Other features members explored were greater multi-disciplinary neighbourhood working aligned with primary care networks enabling early intervention models to get underway that optimise independence. Technology is also being woven into this model to pilot new ways of working.

Members heard about the use of virtual ward management through Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust which helps to avoid hospital admissions, delivering treatment for people in their own home, which is consultant led and reviewed on a daily basis.

Members also heard about the innovative assistive technology programmes that are being rolled out across the service. “Let’s Talk Tech” offers overarching, generic adult social care that is flexible and creative, delivered through a supported living scheme that includes more traditional pendant alarms, but has been extended to include newer forms of technology as well. The Virtual Care project offers a mix of technology and virtual care where contact with the person being cared for includes digital calls, together with face-to-face support. The Group recognised that Virtual Care could be an opportunity to open up more employment opportunities in the social care workforce for people who had the right skills and approach but may not be able to carry out the face-to-face care.

The Task and Finish Group considered how use of this technology can speed up reablement journeys, in a non-intrusive way, maximising resilience and increasing a service user and their family’s confidence in technology in a way that is complementary to traditional care. Members heard that very positive feedback has been received from those who are already using this technology. The data and insights provided throughout the customers journey help officers develop different ways that the technology could be introduced to those who have not started to use it.

The challenges of recruitment and retention in the social care workforce were also discussed, and Members heard that a multi-agency board has been set up to explore this issue. Members also discussed links with the local plan process and addressing potential gaps in provision of suitable accommodation for key workers, care leavers and the ageing population.

Childrens Services

The Task and Finish group recognised that their chosen areas of focus – demand management, Family Hubs and prevention and Early Help – were part of a wider suite of work within the Childrens services Transformation Programme. The overarching priority of this programme was preventing children from needing to come into care and ensuring that they can be safe and live within a family setting. This person-centred approach offers a more community-based prevention.

Members heard that that the safeguarding and prevention elements align with the Health and Well-being Strategy (HWBS), Shropshire Integrated Place Partnership (SHIPP) and the Transformation Programme, forming part of the wider Shropshire system of integration. The Family Hubs approach has been developed using a test and learn process. The Task and Finish Group were informed that evidence-based

interventions were used to provide the greatest benefit for families at a level to suit them. This was achieved through opportunities such as parent education, multi-agency approaches, and community support provision.

Members asked about projected growth in numbers of both children looked after (CLA) and children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). They recognised that without prevention taking place, demand would outstrip capacity and maintain an ongoing budget deficit. It was identified that early support to remain in family settings living with family members such as grandparents and aunts and uncles as “Connected Carers” delivered better outcomes for children and young people, with the added benefit of being cheaper for the Council.

Maintaining this focus on foster care, the group heard how Shropshire Council fostering fees were revised at the end of 2022, being aligned with those in other local authorities. Since then, 48 new foster carers were approved in 2022/23 and a further 26 were approved in quarter 1 - 3 of 2023/24, with a further 30 due to be presented to panel between January – March 2024. There are a further 55 fostering assessments in process. As well as increased fees foster carers are being given greater support and training, and the process of assessment has been made more efficient. Mockingbird constellation (connected carers hubs), delivered by the fostering network, also provides a valuable support network to carers with family support practitioners within the service aiding family stability and peer relationships. The Task and Finish Group were keen to put their support behind raising awareness of fostering opportunities and the support available through promoting the benefits of fostering using their social media reach and within their local communities.

The group also spent time discussing Third Party Spend within Social Care with particular emphasis on agencies providing domiciliary care, on agency social work staff, particularly in Children’s Social Care, and spending on Children’s private residential care. The group recognised that this topic could benefit from further focus by Overview and Scrutiny in future months.

From an Early Help perspective, Members were informed about the Best Start in Life programme providing support for the first 1001 days of a child’s life from conception to age 2. Four work programmes are in place with key partners and stakeholders across health, social care, education, and the wider voluntary sector. The offer includes:

- a new parent course ‘Family Foundation’, to be delivered to first time parents, including women in pregnancy and partners
- signposting to various pathways including financial support, prevention, and early intervention.

This information is published on new webpages across all system partners.

Members learned about the work of Stepping Stones which offers intensive therapeutic interventions through bespoke packages of support offered to children and their parent's / carers. Stepping Stones has increased from having two hubs of 5 Outreach Workers when it was launched in 2021, to a total of 30 Outreach Workers across 6 hubs, 4 hubs working with children on the edge of becoming looked after and two hubs working with children in residential homes to step them down into a family setting.

The Task and Finish Group were particularly interested in understanding more about Community and Family Hubs that have been developed in partnership with the Voluntary and Community Sector. This model puts the needs of children and families at the centre, whilst recognising the strength of community and surrounding support, as well as input from specialist services where necessary. The focus is for the different agencies to work as a single function through a single access point, using a hub and spoke model, with the integration of various organisations as the spokes.

These hubs are aimed at children and families of all ages including those with special educational needs and disabilities. Their work is guided by community need and located where there is a requirement, within a space shared amongst partner organisations, which also means sharing costs. When a need diminishes as children in areas grow up and the service is no longer required it can be relocated to a new area with a greater need. Members discussed the need for hubs to be located in places that were more accessible to people living in rural areas.

Members asked how the benefits for children, families, the agencies involved, and the Council have been identified and measured, and how the return on investment could be evidenced. They were informed that there was evaluation work underway around the long-term health and wellbeing benefits. In the immediate term footfall, an increase in the numbers of families using hubs and a drop in contacts and referrals to social care would be key factors in showing success.

The overall benefits and impact of the transformation of services for children and families over recent years was shared with the Group. They were told that since 2021 Stepping Stones have avoided 83 children coming into care and 47 have stepped down from a residential home into a family setting, which is not only better for children's wellbeing but also equates to total savings of £10.323M since the start of the project.

At the end of period 8 2023/24 £2.992M savings / avoidances were achieved through the work of Stepping Stones.

The group were also informed about the additional capacity that has also been delivered within the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) team to

meet the increasing number of EHCP assessments and enable children to be educated within a local school setting.

Place Directorate led Transformation

Waste services

Members of the Task and Finish Group heard about the cost and remit of the waste service contract which was set up in 2007 specifically for Shropshire to combine the waste treatment, waste collection and recycling elements across the County. They asked about annual costs which are expected to increase as a result of inflation and considered modelling of projected spend for the lifecycle of the contract. Members also discussed the impact of changes required in response to the Environment Act including the requirement for Shropshire to introduce a weekly food waste collection service from April 2026 and the provision of more vehicles and staff, as well as increased customer communication.

Members learned that through working with DEFRA extensive modelling of a number of collection options had been explored. The next step for the Transformation project team was to develop the preferred option, further to Cabinet approval.

Third Party Spend

In relation to Third Party Spend, Members were informed of the development of the Strategic Target Operating Model and how the management of contracts, rebuilding capacity and focusing upon embedding intelligence led decision-making would help to manage Third Party Spend more effectively. There is an opportunity to deliver continuous improvement in the commissioning and management of contracts and ensure that the Council has the right skills in the right service areas.

Members asked whether the strengthening of commissioning and contract management was being built in-house or through PWC and were informed that it was a mix of both in-house and PWC expertise, with the aim of ensuring that the Council and communities realise the best results from the management of contracts. The investment in staff as part of the Getting Leadership Right programme is equipping managers with these skills. Additionally, procurement strategies and processes are being reviewed to include links to social value and environmental benefits.

The Group were also informed about the development of more hybrid style contracts where benefits of 'partnering' with a large private sector organisation that can realise better economies of scale in their procurement of materials, combined with local provision, achieves best results. The Members felt that if this was an effective approach there might be scope to learn from this for other service areas.

It was confirmed that by improving the commissioning of services and the management of contracts the Council could achieve better value for money, greater resilience and accountability, a strengthened client function, ownership of data, and greater ability to drive services forwards.

Temporary Accommodation

In exploring the Transformation Programme within Temporary Accommodation Members heard that there is a national shortage of temporary accommodation units, creating reliance upon bed and breakfast accommodation which is unsuitable and costly. Between March 2022 and March 2023 national use of bed and breakfast increased by 31% however in Shropshire this was reduced by 32% across the same period.

The Task and Finish Group learned about the work undertaken by officers to support processes, tighten up on placement numbers, negotiate bed and breakfast prices, and challenge social landlords where cases are being skipped.

Members understood that significant external funding had been secured to create supported housing units and acquisitions have also been made with Section 106 and HRA funding to increase temporary accommodation stock. The ownership of stock means a greater return from central government than is received when people are placed in bed and breakfast accommodation.

It was explained that those classed as 'vulnerable' can include households with children, pregnant women, people with mental health or physical health issues, hospital or prison discharges, those fleeing domestic abuse or harassment and care leavers. A 'local connection' in this context is defined as anyone who has been in the area six out of the past 12 months, or 3 out of the past 5 years, and can provide proof of past addresses. If they have close family members, or permanent work in the area this is also a consideration. It was clarified that a local connection in a homelessness context does differ from local connection in housing allocation.

It was reinforced to Members that these savings are a reduction to overspend and have been brought about fundamentally as a result of the changing model and bringing accommodation provision in house, resulting in individuals getting better outcomes whilst the Council is in a position to claim more back from central government. Members were grateful for the statistics that were shared.

6. Conclusions

Members of the Task and Finish Group for Transformation and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) have worked at pace with Council officers, Portfolio Holders and PWC the Council's transformation partners. Their focus has been to start their work as a standing committee and explore the transformation projects that are underway to understand the impact being realised for Shropshire people and communities and how the changes being made relate to the MTFS and the delivery of the Shropshire Plan.

They have used their work to develop their understanding of the Transformation Programme projects they have focused on which has resulted in links being made to potential areas of new focus for the group as well as identifying cross cutting themes from elsewhere to be shared with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees for them to consider including in their work programme.

As well as learning about the progress being made in transforming key service areas such as Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care, it was acknowledged that recruitment and retention continue to be challenging. The Group were particularly interested in how maximising the opportunities to integrate technology into care packages could help change how people are supported and contribute to managing demand, increasing capacity, and enabling a broader marketplace. They saw that Virtual Care might be an opportunity to make being part of the care workforce more accessible to people who hadn't been able to work in the sector, perhaps because they would not be able to deliver the physical aspects of the work but would be skilled at providing support and care conversations using digital technology.

Members focused on the transformation work on third party contracts and understood the benefits of upskilling officers around contract negotiation and management, to ensure best value. Their consideration of the review of the waste management contract highlighted to them that there could be the potential for other areas of third party spend that might deliver improved value for money by being subject to a similar review at the appropriate time. They also believe that there would be benefits to recognising learning from the development of more hybrid 'partnering' contracts with local delivery and identify opportunities for this approach to be used elsewhere in the Council.

Members of the Group felt that the work taking place between the Council and PWC was delivering some benefits. They were mindful that the resources and expertise that PWC provided were being targeted at a small number of transformation projects where it was considered that they could add greatest value. The Group heard that the transformation programme consisted of many more projects which

the Council could deliver themselves. With an eye to their future work tracking the transformation programme, the group asked to be provided with an updated list of projects on an ongoing basis.

Having completed this stage of the work, the Members were keen to be able to track the impact and progress of the Transformation Programme. This would be assisted through the availability and reporting of the right measures and outcomes to show how the changes were delivering financial benefits and improved efficiency, as well as having a clear view on whether the expected changes to services were having the planned impacts. They highlighted that the delivery of the Transformation Programme needed to be integral to the Councils overarching business planning and contribute to the realising the priorities in the Shropshire Plan.

The Group also felt that the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees would benefit from taking account of the Transformation Programme when they set their work programmes. This would help to align the focus and resources of Overview and Scrutiny with the work being undertaken to transform the Council and provide more opportunities to add value to the work being undertaken, in a timely manner, before decisions are made.

In reaching their conclusions Members reflected on the breadth of the topics they had considered in the past 11 weeks. They hoped to be able to give topics more time and focus in future work, understanding the impacts and opportunities for and from transformation with relevant stakeholders. This work might involve using rapid investigation techniques as appropriate.

Members were grateful for the honest and helpful way those officers talked with the group and presented the information asked for to them.

7. Recommendations

The Task and Finish Group have identified a number of recommendations as detailed below –

Visibility and awareness of the Transformation Programme progress and impact

Recommendation 1: That information on the Transformation Programme and the planned and realised financial and non-financial benefits should be shared with Members e.g. via the Members Portal.

Working with the Transformation Partner

Recommendation 2: That the Council continues to develop its work with PWC as the Transformation Partner, tactically utilising their access to skills and knowledge that the Council does not have in house, to help transform services.

Recommendation 3: That Members are kept informed of the recommendations and actions arising from work with PWC and are updated as to the progress and impact of the adopted transformation work arising from them.

Integration of Transformation KPIs into performance and financial reporting

Recommendation 4: That key measures related to the delivery of the Transformation Programme should be developed and included in the KPIs that are included in the quarterly performance reporting and the quarterly financial reporting.

Social Care

Recommendation 5: That the Council continues with its good efforts to increase the number of its foster carers with the benefits that this brings, and that all Shropshire Councillors support and promote this through their social media reach and within their local communities.

Recommendation 6: That the opportunities offered by technology to social care pursued by the Council, should include exploring how “virtual care” could enable people to work in the sector by providing online care visits and conversations, opening this up to those who are unable to carry out in person homecare visits.

Recommendation 7: That the Council should continue to work across service areas to ensure that it is possible for people who work in the health and care to live closer to where they work, and that the properties that are developed are suitable to meet the needs of an ageing population.

Recommendations for Overview and Scrutiny

Recommendation 8: The People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to continue with its focus upon the importance of having sufficient establishment in the social work workforce and the design and commissioning of services realises best value for those receiving the service and the Council.

Recommendation 9: That the work programming by each Overview and Scrutiny Committee should take account of the Transformation Programme. This may include continuing the focus on transformation by the People Overview Committee or the contract management of the Keir and WSP contracts by the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation 10: That the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee should consider including Waste in their work programme for 2024/25 in light of upcoming changes to requirements as a result of the Environment Act.

Appendix 1

Meetings of the Task and Finish Group -

Meeting	Members of the Task and Finish group	Witnesses
27th Nov 2023	Cllr Roger Evans (Chair), Cllr Claire Wild, Cllr Alan Moseley, Cllr David Vasmer, Cllr Julia Buckley, Cllr Julian Dean, Cllr Kevin Pardy, Cllr Nick Bardsley, Cllr Peggy Mullock	Billy Webster
11th Dec 2023	Cllr Roger Evans (Chair), Cllr Claire Wild, Cllr Alan Moseley, Cllr Julian Dean, Cllr Kevin Pardy, Cllr Nick Bardsley, Cllr Peggy Mullock	Ben Jay
5th Jan 2024 <u>PWC Focus</u>	Cllr Roger Evans (Chair), Cllr Claire Wild, Cllr Alan Moseley, Cllr David Vasmer, Cllr Julia Buckley, Cllr Julian Dean, Cllr Nick Bardsley, Cllr Peggy Mullock	Billy Webster, Ben Jay, Paul Deegan (PWC), Aamena Bala (PWC)
10th Jan 2024 <u>Adults Services Focus</u>	Cllr Roger Evans (Chair), Cllr Claire Wild, Cllr Alan Moseley, Cllr David Vasmer, Cllr Julia Buckley, Cllr Julian Dean, Cllr Kevin Pardy, Cllr Nick Bardsley	Tanya Miles, Laura Tyler, Natalie McFall, Mark O'Brien, Charlotte Hall, Louise Forbes, Cllr Cecilia Motley
12th Jan 2024 <u>Waste and Third Party Spend Focus</u>	Cllr Roger Evans (Chair), Cllr Claire Wild, Cllr Alan Moseley, Cllr David Vasmer, Cllr Julia Buckley, Cllr Julian Dean, Cllr Kevin Pardy, Cllr Nick Bardsley, Cllr Peggy Mullock	Mark Barrow, Gavin Waite, Tim Smith, Andy Wilde, Billy Webster
16th Jan 2024 <u>Temporary Accommodation Focus</u>	Cllr Roger Evans (Chair), Cllr Claire Wild, Cllr Alan Moseley, Cllr Julia Buckley, Cllr Julian Dean, Cllr Kevin Pardy, Cllr Nick Bardsley, Cllr Peggy Mullock	Cllr Dean Carroll, Laura Fisher, Jane Trethewey, Ben Jay
22nd Jan 2024 <u>Children's Services Focus</u>	Cllr Roger Evans (Chair), Cllr Claire Wild, Cllr David Vasmer, Cllr Julia Buckley, Cllr Kevin Pardy, Cllr Nick Bardsley, Cllr Peggy Mullock	Tanya Miles, Rachel Robinson, Paula Mawson, Penny Bason, Siobhan Hughes, Anne-Marie Speke, Donessa Gray, Cllr Kirstie Hurst-Knight
31st Jan 2024 <u>PWC Focus</u>	Cllr Roger Evans (Chair), Cllr Claire Wild, Cllr Alan Moseley, Cllr Julia Buckley, Cllr Julian Dean, Cllr Kevin Pardy, Cllr Nick Bardsley, Cllr Peggy Mullock	James Walton, Erica Ballmann (PWC), Aamena Bala (PWC)
5th Feb 2024	Cllr Roger Evans (Chair), Cllr Claire Wild, Cllr Alan Moseley, Cllr Kevin Pardy, Cllr Nick Bardsley, Cllr Peggy Mullock	Billy Webster

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