



YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2015

11.00 - 11.40 am in the Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward

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Present

Shropshire Councillors

Councillor Joyce Barrow (Chairman)

Councillors Peggy Mullock (Vice Chairman), Hannah Fraser, Vince Hunt, Kevin Parry and John Price

Co-Opted Members (Voting)

Austin Atkinson

Philip Tranter

53 Apologies and Substitutions

- 53.1 The Committee held one minute's silence following the Paris atrocities at the weekend.
- 53.2 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Boddington [Substitute: Councillor R Evans] and R Tindall.
- 53.3 The Chairman welcomed Mr P Tranter as a new member of the Committee. Mr Tranter stated that he served as a Parent Governor at Lower Heath School on the outskirts of Whitchurch, Shropshire. A welcome was also offered to Diane Steiner, Public Health, as an observer at the meeting.

54 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

- 54.1 No interests were declared.

55 Public Question Time

- 55.1 There were no questions received from members of the public.

56 Members' Question Time

- 56.1 No questions had been received from members of the public.

57 Consideration of the Financial Strategy

- 57.1 The Chairman drew attention to advice received from the Chief Executive explaining the limited role that scrutiny could play in its consideration of the Financial Strategy at this stage in the process. Members considered that scrutiny involvement at an earlier stage would have been preferable but the opportunity to be part of the debate was, nevertheless, of value.
- 57.2 The Performance Manager reinforced the message from the Chief Executive and added that the meeting provided Members with an opportunity to have an understanding of the content of the Financial Strategy and the Council's financial direction of travel. He commented that the detail was still lacking but the changes and the challenges to be met were clear together with the need for the Council's future flexibility and fluidity. The strength in engaging with communities was also very apparent.
- 57.3 The Committee considered the information available and the following specific areas were highlighted during the debate; Early Help, the Big Conversation and future scrutiny involvement in the process.
- 57.4 Early Help
The Committee voiced concerns that Early Help was not included in the list of protected services going forward. Members recognised that this service helped other services within Children's Safeguarding to run more cheaply and cost effectively. It was believed that movement away from preventative measures would most certainly have repercussions elsewhere within the service. It was concluded that 'prevention' was a difficult term to quantify and this would be included as part of the Big Conversation.
- 57.5 A Member commented that the failure to include Early Help within the list of protected services would call into question the whole Children's Safeguarding Strategy. The Committee understood that the Council was legally required to have Early Help in place but it was for each authority to determine the appropriate level for themselves.
- 57.6 Big Conversation
Some concern was voiced on the lack of Member involvement and input into the development of the Big Conversation questionnaire. It was noted that local members would be involved in their own areas. Members acknowledged that it was hoped the same level of feedback would be generated as that engendered by the unitary debate. Feedback from local people was considered to be essential given the huge budgetary implications for the Council.
- 57.7 Some Members voiced concerns on the projected level of services to be decommissioned by the Council and considered that these decisions would have serious repercussions both now and in the future. The Portfolio Holder urged all to become involved in the Big Conversation to ensure that savings were found safely and that children and young people would be kept safe in future.

57.8 Future Scrutiny Involvement

The Chairman considered that the key role of the Committee in future would be scrutiny of the changes, once decided. She also drew attention to the Committee's key 'overview' role.

57.9 The Committee recognised that the fast pace of events represented a challenge in establishing a meaningful route for scrutiny involvement. Members also recognised the need to consider how scrutiny could have a meaningful role in future at an earlier stage in the process.

57.10 **RESOLVED:**

That the Committee's feedback be included as part of the overall scrutiny comments on the Council's Financial Strategy.

58 **Date of Next Meeting**

58.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Young People's Scrutiny Committee would be held at 10.00am on Wednesday 16 December 2015.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: