



Shropshire Council
Legal and Democratic Services
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

Date: Tuesday, 20 February 2018

Committee: Cabinet

Date: Wednesday, 28 February 2018

Time: 12.30 pm

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

You are requested to attend the above meeting.

The Agenda is attached

Claire Porter
Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)

Members of Cabinet

Peter Nutting (Leader)
Steve Charmley (Deputy Leader)
Joyce Barrow
Lezley Picton
David Minnery
Robert Macey
Nic Laurens
Nicholas Bardsley
Lee Chapman
Steve Davenport

Deputy Members of Cabinet

Clare Aspinall
Dean Carroll
Rob Gittins
Roger Hughes
Elliott Lynch
Alex Phillips

Your Committee Officer is:

Jane Palmer Senior Democratic Services Officer

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Email: jane.palmer@shropshire.gov.uk

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AGENDA

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members are reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

3 Minutes (Pages 1 - 8)

To approve as a correct record and sign the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 14 February 2018. **TO FOLLOW**

4 Public Question Time

To receive any questions or petitions from members of the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. Deadline for notification for this meeting is no later than 24 hours prior to the commencement of the meeting, i.e. by 12.30pm on Tuesday 27 February 2018.

5 Member Questions

To receive any questions of which members of the Council have given due notice. Deadline for notification for this meeting is 5.00pm on Friday 23 February 2018.

6 Scrutiny Items

To consider any scrutiny matters from Council or from any of the Council's Scrutiny Committees.

7 Quarter 3 Performance Report 2017/2018 (Pages 9 - 16)

Lead Member – Councillor Steve Charmley – Deputy Leader of Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support

Report of the Director of Place and Enterprise

Contact: George Candler Tel: 01743 258671

8 Amendment to the Discretionary Housing Payment Policy (Pages 17 - 40)

Lead Member – Councillor Steve Charmley – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support

Report of the Head of Human Resources and Development

Contact: Michele Leith Tel: 01743 254402

9 Local Commissioning of Youth Activities - Proposals for changes to the funding of targeted geographical provision (Pages 41 - 52)

Lead Member – Councillor Nicholas Bardsley – Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People

Report of the Director of Place and Enterprise

Contact: George Candler Tel: 01743 258671



Committee and Date

Cabinet

28 February 2018

CABINET

**Minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2018 in the Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND
12.30 pm - 1.10 pm**

Responsible Officer: Jane Palmer
Email: jane.palmer@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257712

Present

Councillor Peter Nutting (Leader)
Councillors Steve Charmley (Deputy Leader), Joyce Barrow, Lezley Picton, David Minnery, Robert Macey, Nic Laurens, Nicholas Bardsley, Lee Chapman and Steve Davenport

143 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

144 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None were declared.

145 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 17 January 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

146 Public Question Time

There were no questions from members of the public.

147 Member Questions

There were no questions from Members.

148 **Scrutiny Items - Call-in**

Cabinet noted that the recent call-in of the Cabinet decision made on 17 January 2018 regarding the New Parking Strategy had been considered by the Place Overview Committee on 12 February 2018 when Cabinet's decision had been supported. Responding to a Member's concerns, the Monitoring Officer stated that the Member concerned had received legal advice outside of the meeting.

The Chair of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee presented the findings of the Financial Strategy and Budget 2018/19 Task and Finish Group following its consideration of the budget proposals for 2018/19 and the proposed Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2022/23. She explained that the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee had now agreed to establish a standing Task and Finish Group to look at budgetary and Financial Strategy issues in order to have a more beneficial influence on the process in future. Responding to a Member's comments, she gave assurances that appropriate Portfolio Holders had been diligent in attending meetings of the Task and Finish Group.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations of the Financial Strategy Task and Finish Group be supported as follows:

- i. That a Task and Finish Group is established to work alongside the development of plans for the 2019/20 Budget and to maintain an overview of progress and performance in relation to innovation and raising income.
- ii. That a review is completed to identify whether the Council has the skills, experience and capacity in house to deliver the innovation and income delivery through the Council's assets that is required to close the budget deficit.
- iii. That consultation on future Budgets and Financial Strategies is accompanied with clear information and examples that help to illustrate the potential impacts of proposed changes, to inform people's responses.

149 **Financial Monitoring Report Quarter 3 2017/2018**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a report from the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance [s151 Officer] detailing the projected revenue expenditure for the whole of 2017/18 as at Quarter 3.

Responding to a Member's query, the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance stated that he would confirm whether or not the difference in the Adult Services budgets in Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 was the result of a budgetary adjustment within those areas.

Referring to the new delivery model for Early Help Services, the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People refuted a Member's comments and stated that a great

deal of publicity had taken place both on the Council's website and in the local media.

RESOLVED:

- i. That it be noted that at the end of Quarter 3 (31 December 2017), the full year revenue forecast is a potential underspend of £0.059m;
- ii. That the impact of this on the Council's General Fund balance be considered.
- iii. That net budget variations of £10.073m to the 2017/18 capital programme be approved, detailed in Appendix 3/Table 6, and the re-profiled 2017/18 capital budget of £58.276m. Variations include revenue contributions of £0.132m towards school projects and Community Library Schemes and a reduction in HRA revenue contributions of £1.249m.
- iv. That re-profiled capital budgets of £46.290m for 2018/19, £7.487m for 2019/20 and £0.667m for 2020/21, be approved as detailed in Appendix 3/Table 9.
- v. That the capital expenditure to date of £37.655, representing 65% of the revised capital budget for 2017/18, with 75% of the year having elapsed, be accepted.

150 Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21 - Final

The Leader presented a report from the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance [s151 Officer] setting out the Council's financial strategy over the next five years, enabling a balanced budget to be set for the years 2018/19 to 2019/20 and considered the potential to set a sustainable and balanced budget in the years beyond.

Referring to the permanent savings from highways maintenance that may be reversible, the Chief Executive explained that these savings would be reviewed in 2020/21 and, at that point in time, if sufficient alternative proposals were in place, then they may be reversed.

RESOLVED:

- i. That 2018/19 budget of £582.151m outlined in the Budget Book at Appendix 7, including the savings proposals outlined in Appendix 4 be agreed and recommended to Council
- ii. That the changes required to the 2018/19 budget as a result of the Final Local Government Settlement and revised business rates and collection fund estimates, be noted.
- iii. That the revised funding gap for the years 2019/20 to 2022/23 be noted.

- iv. That the revised Capital Programme as set out in the report and detailed at section 8 and Appendix 8 be agreed and recommended to Council.
- v. That the continued use of the Policy for Flexibility around the use of Capital Receipts be noted.

151 Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a technical report from the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance [s151 Officer] on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the budget calculations and the adequacy of the proposed reserves.

Responding to a Member's query regarding the number of staff redundancies to be implemented by the end of March 2018, the Chief Executive stated that these were voluntary and savings were to be made before the end of the next financial year, 2018/2019. He stated that, until the outcome of the voluntary redundancy scheme and the impact of the digital transformation had been assessed, the level of compulsory redundancies could not be projected. He also stressed that structural changes were to be made within teams and this would have an impact on future staffing.

The Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance [s151 Officer] explained that the reserves calculation was a risk based assessment based on the current Financial Strategy and that before 2022/23 the Council should be reducing the funding gap and thus reducing the risk in later years.

RESOLVED:

- i. That the recommended level of general balances to support the 2018/19 revenue budget at £17.081m, noting that the projected balance will be below this for 2018/19, be approved;
- ii. That the projected recommended level of general reserves be noted for the following four years at £18.830m in 2019/20, £18.879m in 2020/21, £31.518m in 2021/22 and £40.037m in 2022/23.
- iii. That it be noted that further consideration will be made of the implications of figures contained within this report and should there be any material change required, this will be reported to Council on 22 February 2018.

152 Fees and Charges 2018/2019

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a report from the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance [s151 Officer] on the level of fees and charges to be applied in 2018/19.

RESOLVED:

- i. That the breakdown of the total income for 2017/18 and 2018/19 be noted and in particular that the proposed 2018/19 charges for discretionary services represent only £34.159m of the £72.337m of income derived from Fees and Charges.
- ii. That the charges for 2018/19 be approved as detailed in Appendix 3 to be implemented 1 April 2018, recognising that managers have proposed varying policies for 2018/19.
- iii. That it be noted that as previously agreed, any changes to fees and charges proposed by Shropshire Community Leisure Trust Ltd. in relation to the outsourced leisure facilities will only be referred to Cabinet and Council for approval if the proposed increases exceed Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the preceding November.
- iv. That subject to restrictions or exemptions identified in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill it is recommended to Council that
 - a) Social Housing rents for 2018/19 are reduced by 1% from 1st April 2018.
 - b) Affordable rents for 2018/19 are reduced by 1% from 1st April 2018.
 - c) Shared Ownership rents continue to be set at 2.75% of the outstanding capital value of the home at the time of sale and thereafter increased each April by the greater of the preceding September Consumer Price Index plus 1% or 1%.
 - d) Service charges continue to be set on the basis of actual cost.

153 Estimated Collection Fund Outturn 2017/2018

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a report from the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance [s151 Officer] detailing the estimated Collection Fund surpluses/deficits for 2017/18, calculated as at 15 January 2018 for Council Tax and as at 31 January 2018 for Non-Domestic Rates, for the year ending 31 March 2018.

RESOLVED:

- i. That the overall Collection Fund estimated deficit of £2.712m for the year ending 31st March 2018, comprised of an estimated surplus of £2.784m for Council Tax and an estimated deficit of £5.496m for Non-Domestic Rates (NDR), be noted.
- ii. That the distribution of the Collection Fund estimated surplus for Council Tax and deficit for NDR to the major / relevant precepting authorities and the Secretary of State, be noted.
- iii. That Shropshire Council's share of the overall estimated deficit of £0.130m, comprised of an estimated surplus of £2.293m for Council Tax and an estimated deficit of £2.423m for NDR, be noted.

- iv. That the inclusion of Shropshire Council's share of the overall estimated deficit in the 2018/19 budget be noted.

154 **Treasury Strategy 2018/2019**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a technical report from the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance [s151 Officer] proposing the Treasury Strategy for 2018/19 and recommending the Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2018/19 to 2020/21.

RECOMMENDED:

- a) That the Treasury Strategy for 2018/19 be approved.
- b) That the Prudential Indicators, set out in Appendix 1, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003, be approved.
- c) That the Investment Strategy, set out in Appendix 2 in accordance with the CLG Guidance on Local Government Investments be approved.
- d) That the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement, set out in Appendix 3 be approved.
- e) That the Section 151 Officer be authorised to exercise the borrowing powers contained in Section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003 and to manage the Council's debt portfolio in accordance with the Treasury Strategy.
- f) That the Section 151 Officer be authorised to use other Foreign Banks which meet Link's creditworthiness policy as required.
- g) That Members be asked to note the changes to the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice and Prudential Code and outstanding consultation exercises.

155 **Treasury Management Update Quarter 3 2017/2018**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a report from the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance [s151 Officer] outlining the treasury management activities of the Council during the last quarter.

RESOLVED:

That the position detailed in the report be accepted.

156 **Business Rates Revaluation Discretionary Relief Scheme 2018-2019**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a report from the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance [s151 Officer] detailing the parameters for the new business rate relief scheme.

RESOLVED:

- i. That the proposals for the new business rate relief scheme for 2018-19 and subsequent financial years be approved, and a delegation be confirmed to the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, to finalise the scheme for 2018-19 and subsequent financial years.
- ii. That the use of any remaining government funds to support other businesses on a case by case basis considered by the Council's Section 151 Officer be approved.
- iii. That continuation of £1000 business rate discount in 2018-19 for local pubs with a rateable value up to £100,000 be formally approved.

157 **Revocation of Air Quality Management Areas**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services presented a report from the Director of Public Health on the revocation of two Air Quality Management Areas that were no longer needed because the measured levels of nitrogen dioxide were now below nationally set Air Quality Objective Levels.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Public Health be authorised to revoke the Shrewsbury No.1 AQMA in Bayston Hill and the Shrewsbury No.2 AQMA centred around Heathgates Roundabout under section 83(2)(b) of the Environment Act 1995. The Orders are attached at Appendix 1 and 2 of the report.

158 **Determination of Admission Arrangements 2019/20**

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People presented a report from the Director of Children's Services on the change to the Council's admission arrangements for the 2019/20 academic year. He added that consultations had taken place between 15 December 2017 and 26 January 2018 and the Local Admissions Forum also supported the proposed arrangements.

RESOLVED:

- i. That the proposal to amend the local authority's admission arrangements be approved, namely:

- The rationalisation of the designated secondary school catchment areas for properties at Bomere Heath, Hoptonheath , Clunbury, Cockshutt, Morville, Pennerley and Stanwardine.
- ii That the admission arrangements for 2019/20 be approved without further amendment to those determined in February 2017.
 - iii That, by agreeing to the above, the school admission arrangements for Shropshire Council for the academic year 2019/20 and the required publication of the arrangements in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2014 be determined.
 - iv That Officers notify the Secretary of State by 28 February 2018 that Shropshire Council has determined its school admissions arrangements for the 2019/20 academic year.

Signed

(Leader)

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Date:

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Committee and Date

Cabinet

28th February 2018

Quarter 3 Performance Report 2017/18

Responsible: Tom Dodds, Performance Manager

e-mail: tom.dodds@shropshire.gov.uk

01743 253068

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report presents Cabinet with the Council's Performance against its key Outcomes for Quarter 3 2017/18.
- 1.2 The Corporate Plan and the High Level Outcomes provide the shape and focus of the updated Performance Management Framework. The measures in the framework will be refined as the strategic action plans for the coming 12 to 18 months set out how the outcomes will be delivered.

The new framework will include project milestones from the strategic action plans, as they are confirmed, to help demonstrate the change being delivered.

- 1.3 The new framework is presented with four key outcome areas: Healthy People, Prosperous Economy, Resilient Communities and Your Council. The range of performance measures covers a broader range of service areas than previously reported.
- 1.4 As part of developing the new Performance Management Framework and reporting of additional measures, a different way of presenting performance information has been developed. The online performance portal has been to be used in conjunction with this report, and can be accessed here -

<https://shropshireperformance.inphase.com/>
- 1.5 This is the first stage of improving access to performance information and that of data transparency. Member and user feedback will help to inform further development of performance information, which will form part of the new IT system developments.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- A. Consider the key underlying and emerging issues in the reports and appendices.
- B. Review the performance portal and identify any performance areas that they would like to consider in greater detail or refer to the appropriate Overview Scrutiny Committee.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 Poor performance could have implications for vulnerable people (including children) who are supported by Council services and economic growth in Shropshire. In turn, there may be significant financial, legal and reputational risk to the Council, Schools (and Academies), and partners from across the public and voluntary and independent care sectors.
- 3.2 Effective monitoring and follow-up against key measures of success provides the opportunity to manage risks and ensure that Children and Young People and vulnerable adults in Shropshire remain safe and achieve the desired outcomes. Increasingly, performance reporting will reflect the impact of commissioning decisions by the Council, linking directly with the management of contracts and building on the current approach of looking at how effective the Council is at delivering its outcomes.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 This report does not have any direct financial implications, but presents service and financial information to support decision making. Accountable officers and senior managers may use the information to inform actions or interventions for improving service performance and the prioritisation and use of resources.
- 4.2 Full financial details are presented as part of the Financial Reports.

5. Introduction

Each of the four outcome areas contains a number of sub-outcomes with a range of associated performance measures. The frequency of the availability of the data varies from monthly and quarterly updates to annual updates. All measures, regardless of frequency will be available on the performance portal to improve accessibility to information.

Quarterly Cabinet reports will be used to highlight performance exceptions and changes to measures reported annually.

6. **Healthy People**

The sub outcomes for Healthy People are; Improving Public Health, Keeping People Safe, Participation in Positive Activities for Health and Well-being.

- 6.1 Measures for Improving Public Health are mainly updated annually and will be reported as and when new data becomes available. No measures are updated this quarter.
- 6.2 Participation in positive activities is beneficial for both physical and mental well-being. Participation rates have been mainly positive with increased visitors to leisure centres, outdoor recreation sites, visitor attractions, Theatre Severn and the Old Market Hall.

The Country Parks and Countryside Heritage Sites remain popular and are an important asset for local people and visitors. Collection of accurate visitor data has always been difficult, relying on sample counts. Following a review, a number of electronic counters have been installed at sites, which should provide more accurate figures and better coverage of our sites. The quarter 3 2017/18 figure (936,728) is higher than quarter 3 2016/17 (890,647). The figures being gathered now are much more accurate this is due, in part, to new counters in Snailbeach, Ifton Meadows and Lyth Hill.

Annual visitor figures to visitor attractions have increased at quarter 3 2017/18 (172,651) compared to quarter 3 2016/17 (145,767). There has been a significant increase in the number of visitors to the Shrewsbury Museum, 23,608 at quarter 3 2017/18 compared to 16,778 at quarter 2016/17. This increase can be attributed to several factors. Improved counting to make recording visitor numbers more accurate, increased footfall to the information centre looking for things to do and there has also been an increased footfall due to selling tickets for festivals/events in the county.

There has been a continued long-term reduction in visits to libraries. The annual visitor numbers have reduced. When comparing the same period last year there has been a 10.4% reduction in visitor numbers from quarter 3 2016/17 (1,024,022) compared to quarter 3 2017/18 (917,501).

The number of visitors to Theatre Severn and the Old Market Hall Cinema have continued to increase. The popularity of the theatre continues to show a long term improvement. Annual attendance figures have increased by 2.7% comparing quarter 3 2017/18 (184,756) with quarter 3 2016/17 (179,850).

The Theatre is also making a positive contribution to the visitor economy of Shropshire with 32% of visitors coming from outside of the county. The Old Market Hall visitors increased to 67,420 at quarter 3 17/18 compared to 64,570 for quarter 3 16/17.

- 6.3 Keeping safe measures show that food and drink premises in Shropshire continue to maintain high food safety standards. 99% of premises are rated as generally satisfactory or higher.

- 6.4 As identified and detailed in previous Corporate Performance reports the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads in Shropshire has continued to increase. The annual average over the past 3 years is for 166.7 people to be seriously or fatally injured.

A new approach to the determining of the severity of casualties was introduced and now relies less on the judgement of officers. This has seen a national increase in the rate of reported severities. It is forecast that the reported number of KSI in this report will continue to rise until December 2018 after which the new methodology for recording casualties will have completed a 3 year cycle.

It should be noted that the number of casualties does not reflect the number of accidents which have remained at similar levels throughout the period.

7. Prosperous Economy

The sub outcomes for Prosperous Economy are; Physical and Digital Infrastructure, Employment and Income, Educational Achievement.

- 7.1 Satisfaction results with highways and transport from the public satisfaction survey were published in December 2017. Overall satisfaction with highways and transport has decreased slightly from 55% in 2016 to 53% in 2017. More detailed information of survey results can be found at: <http://www.nhtnetwork.org/nht-public-satisfaction-survey/home/>.
- 7.2 Being young and unemployed can lead to an increase in the risk of poverty, de-skilling and social exclusion as well as cause loss of motivation and mental health problems. Current rate of claimants for Job Seekers Allowance or Universal Credit actively seeking work in Shropshire is below the regional and national averages. The claimant count for young people (aged 18 – 24) saw a continued reduction from the peak in February 2013 when there were 1370 claimants. Since June 2015 the number of claimants has remained fairly constant. The number of young claimants as at December 2017 was 475.
- 7.3 Average wages for people working in Shropshire (workplace wages) fell by £8.30 to £470.80 gross per week (-1.7%) in the year to April 2017, this is lower than the West Midlands average of £514.90. This is also lower than the average annual weekly wage for Great Britain which was up by £12.20 to £552.30; this means that the gap between national and local pay rates widened to £81.50. This difference may be due to a higher percentage of our businesses being within lower paid sectors of agriculture, care, hospitality and leisure.
- 7.4 Residents pay has fallen by £1.50 a week to £517.20; residents pay in Shropshire is now similar to the West Midlands average of £517.40. Shropshire average pay remains lower than the Great Britain average of £552.70. Residents pay is higher than workplace pay indicating that skilled workers are commuting to surrounding areas to achieve higher pay levels. Due to sampling sizes, both pay measures are likely to see a greater annual variance when compared to regional and national results.

8. Resilient Communities

The sub outcomes for Resilient Communities are; Support for Families and Keeping Children Safe, Volunteering, Keeping Communities Clean, People are supported to Stay in their Local Communities, Adults Entering Paid for Care and Adult Social Care - User Feedback.

8.1 The rate of Looked After Children per 10,000 children aged under 18 has risen during quarter 3 to 54.9. This is a raise from 53.2 at the end of quarter 2, and a rise from 48.2 at the end of December 2016. Shropshire's rate is now similar to statistical neighbour averages, and remains lower than the England average. One of the key factors for the increase in LAC at quarter 3 is that we have discharged fewer children this year than we had in the previous year. It is important to reaffirm that our LAC strategy is not about reducing the number of children in care, but is about ensuring the right children are in care, at the right time and for the right duration

8.2 The overall aim of a Child Protection Plan is to ensure the child is safe and prevent him or her from suffering further harm. Numbers of Children with a Child Protection Plan are continually monitored to ensure children have the right support to promote welfare, health and development.

The rate of children with a Child Protection Plan (CPP) has begun to decline during 2017/18. Progress in the quality of our child protection planning is evidenced in the Independent Review Unit RAG Rating Reports. Where safeguarding concerns are addressed, we are now ending CPP as appropriate and stepping down to Child In Need planning; ensuring that children have a gradual step down in services before stepping down to Early Help. The rate of Child Protection plans per 10,000 children aged under 18 rose slightly between the end of quarter 2, and the end of quarter 3. Year on Year, the rate has fallen from 44.9 to 31.3, with Shropshire now below both Statistical Neighbours and England Averages.

8.3 Children's services provided by Shropshire Council have been rated as 'good' overall by Government inspectors Ofsted, following a four-week inspection in September and October 2017. The inspection looked at services for children in need of help and protection, looked-after children, and care leavers. Only 46 councils are currently rated as 'good' for their children's services, and only three have achieved the top rating of 'outstanding'. This means that Shropshire Council's children's services are now in the top 30% nationally. The 'good' rating is an improvement from the 'adequate' rating that was awarded following the last Ofsted inspection in November 2012.

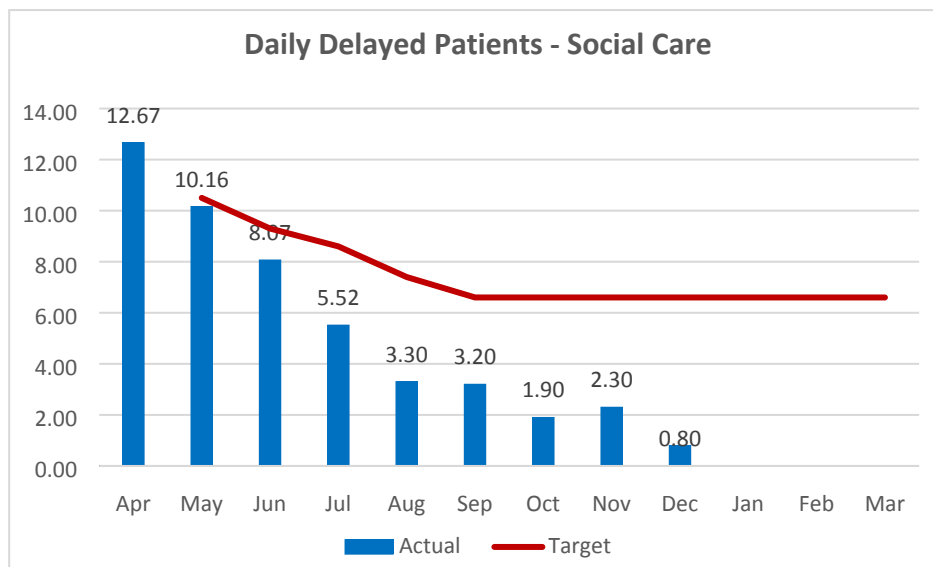
8.4 The rate of permanent admissions of adults aged 65+ into residential or nursing homes is lower (better) than the profile and is currently lower than in previous years. The rate of admissions for adults aged 18 – 64 at the end of quarter 3 is also lower (better) than profile. The service remains committed to enabling people to remain in their homes and maintain a decent quality of life for as long as possible. The service also confirms that it assesses the needs of each person to ensure that the right service is provided at the right time ensuring that residential and nursing care is provided at the most appropriate time.

8.5 The new Delayed Transfer of Care measure was established in April 2017

National targets have been set to reduce the number of patients who are delayed in their transfer from hospital. The aim is to reduce bed blocking to less than 3.5% of all available NHS beds.

The target set for Shropshire Adult Social Care by the Department of Health was to reduce delays attributed to social care by 60% by September and to maintain that level. This is based on a baseline of delayed patients between February and April 2017.

From September the daily number of Shropshire residents who are delayed in hospital due to social care should, on average, be no more than 6.7 patients per day. The latest available data for November was published on the 11th Jan 2018 and shows that Shropshire Council has achieved and maintained performance below its target.



8.6 The annual social care survey results for 2016/17 were published in October 2017

Results compare favourably with the West Midlands region and England. Details of the following measures are updated in the performance portal.

% of Adult Social Care users reported that they have as much social contact as they would like – within the 2nd quartile of English authorities

Quality of life measurement – within the top quartile of English authorities

% of Adult social care users who feel safe - within the top quartile of English authorities

The proportion of people who use services who have control over their daily life - within the 2nd quartile of English authorities

9. Your Council

- 9.1 Projected revenue forecast spend for the year, as at quarter 3 is for a small underspend of £59,000. This is a significant improvement on the reported position as at the end of quarter 2. The underspend is based on a gross budget of £563.3m (net £206.1m). Full details are reported in the revenue and capital monitor report, presented to Cabinet on the 14th February 2018.
- 9.2 The number of non-school FTE employees has increased slightly from 2473 at quarter 2 17/18 to 2508 at quarter 3 17/18. This increase can partially be attributed to additional recruitment in Adult Social Care who have received additional Government funding to target improved performance in key areas including the reduction of delayed transfers of care.

10. Conclusion

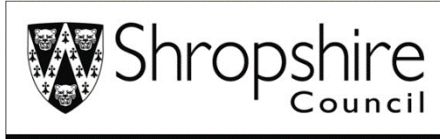
- 10.1 This performance report provides an update on the results achieved and the impact on delivering the outcomes for Shropshire.
- 10.2 Performance for the second quarter of 2017/18 has generally been positive with continued improvements or stabilisation of performance.
- Delayed Transfer of Care has improved by 96.7% from December 2016, with performance now in the top quartile for England.
 - Combined attendance at Theatre Severn and the Old Market Hall has continued to increase with annual attendance now more than a quarter of a million.
 - Permanent admissions to residential care is better than the expected profile.

In addition to these improvements there are confirmed challenges to be faced, and these are being managed by the relevant service areas.

- The number of people recorded as killed or seriously injured in road accidents has continued to increase.
- The number of Looked After Children has increased placing additional pressure on the service

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)
Business Plan and Financial Strategy 2014 – 2017
Draft Corporate Plan 2016/17 – 2018/19
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)
Cllr Steve Charmley - Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support
Local Member All
Appendices https://shropshireperformance.inphase.com/

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<u>Committee and Date</u>
Cabinet
28 February 2018

Amendment to the Discretionary Housing Payment Policy

Responsible Officer Michele Leith

e-mail: Michele.leith@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01743 254402

1. Summary

- 1.1 This paper clarifies and updates the conditions of entitlement and other wording in Shropshire Council's Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) policy.
- 1.2 DHPs are discretionary payments administered by local authorities on behalf of the Department for Work & Pensions who provide the funding. DHP's may be awarded as further financial assistance with rent and associated housing costs over and above any entitlement to Housing Benefit or the rent element within Universal Credit. Conditionality of DHP's is governed by the Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 which define who is entitled, what might be paid and the circumstances under which this might be the case
- 1.3 This amendment reflects the new responsibilities placed on Local Authorities by the Homelessness Reduction Act whereby a duty of prevention may extend to eligible people with no connection to Shropshire and that there may be additional pressure on Shropshire's DHP fund as a result. The discretionary nature of the current scheme as operated now does not automatically exclude applications from people with no connection to Shropshire and whilst this may not change in practice the clarification is to show that the primary beneficiaries of the scheme are intended to be Shropshire Council area residents and those having a connection to Shropshire.
- 1.4 There are also minor changes to cover the introduction of Universal Credit which will increasingly take over from Housing Benefit in providing rent support for working age benefit recipients both in and out of work and which may also increase demand on the scheme.

2: Recommendations:

Members are respectfully requested to:

- A Consider and agree the changes to Shropshire Council's local DHP policy which clarifies that the local fund is primarily for use to support Shropshire residents and people with a connection to Shropshire.
- B Note and agree the revised policy wording covering the introduction of Universal Credit

3: Financial implications

- 3.1 The Department for Work & Pensions provides councils with an annual allocation of funds from which payments of DHP can be made. Any unspent money is returned to government by DWP. Local Authorities may at their own discretion top up the available money from their own funds.
- 3.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act which comes into force on 6 April 2018 places a new duty of prevention on authorities for all eligible applicants under threat of homelessness, irrespective of priority need status or intentionality. There is the potential for increased demand on the DHP fund as a result of this, in addition, other changes in the welfare system scheduled for 2018 including the increased roll out of Universal Credit are also expected to increase demand. Because of the discretionary nature of the scheme, decision makers are obliged to consider all of the facts of an application including a person's financial position, background and the level of hardship so that those in greatest need are assisted, this remains unchanged.

4 Background

- 4.1 Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's) historically have been available only to those people entitled to Housing Benefit. However, with the roll out of the Universal Credit (UC), anyone having a rent element within their UC assessment will be eligible to apply for a DHP and this will include individuals and families both in work and out of work equating to a much larger audience and potentially much larger demand. The allocation of money to an individual authority is calculated by the Department for Work & Pensions and takes into account the size of the live load of Housing Benefit cases and the expected impact on residents caused by welfare reforms since 2013 such as removal of the spare room subsidy, the benefit cap and restrictions on Local Housing Allowance rates.
- 4.2 The expectation in most cases is that a DHP is not a long term solution to a restriction of benefit but is instead provides a financial "cushion" whilst the person makes the necessary changes to make their circumstances affordable. Longer term or even indefinite awards may be appropriate in other cases according to the individual circumstances. Shropshire's policy is operated in this way meaning that wider needs arising from historic welfare changes have been addressed. The

policy and application take into account the recommendations of the Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) Task and Finish Group set up by the Performance Scrutiny Panel in 2014.

5 DHP Policy:

- 5.1 The current policy was agreed by Cabinet on 29 July 2015 and details how the council administers the Discretionary Housing Payment funding that it receives from the Government.
- 5.2 It explains who might qualify, what the fund can pay for, what it cannot pay for, the claiming process, the treatment of income and expenditure, the things we take into consideration when making our decisions, how awards are made and how disputed decisions are reviewed. It also explains how awards may be part of a wider help structure. Due to the discretionary nature of the scheme the policy avoids being proscriptive in order that all of the circumstances of an individual can be considered in the decision making process, this would be a natural consideration to anyone presenting as homeless in Shropshire.
- 5.3 An additional paragraph has been inserted (highlighted at page 6 of the policy) to reflect the required connection to Shropshire for those making applications. The policy wording has also been amended so that any reference to Housing Benefit contains an additional reference to Universal Credit to reflect its gradual take-over of help with rent for working age people.

6 Conclusions:

- 6.1 To help meet these future changes, a paragraph has been added to the Policy to clarify that the expectation is that Shropshire's funding allocation will be aimed primarily at those who are Shropshire residents or those with connections to the County. The discretionary nature of the scheme, however, means that in practice we would not automatically exclude those with no connection and that there may be mitigating circumstances where an award may be appropriate. Additionally, minor changes in the policy wording reflect the increased roll out of Universal Credit in Shropshire.
- 6.2 The original Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment has been reviewed, there is no effect on those in protected characteristic groups as a result of these recommended changes.

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

Draft Discretionary Housing Payments Scheme, item 44, Cabinet 29 July 2015

Discretionary Housing Payment Policy ESIIA 6 January 2015

Cabinet Member/Deputy (Portfolio Holder)

Steve Charmley, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support

Local Member

All

Appendices

Discretionary Housing Payment Policy

DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS

Shropshire Council's policy with regard to the administration and
award of Discretionary Housing Payments

POLICY

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Background

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are supported by the Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 (SI 2011 No.1167) and Child Support, Pensions and Social Security Act 2000.

Discretionary Housing Payments are not payments of benefit. They are discretionary payments additional to any statutory provision by way of Housing Benefit or **Universal Credit**. They can be awarded when a local authority considers that a customer needs further financial assistance towards housing costs. The legislation allows broad discretion in considering DHP's however, local decision making staff are guided by procedures to ensure that consistency of approach and good principles of decision making are followed throughout. This ensures that we are acting fairly, reasonably and consistently.

Housing costs are not defined in the regulations. This gives the council broad discretion to interpret the term. In general, housing costs means rental liability; however, housing costs can be interpreted more widely to include:

- rent in advance;
- deposits; and
- other lump sum costs associated with a housing need (such as removal costs).

DHP payments are intended to alleviate severe hardship for those in financial difficulty providing certain criteria are met:

- The person is entitled to Housing Benefit (HB) or Universal Credit (UC) if it includes a housing element towards rent liability
- There must be a shortfall between the Housing Benefit and the eligible rent that the person is unable to meet from their own means.
- The amount awarded can cover all or part of the rent shortfall but it cannot be more than the eligible rent for the property when added to the Housing Benefit award. Alternatively, the award can be used to assist with the cost of taking up a tenancy.

The Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) guidance on DHP's is to the effect that they form part of a support mechanism of help for those most affected by the impact of welfare reforms. These are particularly around the introduction of the benefit cap; the introduction of size criteria for property in the social rented sector and reductions in the local housing allowance which determines private sector rent allowances. Additionally, DHP's can be made to compensate for other Housing Benefit **and Universal Credit** shortfalls including deductions made for non-dependents in the household, Rent Officer restrictions and shortfalls due to income tapers.

DHP's cannot be made in respect of the following:

- Ineligible service charges on a property

- Increases in rent due to assimilation of arrears
- Certain sanctions (penalties) or reductions imposed on a person's benefits
- To cover the recovery of Housing Benefit or other overpayments

DRAFT

Policy

Introduction

The DWP allocate a fund each year specifically for DHP awards, this is cash limited with any unspent funds being returned to DWP at the year end.

By working closely with our partner organisations, particularly the Housing Associations and support workers and by looking holistically at the range of solutions and alternatives available to residents we are confident that all of the fund will be used to help Shropshire's most vulnerable citizens often at very critical moments in their lives.

- The 2013/2014 allocation of funds to Shropshire Council was £277,475
- The 2014/2015 allocation of funds to Shropshire Council was £383,819
- The 2015/2016 allocation of funds to Shropshire Council is £325,939

The council cannot award any more DHP's if we have met our overall cash limit. The cash limit is two and a half times the government contribution. The legislation that specifies the overall limit on expenditure, is Article 7 of the Discretionary Housing Payment (Grants) Order 2001. Any unspent DHP funding will be returned to the DWP at the end of the financial year.

Policy Aims

The Department for Work & Pensions define the policy aim of DHP's as being:

- To help secure and move to alternative accommodation (e.g. rent deposit)
- To help with short-term rental costs until the claimant is able to secure and move to alternative accommodation
- To help with short-term rental costs while the claimant seeks employment
- To help with on-going rental costs for disabled person in adapted accommodation
- To help with on-going rental costs for foster carer
- To help with short-term rental costs for any other reason

Shropshire Council's policy will contribute to the following corporate priorities and outcomes:

PRIORITIES	
Growing	Help to manage our environment (in a way that helps Shropshire to thrive)
Protecting	Strive to keep people from harm (in a way that doesn't compromise their choices)
Helping	Help people, communities and businesses to help themselves (in a way that helps them to make the most of the choices available to them)

OUTCOMES	
Your Money	Feel financially secure and to believe in a positive future for myself and my family
Your Health	Live a long, enjoyable and healthy life
Your Life	Feel valued as an individual and to live my life, with my choices respected and with as few compromises as possible
Your Environment	Live in an attractive, vibrant and safe environment, in a place that is right for me
Your Council	Feel confident that the council is doing the right things with my money and that my needs are at the centre of any decisions taken about my life

(Shropshire Council Business Plan and Financial Strategy 2014-2017)

The policy will contribute to these outcomes by providing help to the most vulnerable residents that will enable them, as part of a wider programme of support, to maintain themselves in affordable housing. We will deliver this within the limits of the available funding.

Policy objectives

The DHP policy will be administered as part of a wider scheme of help and support with the express aim of contributing to:

- alleviating poverty
- encouraging and sustaining people in employment
- tenancy sustainment and homelessness prevention
- safeguarding residents in their own homes
- helping those who are trying to help themselves
- keeping families together
- providing stability for children
- preventing homelessness for those at risk of losing their home
- supporting domestic violence victims who are trying to move to a place of safety
- supporting the vulnerable or the elderly in the local community
- helping claimants through personal and difficult events
- supporting young people in the transition to adult life, or
- promoting good educational outcomes for children and young people
- supporting the work of foster carers
- supporting disabled people remain in adapted properties
- supporting care leavers

(Source: Gov.UK, Department for Work & Pensions DHP Guidance Manual April 2014.)

For example, we may use a DHP award to assist a person with disabilities to remain in a suitable property or to allow a person experiencing challenging life issues to do likewise whilst they work with a wider range of support services to address these issues.

We may provide the deposit for housing that allows a homeless person the sound foundation from which to rebuild their future stability.

In some cases, time limited awards may be made with the expectation of the customer taking proactive steps to address their life issues and choices or to actively seek alternatives where these exist.

We will consider helping people who want to move but whose Housing Benefit or Universal Credit award has been restricted due to one the welfare reforms.

The types of shortfall that DHPs can cover

- reductions in HB or UC where the benefit cap has been applied;
- reductions in HB or UC following the removal of spare room subsidy in the social rented sector;
- reductions in HB or UC as a result of local housing allowance restrictions;
- rent officer restrictions such as local reference rent or shared room rate;
- non-dependant deductions in HB or housing cost contributions in UC;
- rent shortfalls to prevent a household becoming homeless whilst the housing authority explores alternative options;
- reductions due to income tapers.

Who can apply for a DHP

Primary entitlement to DHP's is governed by the Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001. The legislation states that DHP's are only available to those who are:

- entitled to Housing Benefit
- entitled to an award of Universal Credit that includes the Housing Element

In addition, Shropshire Council policy is that those applying are expected to be:

- Resident in Shropshire or
- Have a local connection

At our discretion we may in exceptional circumstances consider applications from people who are not resident in the County or otherwise connected.

The claiming process

Making an application for DHP

In order to be considered for an award of DHP, an application must be made to the Council. The application form is available on the council's website on <http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/benefits/discretionary-housing-payments/>

A claim can be accepted from the person entitled to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, but we will accept claims from someone acting on behalf of the person concerned where it appears reasonable to do so in the circumstances.

Applications may need to be supported by information from housing providers or other support workers to confirm that alternative housing options are not available / suitable. The claim must be supported by such information as is necessary to determine the claim, such as details of income, capital and expenditure. Requests for a discretionary payment can be made in the following ways:

- In writing
- By telephone
- Or by any other methods (such as electronic means)

Each claim will be considered individually based on the evidence provided to support the application. We will however expect to act with consistency whilst using our discretion to provide support to the most vulnerable citizens in Shropshire.

We will ask the customer whether they have a support worker to help them, if so we will liaise with the support worker to gather further information with which to consider the request for an award of DHP. This will allow us to make fully informed decisions that are fair and reasonable for the customer, especially where there are mental health considerations. All requests will be considered on an individual basis with due account given to the vulnerability and personal circumstances of each customer. An individual's personal circumstances, the amount requested and the importance of the need within the circumstances will form the basis for the prioritisation of awards.

Evidence

Before we can grant a DHP we will request details from the customer to confirm the following: -

- The reason a DHP is required
- The current income and expenditure of the household. This may include:
 - Does the customer have other debt to pay?
 - Have they sought advice to clear their debt?
 - Can the customer renegotiate non priority debts?

- Entitlement to other benefits that are not being claimed or maximised
- Any income or capital that is disregarded (taking into account its intended use)
- Spending on non-essential items
- Could the rent be afforded when the customer first moved in?
- Is anyone else willing to pay the shortfall?
- Can any non-dependants make a contribution to the shortfall?
- Can they take steps to reduce their spending on non-essential items?
- Can the customer increase their hours or do any overtime?
- Any steps the customer has taken to try and resolve their financial situation? Such as:
 - Has the customer requested the landlord to reduce the rent and what was the landlord's response?
 - Could we speak to the landlord to negotiate a lower rent?
 - Did the customer enquire about the level of HB before they took the tenancy? If yes, what advice were they given?
 - Did customer have a pre-tenancy determination?
 - Has the customer taken long-term action to help their problems in meeting their housing costs
 - Reducing their spending on non-essential items
 - Has the customer managed to increase their hours or do any overtime?
 - Have they tried to re-negotiate or consolidate their debts?

Medical circumstances

When considering the circumstances of a customer who has requested a DHP payment, it is important that the medical situation is taken into account. With this in mind we will ensure the following is considered on each application:

- Does the customer or a member of the household have health or support needs that require them to remain in a particular property because of adaptations or access to medical facilities?
- Does the customer or a member of the household have to have an extra room for health or support needs?
- Do the health needs of someone in the household mean that the choice of housing is restricted temporarily or permanently?
- Does the customer or a member of the household have health care related expenses such as medicine (non-prescription or otherwise) or therapeutic training?

Rent deposits and rent in advance

Where requests are made for deposits or rent in advance for a prospective new property:

- the customer must be in receipt of Housing Benefit (or Universal Credit including a housing cost element) at their current address, and

- we will ask for proof of the amount they are requesting from the prospective landlord
- we will ask the customer must to confirm that they have been unable to source assistance from elsewhere first (namely Shropshire Housing Alliance or the council's Housing Options Team)
- we will consider whether the property the customer is moving to is affordable (whilst recognising that some people may have had to flee a home due to domestic violence so they may have had to seek a place of safety such as a refuge service)
- we will want to know whether the customer is due to have a deposit returned to them from their outgoing tenancy
- we will also want to know whether the customer has received assistance from another department within the LA towards a rent deposit (such as a rent deposit scheme or similar)
- we will need an application form for HB to be submitted at the same time as the DHP request so we can establish if there will be an entitlement to HB at the new address. For UC, we will need to establish that the customer will receive an element towards their housing costs when they move.
- we may consider making awards for deposits or rent in advance for properties outside our area if the customer is in receipt of HB or UC in our area.

When looking at requests, we will take into consideration the availability of suitable alternative accommodation, especially one bed accommodation.

Treatment of income and expenditure

We will look at the income received by the claimant and partner when calculating awards. Where non-dependents don't make a contribution to the household, we assume that the claimant receives a weekly amount equivalent to the non-dependent deduction being applied to the Housing Benefit or Universal Credit claim.

We will consider what is reasonable when assessing declared expenditure. If we feel that declared expenses are unreasonably high, we will reduce them to an amount we deem reasonable in our calculation.

We will make a comparison of the income and expenditure to establish whether the customer has an excess weekly income after meeting all their expenses, including their rent shortfall.

Treatment of the household

We will always take the income of the claimant and partner into account in our calculation. We won't take the income of other members of the household into account but we will assume that a contribution will be made to the household by any non-dependant. This will either be the figure quoted as 'keep' or the level of the non-dependant deduction on the

Housing Benefit or Universal Credit claim. If there is no non-dependent deduction and they do not pay keep, we will consider whether an assumed contribution should be made, dependent on the non-dependent's income.

The tenancy

- Can the landlord reduce the rent?
- Is the tenancy fixed term and when does it end?
- Are any agencies or services such as the Housing Options Team able to help negotiate a lower rent?
- Could they afford the tenancy before they took it on?
- Would awarding the DHP mean the property would be affordable for an interim period, allowing the tenant enough time to find alternative accommodation

Amount and Duration

The amount of any DHP awarded will be in accordance with the limits set in legislation and in any case will not exceed the eligible amount for Housing Benefit or housing element for rent calculated within Universal Credit. The awards will usually be made to cover short term needs rather than provide a long term solution to shortfalls in rent. There will however, be circumstances where longer term awards will be provided.

Examples when longer awards may be made are:

- For people with a disability who have had substantial adaptations made to their home
- When it is considered unreasonable to expect the customer to move house, where appropriate, awards of DHP may be of a longer duration than usually expected.
- A disabled child who is not in receipt of the required rate of DLA, and who would normally be expected to share a bedroom under the rules governing the spare room subsidy, requires a separate room and provides evidence that this is the case.

In exceptional cases, an indefinite award may be considered, subject to a relevant change in their circumstances.

A DHP can be awarded on a weekly ongoing basis or as a lump sum payment in respect of removal costs.

Decisions on the level and duration of an award will need to take into account the customer's individual circumstances and what is affordable within the council's allocated budget. We will also consider the amount of time the customer will need to sort out their financial circumstances or housing circumstances, particularly if they are trying to find alternative accommodation.

Making our decision

Before making our decision, we will consider the following:

- Does the household have to live in the area because of an existing support network?
- Is there a particular reason the person chose to live in the accommodation?
- Is there a more realistic prospect of work in the area they currently live in?
- Is the property the cheapest available for the customer's needs?
- Are the children at a critical point in their education or is a training scheme almost complete?
- Is one of the children near the edge of the threshold for an additional bedroom?
- Is the customer expecting a child and will she require her size of property when the child is born? (i.e. will the benefit size restriction end?)
- Is the customer fleeing Domestic Violence, meaning they cannot reasonably shop around for suitably priced accommodation?
- Is someone in the household undertaking care duties for relatives in the neighbourhood?
- Is someone temporarily living away from home and expected to return shortly?
- Is there a shortage of shared accommodation?
- Is the customer a care leaver who has a reduction in their LA rate after becoming 22 years old?
- Does the person need an additional room for a foster child or is the room being kept free for a foster child?
- Does the customer qualify for the 13 weeks or 52 weeks protection?
- Does the customer need an additional room for an overnight carer?
- Is there a requirement for a separate bedroom for each member of a couple due to medical reasons?
- The time needed for the customer to address any underlying issues.

We will inform customers of our decisions at the earliest opportunity.

Where we are unable to make an award, we will explain the reasons for this in writing so that the customer understands why. We will also provide suggestions for alternative support where these exist and will signpost customers to various useful agencies.

Where we can make an award, we will confirm the weekly award and the period of time we will pay it for. We will also provide a list of recommended actions that the customer must take to change their personal circumstances so they are more beneficial or to avoid them requiring further assistance from the DHP fund. We will expect them to take action on these recommendations in order to guarantee any further awards of DHP where the customer requests an award extension.

Our letter will inform customers that there is no formal right of appeal but will offer customers the opportunity to ask the council to look at the decision again, especially where

they think there has been an error or omission. Where the customer has consented, we may also inform the landlord of our decision. Where Housing Benefit or Universal Credit is being paid to a landlord and we subsequently make an award of DHP that we also pay to the landlord, we may contact the landlord to advise them of this.

Corroborative supporting information may be sought from third parties such as housing providers or support workers where this is felt reasonable in order to confirm that alternative solutions have been considered. Failure to provide supporting evidence without good reason may lead to the application being unsuccessful.

We will ask the customer whether they have a support worker to help them and will speak to that support worker to gather further information to support the request for an award of DHP. This will allow us to make fully informed decisions so that the decision we make a fair and reasonable decision for the customer, especially where there are mental health considerations.

Refusal to provide the necessary information for the team to make a decision will result in a refusal of award or as a withdrawal of application where there is loss of contact.

Where we are unable to make an award, we will explain the reasons for this in writing so that the applicant understands why. We will also provide suggestions for alternative support where these exist and will signpost applicants to various useful agencies.

Payment of the award

Payments for rent shortfalls will be made at the same frequency as Housing Benefit or **Universal Credit** payments. They can be paid to someone other than the claimant if the council considers it reasonable to do so (e.g. an agent, appointee or landlord).

Payments for deposits and rent in advance will be paid directly to the landlord. We will advise tenants that landlords have a legal obligation to protect any deposit paid in a Government approved tenancy deposit scheme to help avoid future requests for deposits.

- Payments to private tenants and their landlords will be paid by BACS.
- Payments to housing association tenants and their landlords will be paid by BACS
- In the case of Rent Rebate, DHPs will be paid to the rent account by direct credit.

Prevention of Homelessness

Homelessness has a major impact on customers in terms of health, education and employment prospects. It is vital that we use the DHP fund where appropriate to avoid homelessness by taking the following into account: -

- That an award of DHP may prevent evictions and prevent homelessness
- That the proximity of the household to education, employment and social networks means it may be helpful to pay DHP for resettling period from homelessness
- A DHP award could be central to the person being able to access employment, education or training and therefore less likely to become homeless
- Whether an award made to someone who has previously been homeless would increase the long-term sustainability of their tenancy
- Whether an award made to a care leaver who needs support would increase the long-term sustainability of their tenancy
- Closer working and good relationship building with internal services such as homelessness and external services such as Citizens Advice Bureau to act on early warning signs of potential homelessness and vulnerable cases

DHPs and two homes

We can award DHPs on two homes if a customer is temporarily absent from their normal home, for example, because of domestic violence. If there is a rent shortfall in both properties, we will consider an award of two DHPs, subject to the normal limits.

If the customer is not liable to pay rent for the new address but has a shortfall in rent at the normal home, we can award a DHP for the normal home, again, subject to the normal limits.

Backdated Awards

We will consider requests for backdated DHP's and will look at each case on its own merits. Whilst no blanket policies will be adopted, we will be consistent in our decision-making throughout. Although there are no rules regarding backdating, we will look to establish that 'good cause' for failing to make an earlier claim has been established. We will normally only backdate a DHP to the beginning of the current financial year. We will only consider backdating a DHP award to a date prior to the current financial year in exceptional circumstances. We will consider backdated benefit awards to assist customers with arrears due to welfare reforms who wish to move address. In every case we will consider the person's age, household make-up, health and individual circumstances.

Appeals and Reconsiderations

Under the legislation governing DHP's, there is no right of appeal to an independent tribunal. Decisions are however, subject to requests for internal review and they should be treated under the Decision Making and Appeal procedures for this purpose.

Such requests for a review are dealt with through local arrangements.

The review process will have two stages:

- Stage 1 In the first instance, any request for a review will be considered by someone other than the officer who made the original decision unless new evidence is provided, when the same officer can consider the request. All requests to review a decision from an applicant or their representative to be considered and notified within one month of the date of decision.
- Stage2 If the applicant is still not satisfied with the outcome of the review, they may request a further review within one month of the date of the review outcome. The process will seek to ensure that stage 2 reviews are considered by a senior officer taking into account all the information and evidence included in the review and the reasonableness of the decision made. The decision will be notified in writing.

Any negative decisions will be clearly explained.

Decisions on DHPs cannot be appealed to a Social Security Tribunal as they are not empowered to deal with them. The route of judicial review is available, and the local government ombudsman if there is an allegation of maladministration.

Changes in Circumstances

A person claiming a DHP is required by regulations to:

- Give the Local Authority such information as it may require
- Tell the Local Authority of any changes in circumstances that may be relevant.

Revising Awards

Where an award of DHP has been made, the amount of the DHP will be regularly reviewed and possibly revised where there has been a change in circumstances to their Housing Benefit or Universal Credit claim.

Repeat Awards for Rent Shortfalls

DHP's are not intended to be for an indefinite period. Individuals are expected to manage their day to day finances and take steps to budget and manage their household income. We will provide advice and guidance to people by signposting them to suitable support regarding this. Where customers request repeat awards, we will look to see whether they have acted on the recommendations made when their previous award was granted. If they have failed to do so, we may provide them with one month to act on these before considering a further award. If they fail to act on the recommendations within one month, we will not extend their DHP award.

We will not consider requests beyond the one month extension:

- Where advice has been ignored or not sought as advised
 - Where a previous request was unsuccessful (unless there has been a change in household circumstances)
 - Where the individual has not taken steps to remedy the situation
 - Where the circumstances could have been avoided or were as a result of reckless or deliberate behaviour
 - Where the individual has not co-operated with the Council or other public bodies
- The above list is not exhaustive and consideration will be given to repeat applications on an individual basis.

Stopping DHPs

If the council decides that DHPs are being or have been made because of misrepresentation / failure to disclose information correctly or the Local Authority has paid in error, the payment can be stopped.

Recovery of DHPs

We can recover DHP's if we decide that payment has been made as a result of misrepresentation or failure to disclose a material fact, either fraudulently or otherwise. We can also recover DHP's if we decide the customer has been paid as a result of an error made when the claim was determined.

We cannot recover DHP's from ongoing Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. This is unlike Housing Benefit (HB) overpayments where there is a regulatory provision to allow recovery from ongoing Housing Benefit. There is also no provision for recovery of overpaid DHP's from other prescribed benefits.

Overpaid DHP's will be requested from the customer via invoice. Customers will have the opportunity to repay their debt in full or make an arrangement to repay in instalments within a reasonable timeframe.

Circumstances Where It Is Not Appropriate To Award A DHP

- **Ineligible charges:** a service charge that is not eligible for HB or UC cannot be covered by a DHP. These are as specified in Schedule 1 to the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 and Schedule 1 to the Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) Regulations and Schedule 4 of the Universal Credit Regulations 2013 2006. Nor can DHPs cover charges for water, sewerage, and environmental services – as defined and calculated under the HB provisions.
- **Increases in rent due to outstanding rent arrears:** Regulation 11(3) of the

Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 and Regulation 11(2) of the Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) Regulations 2006, **Schedule 4 of the Universal Credit Regulations 2013** refer. This refers to those cases where a customer's rent is increased to incorporate outstanding arrears which are owed by the customer in respect of their current or former property.

- **Sanctions and reductions in benefit:** DHPs cannot meet these because to do so would undermine the effectiveness of the sanctions or reduction in benefit. These are:
 - Any reduction in Income Support (IS) or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA(IB)) due to a Reduced Benefit Direction (RBD) for failure to comply with the Child Support Agency in arranging maintenance. The RBD is a reduction in benefit of 40% of the personal allowance and only applies to IS or JSA(IB)
 - Any reduction in benefit as a result of non-attendance at a work-focused interview. This applies both where the person's HB or any other benefit the person is receiving is reduced subject to a sanction
 - Any reduction or loss of benefit due to a JSA employment sanction. JSA is not payable for the period of sanction if they have contributed towards their unemployed status, for example, by leaving employment voluntarily or failing to attend a prescribed training scheme. In such cases, it may be possible for a reduced rate of JSA to be paid under the JSA hardship provisions
 - Any reduction in benefit due to a JSA sanction for 16/17 year olds - for certain young people who receive JSA under a Severe Hardship Direction. JSA is not payable for the period of the sanction if they have contributed towards their unemployed status, for example, by leaving unemployment voluntarily or failing to attend a prescribed training scheme,
 - Or any restriction in benefit due to a breach of a community service order
 - Any reduction in UC due to a sanction as specified under regulation 100 of the UC Regulations 2013
 - Any restriction due to repayment of a social fund loan
- **Benefit suspensions:** - HB or UC can be suspended either because there is a general doubt about entitlement or because a customer has failed to supply information relevant to their claim. In such cases, it would not be permissible to pay DHPs instead. One of the intentions of the suspension provisions is to act as a lever to ensure that the customer takes the necessary steps to provide the authority with the

necessary information / evidence. Paying DHPs could reduce the effectiveness of this lever.

- **Shortfalls caused by HB overpayment recovery:** when recovery of an HB overpayment is taking place, such shortfalls should not be considered for a DHP
- Rent, when the person is getting Council Tax support but not HB or help towards housing costs in UC: so if someone is only getting local Council Tax support, we cannot award a DHP towards rental liability

From Annexe B of Draft Department for Work and Pensions Good Practice Guide 2013

Future Applications

Where changes are anticipated, such as the introduction of size criteria in the social rented sector or introduction of the benefit cap, we will allow applications for DHP's from customers in advance to help alleviate uncertainty for some. We will advise customers of an award that will start from a future date, subject to any subsequent change in circumstances.

Monitoring Arrangements

The government has provided councils with a single budget figure for the provision of DHP awards. The council then has to monitor this budget throughout the year to ensure that awards are targeted to those most in need whilst ensuring there is sufficient budget to provide necessary support throughout the year. The Welfare Reform and Support Team will undertake this monitoring.

The government asks councils to record if customers have been affected by one of the following:

- Benefit cap
- Removal of spare room subsidy in the social rented sector
- Local Housing Allowance restrictions
- Combination of reforms
- No impact

They also ask councils to record the intended outcome when making an award. These awards are broadly grouped into the areas that cover the policy intention of DHPs:

- To help secure and move to alternative accommodation (e.g. rent deposit)
- To help with short-term rental costs until the claimant is able to secure and move to alternative accommodation
- To help with short-term rental costs while the claimant seeks employment
- To help with on-going rental costs for disabled person in adapted accommodation
- To help with on-going rental costs for foster carer
- To help with short-term rental costs for any other reason

Publicity

Shropshire Council will regularly publicise the Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme by regularly promoting it via:

- The council's website,
- The council's hubs and customer service centres
- Local Registered Social Landlords
- The council's Housing Options Team
- Citizens Advice Shropshire
- Age UK
- A4U
- Local Landlord Forums
- Elected council Members
- Jobcentre Plus Universal Credit Advisers
- Other relevant organisations and support groups

Support into work

The Scheme will support the government's Welfare Reform agenda by signposting people towards work opportunities where possible. This can include:

- Signposting people towards skills-based support and training by various agencies, such as challenging expectation, culture change, confidence building, training, help with skills, work clubs, help with CVs and job applications
- Signposting people to the Benefit Options Team in order that they can provide 'better-off in work' calculations
- Signposting people towards County Training who can signpost people to apprenticeships
- Providing people with clothing and travel for interviews where this cannot be provided by Jobcentre Plus.
- Signposting people towards Wheels to Work and Transport Solutions
- Providing people with help towards fuel for transport to new employment if they have not been paid yet and this cannot be provided by another source.

Policy Review

The welfare reform agenda means that it is highly probable that changes to this document and the practical application of the scheme will need to be made throughout the year.

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Committee and Date

Cabinet

28th February 2018

Local commissioning of youth activities - proposals for changes to the funding of targeted geographical provision

Responsible Officer George Candler, Director of Place & Enterprise
e-mail: george.candler@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 255003

1. Summary

A report was brought to Cabinet on 18th October 2017 with proposals to change the arrangements for the future commissioning of youth activities. It was agreed by Cabinet to consult on the proposals made within the report.

A public consultation on the proposed changes to the Local Joint Committee (LJC) funding allocations to support the commissioning of youth activity ended on 5th January 2018.

335 individual responses plus responses from youth groups and local councils were received. The vast majority of these responses were not in agreement with the proposals within the consultation. A summary of the responses can be found at 4.0 within this report and the full feedback is attached as Appendix 1

The consultation feedback demonstrated that there was strong support for the council continuing to fund youth activities in rural areas, keeping rurality considerations in the funding formula and continuing to offer grants to small voluntary clubs.

The feedback also showed that whilst respondees would like to see all the council's funding for youth activities continue at current levels, they particularly would like funding in rural areas to be protected.

In the context of reduced available budget it is proposed that there is a reduction in the funding for activities in some of our largest market towns. A number of the larger town councils have suggested that they are in a position to financially support youth activities in their area.

It is proposed that the current rurality grants are brought together into one centrally held pot that groups and clubs delivering activity in LJC areas currently eligible for rurality funding can bid into. The application process would need clear criteria and an assessment process that continues to involve local elected members and the LJC's.

2. Recommendations

- A. To acknowledge the feedback from the recent consultation on the LJC funding allocations for the commissioning of youth activity proposed in the Cabinet Report of 18th October 2017
- B. To confirm the proposed LJC funding allocations for the commissioning of youth activities in 2018/19 that have been revised as a result of the feedback received through the consultation (as detailed at 5.9 within the report)
- C. To approve the intention to work with partners over the next 12 months to develop an integrated approach to the provision of universal and targeted youth activities within the context of the wider review of early help services, recognising that there will be new arrangements from 2019/20 onwards, which could include a further budgetary reduction.
- D. To confirm a delegation to the Head of Infrastructure and Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People to confirm the final design of the revised rurality needs grant scheme

REPORT

1.0 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 1.1 Local authorities have a duty to secure, so far as reasonably practical, equality of access for all young people aged 13 to 19 (24 for those with learning difficulties). The “local offer” should be the best possible to meet local needs and to improve young people’s well-being and personal and social development within available resources. Local authorities must also take steps to gain the views of young people and to take them into account in making decisions about services and activities for them.

Visit:<http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/15549/1/statutory%20guidance%20on%20la%20youth%20provision%20duty.pdf>

Our assessment is that within the context of diminished resources and a large rural county the Council is meeting its statutory requirements with respect to provision.

- 1.2 However, the Council is currently less effective at taking the views of young people into account in making and reviewing decisions about provision, particularly at a county wide, strategic level. Previously Members of The Youth Parliament and Speak Out Group were among a number of initiatives, which helped young people to share their thoughts, opinions and ideas. These are no longer in place in Shropshire.
- 1.3 An Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) has been updated and is available on request. Reducing funding in some of the market towns has the potential to result in a negative impact to young people. However,

arrangements to enable additional funding that will mitigate these proposed reductions will be discussed with the relevant town councils.

If this additional funding can be secured we do not anticipate that any clubs currently supported by the Council through the local commissioning approach will need to close because of the funding proposals outlined within this report.

Should any specific local challenges arise, the Council will consider what transitional support it may be able to provide.

The Council will continue to engage an “infrastructure support provider”, the Shropshire Youth Association (working with Energize), to support the development of safe and effective voluntary sector youth club providers., Community Enablement Team Officers will also continue to support local youth clubs to access funding and provide sustainable delivery.

- 1.4 Child safeguarding and welfare matters are paramount in our approach and appropriate safeguards will continue to be included in all arrangements. Visit: <http://www.safeguardingshropshireschildren.org.uk/scb/>
- 1.5 Supporting early help and early prevention is a key driver for the Council¹. Support for youth activities as a “universal offer” alongside more targeted support for young people with particular needs underpins the Council’s approach to commissioning support for young people.

2.0 Financial implications

- 2.1 The table below shows the available Council budget from April 2017 across the three overlapping areas of youth activity - infrastructure support, geographically targeted provision, and Special Needs Groups.

	Budget from April 2017
Infrastructure support	£97,500 (25.7%)
Geographically targeted provision	£234,950 (62%)
Special Needs Groups	£46,500 (12.3%)
	£378,950

- 2.2 In the context of reduced available budget the proposals within this report would result in a reduction in the budget for geographically targeted provision from £234,950 in 2017/18 to £174,500 in 2018/19.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 At its meeting on 19th October 2016 Cabinet recommended that proposals for the future commissioning of youth activities – universal support, geographically targeted support and thematically targeted support - should be reviewed by the Young People’s Scrutiny Committee, and that recommendations should be brought back to Cabinet.

¹ Shropshire Early Help Strategy, helping children have a safe, happy and healthy family life, June, Shropshire Council, 2014

- 3.2 A Task & Finish Group met three times and heard a variety of evidence from LJsCs, youth activity providers, youth forums, the Council's Infrastructure Support Provider partner, neighbouring local authorities, potential "partner organisations" and others.
- 3.3 Subsequently at its meeting on 28th June 2017, the Young People's Scrutiny Committee confirmed the positive impact of youth work, universal and targeted, on young people's lives, and made a number of recommendations.
- 3.4 The Scrutiny Committee recommended back to Cabinet that work was undertaken with a broad range of interested partners over the next 18 months to develop an integrated approach to the provision of universal and targeted youth activities within the context of a wider review of Early Help provision.
- 3.5 The proposals made by Scrutiny were to introduce revised funding proposals in support of geographically targeted youth activity provision from April 2018. These proposals were based on a simplified "funding formula" and local intelligence, described within a proposed "hierarchy of Council support for youth provision". The consequences of this approach would have been a reduction in the number of LJsCs allocated money from 18 to 12, and an overall reduction in the budget from £234,959 to £167,000. This reduction would have been as a result of the proposed removal of rurality funding from 12 existing LJsCs, and a slight redistribution of needs funding away from the main market towns to include three new LJsCs. These proposals have been consulted on and revised as a result of the feedback received.

4.0 Summary of the feedback received through public consultation

4.1

335 responses received	YES number	NO number	YES %	NO %
Q2 - do you agree with the proposal to reduce council funding in support of youth activity	10	325	2.99%	97.01%
Q3 - do you agree with the proposal to remove rurality considerations from the funding formula	15	320	4.48%	95.52%
Q4 - do you agree with the proposal to allocate funding to the larger market towns?	34	301	10.15%	89.85%
Q5 - do you agree with the proposal to remove grants to small voluntary clubs?	16	319	4.78%	95.22%

- 4.2 In addition to the responses made directly through the council's consultation web portal, written feedback was received from a number of local councils and

representatives of the youth clubs that would have been affected by the proposals. This feedback reflected the majority of that received, i.e. that funding in support of youth activities in rural areas should be retained.

5.0 Geographically targeted support

- 5.1 Geographically targeted support is delivered via a local commissioning approach. LJsCs, local elected members, together with young people and supported by the Community Enablement Team, are responsible for making commissioning recommendations. LJsCs base their recommendations on a consideration of local needs, an understanding of existing youth provision, conversations with young people and stakeholders, and their local knowledge. Community Enablement Team officers support LJsCs with this work and are responsible for procuring youth activity within the Councils' Constitution and Contract and Financial Rules.
- 5.2 In Shrewsbury, the full responsibility for the commissioning and delivery of youth activities has been transferred within a formal delegation agreement from Shropshire Council to Shrewsbury Town Council.
- 5.3 If additional funding from local councils to support their local activity can be agreed, the impact of these proposed savings on the current delivery can be mitigated.
- 5.4 It is proposed that the smaller settlements serving a rural hinterland retain funding at similar levels to their current amount. Reviews of the activity taking place in these areas is positive and there are examples of parish councils providing financial support.
- 5.5 It is proposed that the rurality grants are brought together into one centrally held pot, with a value of £33,000 that groups and clubs delivering activity in LJC areas currently eligible for rurality funding can bid into.
- 5.6 Communities within the LJsCs that have previously received a rurality grant of £3,000 will be able to apply to a centrally held pot to a total maximum amount per LJC of £3,000 within 2018/19.
- 5.7 The rationale for changing to a centrally held grant pot is that it will reduce the administrative work for the individual Community Enablement Officers (CEOs) as this work will be done centrally, whilst ensuring that local members and LJC members continue to contribute to the application assessment process. The CEOs will still be able to provide the necessary support in bringing applications forward.
- 5.8 Applications will be asked to evidence how the funding will be used to achieve the council's recognised good outcomes for young people – ensuring the emotional wellbeing of children and young people by focussing on prevention and early intervention and keeping more children and young people health and reducing health inequalities.
- 5.9 In allocating funding and establishing the value of the total funding pot, the feedback received through the recent consultation has been considered and this is summarised below within a proposed **hierarchy of council support for youth club provision**.

Local Joint Committee Area (in descending order of needs score)	Current Rurality Funding	2018		
		Current needs funding £	Needs score	Proposed needs and rurality funding in 2018 £
Tier 1 – Partner delivery commissioned by Shropshire Council				
Shrewsbury	0	81,500	15.1%	25,000
Market Drayton	0	24,060	6.6%	14,500
Oswestry	0	24,640	6.0%	14,500
Bridgnorth, Worfield, Alveley and Claverley	1,500	10,120	5.6%	14,500 *
Whitchurch	0	15,580	4.5%	14,500
Ludlow and Clee area	0	10,850	5.0%	14,500
Tier 2 - Community partnership youth provision supported by Shropshire Council				
Wem and Shawbury	3,000	9,450	4.6%	8,000 *
Craven Arms and Rural	3,000		4.1%	4,000 *
Bishop's Castle, Chirbury, Worthen and Clun	3,000		3.0%	4,000 *
Ellesmere	3,000		3.9%	4,000 *
Gobowen, Selattyn, St Martins and Weston Rhyn	0	12,120	3.9%	12,000
Longden, Ford, Rea Valley and Loton incl Pontesbury and Minsterley	3,000	13,630	3.8%	12,000 *
Tier 3 – Community provision supported by the Shropshire Youth Association				
Shifnal and Sherrifhales	0		3.4%	0
Five Perry Parishes	0		3.3%	0
Broseley and Rural	0		3.2%	0
Tern and Severn Valley	3,000		3.2%	*
St Oswald	3,000		3.1%	*
Albrighton	0		3.1%	0
Strettondale and Burnell	3,000		3.0%	*
Highley and Brown Clee	1,500		2.8%	*
Cleobury and Rural	3,000		2.5%	*
Much Wenlock and Shipton	3,000		2.4%	*
Bayston Hill	0		2.4%	0
Centrally held rurality grant pot				33,000
Total funding	33,000	201,950		£ 174,500

* LJC area able to access rurality grant funding pot

- 5.10 The funding allocation for Gobowen, Selattyn, St Martins and Weston Rhyn LJC and Longden, Ford, Rea Valley and Loton LJC (incl Pontesbury and Minsterley) are higher as a result of their significantly higher population and numbers of young people aged 10 to 19 years.
- 5.11 The Council is committed to supporting the development of sustainable youth activity provision free, where possible, from direct Council financial support. This reflects the ongoing challenging financial context. It also provides the best chance for the long-term provision of youth activities to be embedded within the local community, using the resources of that community.

Council-supported youth activity provision aims to be inclusive to children and young people of varying needs, while recognising that this will sometimes require bespoke support. For example, a number of dedicated groups provide opportunities for young people who have a disability (Special Needs Groups), are LGBT or are young carers, and who might otherwise find it difficult to attend mainstream clubs, groups or facilities.

The council will continue to fund the Shropshire Youth Association and Energize to provide proactive support to youth clubs across Shropshire, notably in the Tier 2 and Tier 3 groupings. We recognise this as being crucial to the long-term sustainability of an active and dynamic voluntary community sector.

Within the Tier 1 and Tier 2 groupings Local Joint Committees will continue to advise on the details of commissioned provision based on their local knowledge of need. For the immediate future, it is likely that Tier 1 clubs, i.e. clubs within the main market towns and within the areas of greatest need, will continue to be directly commissioned by Shropshire Council. In the smaller Tier 2 market towns, the Council aims to develop and support existing youth club infrastructure within a sustainable partnership framework.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The revised funding proposals will result in 18 LJCs continuing to receive a funding allocation in 2018/19 at broadly similar levels to the status quo. The exceptions are Shrewsbury, Oswestry and Market Drayton LJCs. Where the town council within these areas has previously indicated that they will consider financially supporting youth activity, this intention will now be discussed in response to the proposed reduction in funding allocations.
- 6.2 Should any specific local challenges arise, which will impact upon the current provision, we propose to consider what transitional support could be provided.
- 6.3 The council's Infrastructure Support Provider partner will continue to provide proactive support for universal youth activity provision within existing contractual arrangements. Its focus will be on supporting clubs that have no alternative support and are vulnerable to potential closure. The Infrastructure Support Provider will continue to work with Community Enablement Team Officers and local partners to develop new clubs in response to local need.
- 6.4 We have suggested different levels of council support within a hierarchy of delivery. We acknowledge that the aim should be to support clubs to become

sustainable within their local communities outside the need for direct council support.

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

Future vision for youth support services in Shropshire, Cabinet, 8 December 2010

Shropshire Children's Trust Children, Young People and Families Plan 2014

Changes to Youth Services, Young People's Scrutiny Committee, 30 April 2014

Future Commissioning and provision of youth activities, Portfolio Holder Decision, 2 July 2014

Update – Future Commissioning and Provision of youth activities, Children & Young People's Scrutiny Committee, 22 October 2014

Local Joint Committees – Update on youth commission and boundaries, Cabinet, 10 December 2014

Youth Commissioning Update, Children & Young People's Scrutiny Committee, 24 June 2015

Delegation of the responsibility for the commissioning and delivery of youth services within Shrewsbury to Shrewsbury Town Council and recommendations for Broseley Youth Club, Cabinet, 29th July 2015

Support for Youth Activities update, Young People's Scrutiny Committee, 4 November 2015

Support for Youth Activities update, Young People's Scrutiny Committee, 3 February 2016

Proposals for the future commissioning of youth activities within the context of reduced funding, Cabinet, 19 October 2016

Proposals for the creation of a Task & Finish Group to consider the local commissioning of youth activities, Young People's Scrutiny Committee, 14 December 2016

Recommendations for the future commissioning of youth activities, Young People Task & Finish Group, 26 April 2017

Report from the Task & Finish Group on the future commissioning of youth activities, Young People's Scrutiny Committee, 28th June 2017

Local Commissioning of Youth Activities – proposals for consultation on changes to the funding of targeted geographical provision, Cabinet, 18 October 2017

Cabinet Member:

Cllr Nick Bardsley – Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People

Local Members:

All Members

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Feedback on the public consultation on the proposals on changes to the funding of targeted geographical provision – end date 5th January 2018

Report to Cabinet 28th February 2018

Local commissioning of youth activities - proposals for changes to the funding of targeted geographical provision

Shropshire Council asked people for their views on a proposed reduction of, and changes to, funding that supports the provision of youth activities.

A public consultation ran from 1st November 2017 to 5th January 2018.

The council proposed to introduce a revised and simplified funding formula based on just two measures: the relative number of young people aged 10 to 19 years old, and young people in receipt of free school meals in a Local Joint Committee (LJC) area. It was proposed that the proposed formula longer made specific reference to rurality.

335 responses were received through the council's consultation web portal along with a number of narrative responses from local councils and youth clubs that would have been affected by the proposed changes. The vast majority of these responses disagreed with the proposals within the consultation.

There was strong support for the council continuing to fund youth activities in rural areas, keep rurality considerations in the funding formula and continue to offer grants to small voluntary clubs.

Consultation feedback

Q1

From the following list which is your Local Joint Committee area?

Changes to provision of youth activities		
From the following list which is your Local Joint Committee area?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Albrighton area LJC	0.90%	3
Bayston Hill LJC	0.30%	1
Bridgnorth, Worfield, Alveley & Claverley, Brown Clee LJC	1.19%	4
Broseley and Barrow LJC	5.37%	18
Cleobury and Rural LJC	4.18%	15
Craven Arms and Rural LJC	6.27%	23
Ellesmere area LJC	0.30%	1
Gobowen Selattyn, St Martins, Weston Rhyn LJC	10.15%	34
Highley and Chelmarsh LJC	0.00%	0
Loton, Longden, Ford, and Rea Valley LJC	12.84%	59
Ludlow and Clee area LJC	7.16%	25
Market Drayton area LJC	0.60%	2
Much Wenlock LJC	0.30%	1
Oswestry LJC	0.90%	3
Shifnal and Sheriffhales LJC	0.30%	1
Shrewsbury wide LJC	13.13%	44
South West Shropshire LJC	6.87%	52

St Oswald and Llanymynech area LJC	0.90%	3
StrettonDale LJC	1.79%	9
Tern & Severn Valley LJC	0.30%	4
The Five Perry Parishes LJC	0.00%	1
Wem and Shawbury area LJC	10.45%	37
Whitchurch and Prees LJC	1.79%	6
Cover the whole of the county		3
Outside Shropshire		2
I don't know which is my local LJC area	14.03%	47
	Answered	335
	Skipped	0

Q2,Q3,Q4,Q5 – summary of responses below

	YES number	NO number	YES %	NO %
Q2 - do you agree with the proposal to reduce council funding in support of youth activity	10	325	2.99%	97.01%
Q3 - do you agree with the proposal to remove rurality considerations from the funding formula	15	320	4.48%	95.52%
Q4 - do you agree with the proposal to allocate funding to the larger market towns?	34	301	10.15%	89.85%
Q5 - do you agree with the proposal to remove grants to small voluntary clubs?	16	319	4.78%	95.22%

Q6 - summary of responses below

Do you have any other ideas for how Shropshire Council should use its limited resources to support the provision of youth activities in local communities and on how resources should be prioritised?

Q7

Are you a...?	Young person	22.99%	79
	Parent/carer	32.54%	114
	LJC member	2.69%	15
	Representative of an organisation that provides youth activities	15.82%	65
	Representative of another organisation with an interest in the provision of youth activities	3.88%	13
	Other, e.g. interested residents	22.09%	49

Q8

77 responses 258 skipped

	Yes - number	No - number	Yes %	No %
Do you attend a youth club?	59	18	76.62%	23.38%

Q9

108 responses 227 skipped

	Yes - number	No - number	Yes %	No %
Does your child/the person you care for attend a youth club?	46	62	42.59%	57.41%

Q10**Are you a Shropshire Councillor or a parish councillor?**

10 responses were received – 2 people said they were Shropshire Councillors, 7 said they were parish councillors and 1 said they were both.

Q11**Which organisation do you represent?**

61 responses were received from representatives of a wide variety of organisations providing activities for young people.

Key themes that emerged through the consultation**Q2 – do you agree with the proposal to reduce council funding in support of youth activity - If no, please state why**

Youth clubs are needed to provide organised activities that young people benefit from physically, socially and emotionally.

Free activities are accessible to families on low incomes.

Youth activities are important and should be supported to continue.

Small amounts of funding make a big difference to what can be provided in communities for young people.

Young people should be supported- particularly those living in rural areas that potentially have fewer opportunities.

Q3 - Do you agree with the proposal to remove rurality considerations from the funding formula - If no, please state why

It is unfair to propose that rural areas need funding less than the market towns.

You are suggesting that rural areas are less important than the towns.

Transport is a barrier to accessing activities in the towns from the rural areas.

There is a risk of isolation within rural communities if activities aren't available and accessible.

Q4 - Do you agree with the proposal to allocate funding to the larger market towns? If no, please state why.

The larger market towns have a range of activity for young people, whilst the smaller towns and villages have nothing apart from the council funded activity.
Youth activity in the market towns should continue to be funded, but not at the expense of the rural areas.

Q5 - Do you agree with the proposal to remove grants to small voluntary clubs? If no, please state why.

The voluntary clubs would not be able to provide all the activities they currently offer without additional grant funding.
Small voluntary clubs are at the heart of communities and should be supported to continue.
Small grants can attract further funding from other sources.
The financial support that clubs can access will make a difference between them keeping going or closing.

Q6 - Do you have any other ideas for how Shropshire Council should use its limited resources to support the provision of youth activities in local communities and on how resources should be prioritised?

Use money currently earmarked for other initiatives that are seen as being less important.
Fundraising and sponsorship.
Use the assets and resources already available in communities.
Adopt a more targeted approach to the use of the available funding.
Attract more volunteers to help deliver youth clubs and activities.

ENDS