

SHOPSHIRE COUNCIL

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2018

**2.00 - 4.10 pm in the Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate,
Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND**

Responsible Officer: Julie Fildes

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Present

Councillor Claire Wild (Chair)

Councillors Gwilym Butler (Vice-Chair), Roger Evans, Hannah Fraser, Alan Mosley, Cecilia Motley, Peggy Mullock, Dave Tremellen and Leslie Winwood

24 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies were received from Councillor Karen Calder.

25 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None were disclosed.

26 Minutes of the meeting held on 12th September 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th September 2018 were confirmed as a correct record.

27 Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

28 Member Question Time

There were no questions from Members.

29 Digital Transformation Programme Update

Members received a verbal update from the Head of Workforce and Transformation on the progress of the Digital Transformation Programme [briefing note attached to signed minutes].

The Chairman congratulated Officers on the quality and volume of work undertaken within the project.

In response to Members queries on the impact of missed deadlines on projected savings and budgets, the Head of Workforce and Transformation reassured Members that anticipated delays with the Liquid Logic section of the project would not impact on the progress of the other parts. She explained that the Council was having to work closely with the supplier of the software to resolve quality and

performance issues and that the product could not be accepted until these had been corrected.

The Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance further responded that the profile of the project spend had changed from that which was in the business case, this had been anticipated as a natural development of the project as situations evolved. He continued that the budget for the project had been set at £26m but current projections were anticipating that this would come in at £23m. The Chief Executive added that the Digital Transformation Programme itself would not deliver the savings, but these would be found in how it was used to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Council operations.

A Member asked if Council contact via webchat would be made available outside usual office hours. The Head of Workforce and Transformation explained that with advances in technology and the Council's flexible and agile working policies would enable staff to work outside office hours at a location of their choice if required. She continued that the new technology had the capability to identify times of high usage and allocate staff appropriately to take calls or answer emails. There was also the possibility of drafting in casual staff at time of high demand.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

30 Annual Customer Feedback Report

The Information, Intelligence and Insight Manager introduced this report and referred Members to the full report considered by Cabinet on 17th September 2018, not distributed with the agenda [copy attached to signed minutes]. Members noted that there had been increased customer feedback across all areas, with a 20% increase in complaints. It was observed that this indicated that the public felt able to comment and knew how to do so. The pattern of upheld complaints had remained consistent with previous reports, falling from 52% to 32% which was counter to the National trend. The Information, Intelligence and Insight Manager commented that this would suggest the appropriate application of policy by the Council.

Members noted that Highways, Street Scene, Waste and Recycling, Adult Social Care and Children's Services received the majority of the feedback, but as these were the areas of highest budget spend this was expected.

The Information, Intelligence and Insight Manager observed that when viewed against the number of interactions the Council had with members of the public, a very small proportion generated feedback.

In response to a Member's query the Information, Intelligence and Insight Manager advised that the Council had a strong procedure for identifying vexatious and persistent complainants and this procedure was followed in interactions with them. He confirmed that the identification of a vexatious complainant was confirmed at Director level. Although being classified as a vexatious complainant did not affect the individual's ability to make new complaints and these were subject to the same complaints procedure as all others.

The Information, Intelligence and Insight Manager responded to a Member's query on the nature and volume of seasonal complaints, commenting that this information was difficult to ascertain from the report but the increase in the number of complaints appeared to be gradual and not seasonal.

Referring to a Member's question on complaints which took longer than 50 days to resolve, the Information, Intelligence and Insight Manager explained that these tended to be more complex issues and agreed to provide further information on the nature of these complaints. He confirmed that Adult Social Care and Children's Services complaints followed a National process and by their nature tended to be complex and so took longer to resolve.

The Information, Intelligence and Insight Manager confirmed that the Peer Challenge had identified an opportunity to make more proactive use of Member enquiries alongside complaints information and that this was being looked at through the development of the digital transformation programme. He continued that overall communication had been identified as an issue and culture change would improve this.

Referring to the recommendations within the report a Member observed that the identification of the Officer responsible for handling complaints was too vague. It was agreed that Service Managers with this responsibility would be identified and this would be referred to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Commercial Support for comment.

RESOLVED:

- i) that the recommendation that the Annual Customer Feedback report 2017/18 be approved for publication on the Council's website.
- ii) that subject to the term 'service area' be replaced with 'service area managers' in the final sentence of recommendation 2, the recommendations included within the Annual Report be endorsed.

31 Quarter 1 2018/19 Corporate Performance Report

The Information, Intelligence and Insight Manager presented this report. He observed that there had been positive performance and the report reflected the refresh of the Corporate Plan 2018/19. He continued that the severe weather seen in the winter and spring of 2018 had had a knock-on effect on service provision.

Members noted that there had been welcome reductions in delayed transfer to care statistics and increased attendance at Theatre Severn and other cultural sites. The increase in the use of libraries had started to level out in quarter 1, although the on-line use of libraries had increased.

In response to a Members question regarding the monitoring of environment and sustainability the Information, Intelligence and Insight Manager responded that this report had been produced with reference to the current Corporate Plan. A revised

Corporate Plan with new priorities was being considered and data on these issues may be incorporated into performance reports from 2019/20 onwards.

A Member observed that the information contained within the report was no longer current and queried why it was necessary for Cabinet to receive this report before the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee. The Information, Intelligence and Insight Manager responded that Cabinet and Council had responsibility for the delivery of the Corporate Plan. The Chief Executive added that the Financial Strategy Task and Finish Group might be minded to consider the Corporate Plan during the course of its work.

Members suggested that the issue of Broadband provision within the County should be referred to the Place Overview Committee for further consideration. The Chair of the Place Overview Committee agreed to add this item to the Committee's work plan following agreement by the Members of that Committee.

Members also suggested that the issue of Waste Recycling should be referred for further investigation to the Communities Overview Committee.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

32 **Quarter 1 2018/19 Financial Monitoring Report**

The Head of Finance Governance and Assurance introduced this report. Members noted that the projected revenue outturn was projected to overspend by £6.79m, that the project General Fund balance as at 31st March 2019 was projected to stand at £8.521m, significantly below the recommended level, and that £2.5m of projected savings were RAG rated as red.

In response to a Member's question the Head of Finance Governance and Assurance confirmed that Directors received monthly financial monitoring reports and work was continually being undertaken to ensure that finances were balanced at the end of the year. He continued that there was an increasing demand for children's services with associated increase in costs which was difficult to reduce. He continued that the costs of Adult Social Care were also increasing rapidly at rate which exceeded the financial model for this service area despite an additional one-off payment from central Government.

A Member asked for clarification regarding the Workforce and Transformation saving of £1.2m set out in Table which was shown as red or amber rated. The Head of Finance Governance and Assurance explained that this related to the restructure of the workforce which was subject to agreement and consultation and the project being delivered on time. Members noted that there had been a review of staff vacancies and a spending freeze on staff recruitment.

In response to a Members query on the CIPFA recommended level of the General Fund Balance the Head of Finance Governance and Assurance responded that there was no definitive guidance, but a risk assessment was mandatory on a significant number of factors. There was risk assessed level of £15/16m which was slightly

above that of the previous year. If the budget was found to be difficult to balance this figure would have to increase.

A Member queried whether the additional expenditure resulting from the severe weather had been reflected in the report. The Head of Finance Governance and Assurance advised that this would be contained in the next report which covered the period up until the end of September 2018.

RESOLVED: that the Financial Monitoring Report – Quarter 1 2018/19 be noted.

33 **Financial Strategy Task and Finish Group Interim Report**

The Chair of the Financial Strategy and Innovation and Income Task and Finish Group introduced this report. She confirmed that meetings of this group would continue.

A Member suggested that the Group may be minded to consider cashable and non-cashable savings during the course of its work.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

34 **Road Safety Task and Finish Group**

The Chair of the Place Overview Committee advised that the Place Overview Committee had recently received an item on the '20's Plenty' campaign to reduce 30mph speed limits across Shropshire to 20mph and the Committee had considered the issue of road safety in the County as part of its Place Shaping work. He continued that work needed to be undertaken to ensure that road policies for rural areas were suitable and not wholly based on those required for urban areas which had different requirements. He suggested that work should be undertaken on understanding the nature of accident blackspots and identifying that funds were being spent appropriately on these areas.

Members discussed the Safer Roads Partnership and traffic calming measures which could be considered by a Road Safety Task and Finish Group. The Portfolio Holder for Transport responded that he welcomed the establishment of the group and hoped that it would look at all areas of road safety and not restrict its work to lowering speed limits.

Members observed that Planning Policy played a significant role in road safety and cuts in Council expenditure impacted on implementation of projects to support this. It was suggested that this should be added to the Task and Finish Group's terms of reference.

RESOLVED: that the Road Safety Task and Finish Group be established in conjunction with the Place Overview Committee.

35 CIL, S106 and NHB Task and Finish Group

The Chair in her capacity as Chair of the CIL, S106 and NHB Task and Finish group updated Members on its progress. Members noted that a Members' Briefing had been arranged on the CIL Regulation 123 List and suggested amendments. She clarified that developments which appeared in the CIL R123 List could not be funded through Section 106 agreements.

Members discussed the use of CIL revenue and asked for clarification of the policy to be sent to Town and Parish Councils. Members observed that they were required to sign off Parish and Town Plans but not Place Plans and expressed concern over the lack of Member involvement in the process. Members agreed that a Briefing on the Place Plan process would be useful.

Members commented that the prospect of receiving CIL funding was an important aspect in communities accepting new development in their towns and parishes. They expressed concern that without this incentive development would not be supported.

36 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/19

RESOLVED: that the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/19 be noted.

37 Date/Time of next meeting of the Committee

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday 14th November 2018.

38 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED: that under paragraph 10.2 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules that the proceedings of the Committee in relation to Minute 39 shall not be conducted in public on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the categories specified against them.

39 Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 11th July 2018

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 11th July 2018 were confirmed as a correct record.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: