



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

Date: Friday, 15 January 2021
:

**Committee:
Communities Overview Committee**

Date: Monday, 25 January 2021
Time: 2.00 pm
Venue: THIS IS A VIRTUAL MEETING

Members of the public will be able to listen to this meeting by clicking on this link:

Please note that this meeting will be made available through Microsoft Teams Live Events - your device will need to meet the minimum specification as detailed on the Microsoft website at this link: [Device Specification](#)

- You will need to download MS Teams (free) and click on the link to listen to the meeting if you are using a PC
- If using a mobile device, you will need to download the MS Teams app (free) before clicking the link
- Use the link at 2.00 pm on the day of the meeting and click on 'Join as Guest'
- You may receive an error message or a request for login details if you try to gain access before 2.00 pm

You are requested to attend the above meeting.
The Agenda is attached

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

Members of Communities Overview Committee

Cecilia Motley (Chairman)	Roger Hughes
Nick Hignett (Vice Chairman)	Vivienne Parry
Clare Aspinall	Keith Roberts
Ted Clarke	Leslie Winwood
Nigel Hartin	Tina Woodward

Your Committee Officer is:

Julie Fildes Committee Officer
Tel: 01743 257723
Email: Julie.Fildes@shropshire.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 Apologies for absence and substitutions

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 of the last meeting (Pages 1 - 4)

To consider the minutes of the Communities Overview Committee meeting held on 8th December 2020 (To Follow).

4 Public Question Time

To receive any public questions or petitions from the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. The deadline for this meeting is 2.00pm on Thursday 21st January 2020.

5 Member Question Time

To receive any questions of which members of the Council have given notice. Deadline for notification for this meeting is 5pm on Wednesday 13th January 2020.

6 Climate Change Draft Action Plan and Quantified Carbon Budget (Pages 5 - 24)

To consider the draft Climate Change Action Plan and Quantified Carbon Budget to ascertain that the plan meets the objective of the Council's Climate Change Strategy. [Report attached]

Contact Mark Barrow. Tel: 01743 258919

7 Public Rights of Way Update (Pages 25 - 28)

To receive an update on work to maximise access to public rights of way. (Report attached)

Contact Shona Butter Tel: 01743 255062

8 Update On Provision Of Burial Space, Cemetery Extension And Service Related Developments. (Pages 29 - 38)

To receive an update on building burial capacity in Shropshire. (Report attached)

Contact Mark Foxall Tel: 01743 255936

9 Shropshire Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme - suggested revisions (Pages 39 - 44)

To receive an update from the committee's recent working group review of Shropshire Council's housing allocations policy. (Report attached)

Contact Danial Webb. Tel: 01743 258509

10 Work Programme (Pages 45 - 50)

To consider the future work programme of the Committee. [Report attached]

Contact Danial Webb. Tel 01743 258509

11 Date/Time of next meeting

The Committee is next scheduled to meet on 15th March 2021 at 2.00pm.

This page is intentionally left blank



<u>Committee and Date</u>
Communities Overview Committee 25 January 2021

<u>Item</u>
<u>Public</u>

CORPORATE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2021

Responsible Officer Mark Barrow, Executive Director Place
e-mail: mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 258919

1. Summary

- 1.1 The mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation measures to build resilience are now essential to prevent the worst outcomes of the climate emergency. Shropshire Council declared a climate emergency in May 2019 and adopted a Climate Strategy and Action Plan, which establishes the objective of achieving net-zero carbon performance for Shropshire Council by 2030 in December 2020. An internal officer working group was established in April 2019 and the Climate Change Task Force was established to lead the Council's response in November 2019.
- 1.2 During 2020, the efforts of the Task Force were directed towards developing a corporate strategy and embedding climate change as a key consideration in the Council's strategies and corporate governance systems. Considering the impact of our activities on the climate has been adopted as one of the eight organisation principles for the council. A range of projects and initiatives are being developed to help the Council improve its own performance and to demonstrate 'leadership by example' to help foster similar action across the wider economy and communities in Shropshire. Shropshire Council is also a founder and key supporter of the new community-led Shropshire Climate Action Partnership (SCAP) which is leading efforts to tackle carbon emissions across the county as a whole.
- 1.3 The adopted corporate Climate Strategy summarises the best available information about the Council's current direct and indirect carbon emissions and identifies the scale of reductions and residual offsetting which will be required to reach our objective of net-zero performance by 2030. The Action Plan element of the document identifies a range of potential actions and a pipeline of specific projects to help deliver progress. This is a fast-moving area of work and the Action Plan has therefore been published as a 'live' document with a general expectation that it will require frequent updating.

2. Recommendations

- A. That the Communities Overview Committee supports the Corporate Climate Action Plan and Project Pipeline 2020 (Appendix 1) as a 'live' document which will be updated frequently to reflect rapid changes in technology and resources which are expected to influence this work;

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 The climate crisis is a serious threat to civilised society and the lives of millions of people both globally nationally and locally. The mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation measures to build resilience is now urgent and essential to prevent the worst outcomes of the climate crisis. Even if we are successful in mitigating the worst effects, we will continue to experience more pronounced and frequent episodes of extreme weather effects. Within 50 years there is a global threat to food supply chains and economic systems. The much greater frequency of extreme weather events will significantly increase insurance risks and disrupt financial markets. In addition to financial impacts, Climate Change threatens continued access to adequate energy, water, food and housing which are all essential human necessities which affect the health, wellbeing and future resilience of our communities.
- 3.2 The climate crisis therefore represents a significant strategic risk to Shropshire and the delivery of Council and public services. This risk is most likely to manifest itself in terms of financial impacts (e.g. operating costs, impacts on the Shropshire economy) and impacts on the health and well-being of staff and residents as service users.
- 3.3 Taking active steps through the adoption of a corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan and supporting wider community efforts will allow the Council to make a demonstrable contribution to reducing the carbon footprint of the wider county, as well as 'leading by example' by reducing its own carbon footprint. Through its regulatory role and procurement decisions, Shropshire Council is in a position to make a strong positive contribution to help the wider Shropshire community make a positive transition to a low carbon future.
- 3.4 An Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) has been carried out on the draft documentation. This screening indicates that the corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan are likely to have a positive effect on all groups in society and is intended to do so, given its objective of addressing Shropshire Council's contribution to the climate emergency. The climate emergency will have significant impacts on the whole of Shropshire and all its diverse communities, from those living or working in our rural areas to those living or working in our market towns, as well as those that travel into our county and across our porous borders.
- 3.5 Individual Council services will need to engage with their staff and service users to explore the need for, and implications of, service changes which may result from the adoption of carbon reduction measures. The Council will need to adopt an agile approach keep abreast of national good practice in order to maximise opportunities for equality and social inclusion within the overall policy context of addressing the climate emergency.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. Measures to reduce Shropshire Council's carbon footprint and adapt service delivery to address the impacts of extreme weather events will significantly

reduce financial risk and potentially generate revenue savings as well as delivering on our corporate responsibilities to the environment and our communities. Improving Shropshire Council's carbon performance and resilience will however require significant capital investment in energy efficiency, low carbon technologies and renewable energy generation.

- 4.2. Access to the Council's Capital Programme will be pursued where projects will be appraised on an individual basis following the process detailed in the Capital Strategy. Each initiative in the climate strategy would need to be evaluated on its own merits prior to inclusion in the Capital Programme. Some projects delivered in partnership with others may lead to commercial income being generated.
- 4.3. However, failing to reduce the Council's carbon footprint and implement climate change adaptation measures represents a financial threat to both revenue costs and the value of the Council's capital assets. This means that there is an incentive for the Council to 'Invest to Save' to mitigate the risk of future costs.
- 4.4. Many measures to reduce dependence on greenhouse gasses also offer opportunities to both generate a financial return and to provide community leadership which highlights the 'clean growth' economic potential of new technologies and adaptation measures in the Shropshire context.

5. Climate Change Appraisal

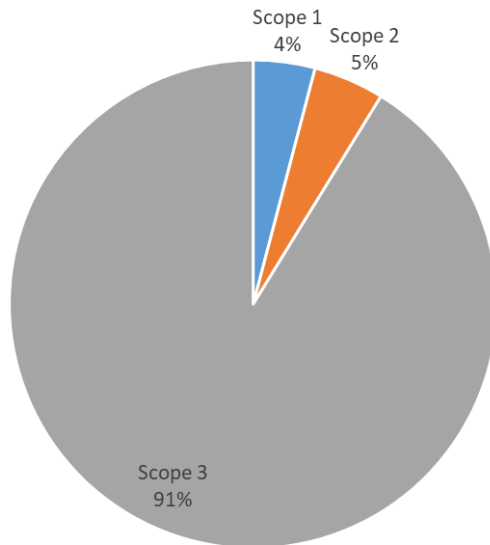
- 5.1 **Energy and fuel consumption:** The corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan have been developed to drive the delivery of actions to improve energy efficiency and carbon performance across Council Services;
- 5.2 **Renewable energy generation:** The corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan have been developed to drive the delivery of additional generation of renewable energy from a range of technologies on Council land and buildings;
- 5.3 **Carbon offsetting or mitigation:** The corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan have been developed to drive the delivery of efforts to capture and store carbon and to mitigate the effects of climate change on biodiversity through the management of Council land;
- 5.4 **Climate Change adaptation:** The corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan have been developed to drive the delivery of efforts to ensure that Council services and assets are resilient in the face of the challenges of more extreme weather events.

6. Background

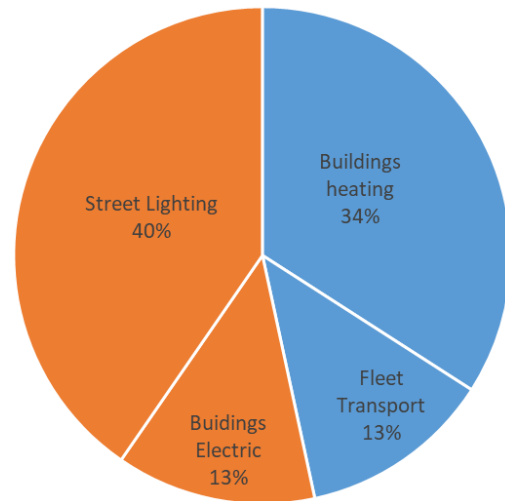
Corporate Carbon Footprint 2019

- 6.1 The best available data suggests that Shropshire Council's carbon footprint (Scope 1 & 2) has fallen from around 12,000 tonnes CO₂e in 2017 to around 5,000 tonnes CO₂e in 2019. The Council's indirect emissions (Scope 3) are assessed as being around 50,000 tonnes CO₂e in 2019 (see charts below). Whilst the Council's footprint represents only around 1% of Shropshire's total carbon footprint, work is ongoing to refine performance data and establish an accurate picture to support annual monitoring.

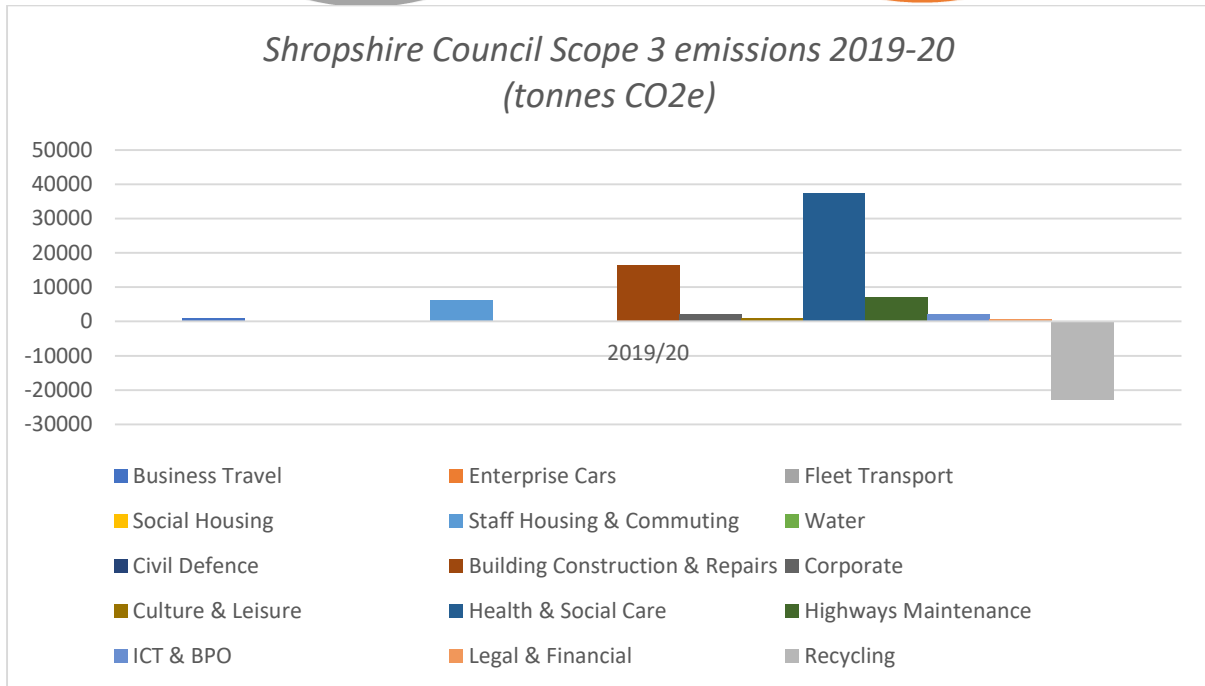
Shropshire Council Carbon Footprint
2019-20 (tonnes CO2e)



Shropshire Council Scope 1 & 2
emissions 2019-20 (tonnes CO2e)



Shropshire Council Scope 3 emissions 2019-20
(tonnes CO2e)



6.2 The graphs above show that the majority of the Council's carbon emissions are generated from indirect activity, such as services which are commissioned from commercial providers, the repair and maintenance of its buildings and from staff housing and commuting. The waste management contract operated by Veolia generates a net carbon saving of around 23,000 tonnes mainly because of the high levels of recycling in the county. The Council's current carbon footprint is already offset to some extent through carbon capture and storage on land holdings such as countryside sites, which in total currently capture and store around 2,000 tonnes CO2e per year.

6.3 Shropshire Council was already working to reduce its' carbon footprint and direct impact on the climate prior to the declaration of a climate emergency in May 2019. An internal officer working group was established in April 2019 and

the Climate Change Task Force was established under the leadership of Adrian Cooper in November 2019. A Climate Strategy Framework, which established the objective of achieving net-zero carbon performance for Shropshire Council and set out the scale of the challenge, key objectives and principles and a route map for our response was approved by Council in December 2019. An update on progress was reported to Performance Management Scrutiny Committee in July 2020.

Climate Task Force – Role and Resources

- 6.4 The principal role of the Task Force is to inform, challenge and co-ordinate climate and carbon management actions across the full range of Shropshire Council Services. The Task Force currently has a manager and 2.5 full time staff, but both supports and is supported by a large number of other staff across the Council, through an internal ‘Climate Officer Group’. Reflecting the scope of the work outlined in the Action Plan, the Task Force plans to recruit more staff during 2021 to increase the capacity and capability of the team.
- 6.5 The early efforts of the Task Force have been directed towards embedding and normalising climate change as a key consideration in the Council’s culture, strategies and corporate governance systems. Alongside commissioning feasibility developing its Task Force staff are contributing directly to the development of a wide range of strategies including the Local Plan, the Local Transport Plan (LTP4) and the Leisure Services Strategy. Staff also contribute to the project boards which have been established to manage development projects such as those at Greenacres Farm, the Quarry Pool and school’s development projects.
- 6.6 Alongside these initiatives, the Task Force is supporting the development of a wide range of projects across the full range of Council services to ‘power down’ energy consumption for Council buildings and transport, ‘power up’ the generation of renewable energy on Council land and buildings and support the capture and storage of carbon on Council-managed land.

7. Corporate Climate Action Plan 2021

- 7.1 A copy of the corporate Climate Action Plan and Project Pipeline is attached as Appendix 1 and identifies a range of potential actions and a pipeline of specific projects, both for the forthcoming 12 months and those that are under development for the longer term. Of particular note are:
- i. Work to assess the feasibility of a 2 MW solar farm on the former landfill site at Maesbury Road, Oswestry, which could supply electricity direct to local companies in the neighbouring industrial estate;
 - ii. Work to assess the feasibility of the manufacture of ‘green’ hydrogen as a vehicle fuel for heavy commercial vehicles in both the Council’s fleet and that of its contractors, using electricity from the Battlefield Energy Recovery Facility.

Future progress with these and subsequent projects will be reported as part of an annual monitoring and review process.

- 7.2 Climate Change is a rapidly evolving area of work and the Strategy will almost certainly need to be reviewed and modified in future years to reflect technology changes and enhanced data.

Carbon Budget

- 7.3 Shropshire Council has agreed the principle of preparing an annual Carbon Impact Budget which will identify the greenhouse gas impacts of individual Council services and major projects and will report on annual performance trends in parallel with the Council's financial budget. The starting point for this budget is our current corporate footprint, and the corporate Strategy illustrates a trajectory and the indicative annual targets for future years which will be required to achieve the objective of net-zero performance by 2030. The level of annual reduction required is similar to the percentage reductions achieved in recent years (see paragraph 6.1 above).

8. Shropshire Climate Action Partnership

- 8.1 In addition to efforts to tackle its own carbon emissions, and as a key community leader, Shropshire Council is one of the key founders and supporters of the community-led 'Shropshire Climate Action Partnership' (SCAP) which has set the objective of achieving net-zero carbon performance across Shropshire by 2030 and an initial target of preparing a county-wide Climate Strategy and Action Plan by the end of 2020. Further information is available here: <https://zerocarbonshropshire.org/> The Partnership is being supported by volunteers drawn from a wide range of business sectors and communities across Shropshire and has recently drafted an initial county-wide Strategy and Action Plan for Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.
- 8.2 Whilst most of the actions in the current corporate Action Plan focus on projects and initiatives which we help Shropshire Council to reduce its own footprint and thereby provide 'Leadership by Example', some actions will also actively foster 'green growth', innovation and improved performance in the wider Shropshire community and economy. Shropshire Council staff will continue to work with SCAP to support wider improvements through the deliver of our services and regulatory roles.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 Whilst the transition to net-zero performance will not be easy or quick to achieve, we face a climate emergency and it is crucial to take early action and build momentum. The recently adopted Action Plan sets out an initial list of projects and initiatives, but significant agility will be required if we are to take advantage of funding opportunities and rapid changes in technology and good practice and the Action Plan has therefore been prepared as a 'live' document which will be updated frequently.

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

Shropshire Council Climate Change Strategy (December 2020)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Dean Carroll

Local Member

All

Appendices

1. Shropshire Climate Action Plan and Project Pipeline


This page is intentionally left blank

Climate Action Plan and Project Pipeline 2020


The following table is a selection of actions drawn from multiple sources including the public event in February 2020. The full list has been summarised to include only those that Shropshire Council are able to take on. It focusses on those actions that are likely to reduce the Council’s own emissions – including indirect (Scope 3) emissions – rather than Council led actions that help reduce the emissions of Shropshire businesses or residents. Actions that help sequester carbon are included. This list is a work in progress. Formal approval under the Council’s Capital Programme will be pursued where projects will be appraised on an individual basis following the process detailed in the Council’s Capital Strategy. Each potential action would need to be evaluated on its own merits prior to inclusion in the Capital Programme. Some projects delivered in partnership with others may lead to commercial income being generated. Updates will be made at monthly internal Climate Officers Group meetings.


The first table lists active projects that are already underway as part of a ‘Project Pipeline’ and the second table identifies a range of potential actions that could be undertaken subject to satisfactory feasibility assessment.


1. Project Pipeline

Title	Lead org / Dept	Notes / work underway	More info needed?
POWER DOWN 			
Current projects that reduce demand for energy and resources			
Shropshire Council is working to expand the range of staff incentives for low carbon behaviour and living, including via salary sacrifice schemes and staff rewards schemes.	Human Resources	Cycle to Work scheme is an existing example	Y
Continue and further promote Warp-it Re-use scheme	Assets and Estates	Warp-it is a way to "find, give away, or loan office furniture, equipment and other resources". It currently saves about 50 tCO2e pa. The next step is to roll the scheme out more widely to other public sector bodies in the County.	N

Title	Lead org / Dept	Notes / work underway	More info needed?
Assess the feasibility of manufacturing Hydrogen Vehicle Fuel at Battlefield, using power from the Waste to Energy plant	Climate Change Task Force	Government is now clearly backing hydrogen as a low carbon vehicle fuel. Our transport fleet and that of our key contractors (including buses) could make use of hydrogen, therefore we will undertake a feasibility study as a joint commission with Highways and Transport colleagues. Battlefield was recently identified as one of only two preferred locations identified in the Marches as part of a recent regional study commissioned by the Midlands Energy Hub for low carbon transport hubs.	Y
Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme	Housing Services	Shropshire Council and Herefordshire Council are working together on allocating the Governments 'Green Home Grant', the Warm Homes Fund 'Rural homes and communities Category', and other funding to households in greatest need. Total budget is £1.8m across both areas. Air Source Heat Pump's will feature highly in the measures introduced where the buildings are suitable. A larger bid for LAD2 funding across the Marches area is being prepared for Spring 2021.	N
Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Demonstrator	Housing Services	Shropshire Council has led the submission of a bid for up to 50% grant funding (up to £30k per house) for energy and carbon performance improvements to social housing in Shropshire.	N
Install EV Charging Points in market towns across Shropshire	Highways	Shropshire Council is part of a successful 100% Government-funded project called 'Agile Streets' which is seeking suitable test locations for 25 funded EV chargers to help vehicle owners who are reliant on on-street or public parking. Application for additional Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) funding, would cover 75% of the cost of an additional 20-25 charging points.	N
Shropshire Council Buildings – Energy Efficiency Improvements (Sustainable Energy in Public Buildings)	Property Services Group	The Climate Change Task Force and Property Services Group are working to extend the current programme of ERDF-funded improvements to building efficiency through SePuBu: https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/climate-change-and-sustainability/sepubu-sustainable-energy-in-public-buildings/	Y
Shropshire Council Buildings – Energy Efficiency Improvements	Climate Change Task Force	Shropshire Council and APSE Energy have submitted a bid to the BEIS-funded Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund which would pay for them to identify and develop a programme of energy efficiency and low carbon heat upgrade	Y


Title	Lead org / Dept	Notes / work underway	More info needed?
(Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund)		projects for our buildings, before preparing an application for capital funding, on our behalf, to the Salix-funded £1 billion Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme	
Replace all street lights with LED lighting by 2024	Highways	£6.8 million is being spent to replace all sodium street lamps with more efficient and longer lasting LED lighting. This will save 794.5 tCO ₂ e - currently equivalent to about £900,000 - every year. All replacement due by March 2024.	N
Assess the potential to develop an 'Electric Forecourt' as part of the proposed Oswestry Innovation Park at Mile End, near Oswestry	Climate Change Task Force	Mile End near Oswestry is being considered as one of 100 national Electric Forecourts which can charge 24 electric vehicles at once with superchargers that can deliver up to 350kW of charging power. This enables people to charge vehicles within 20-30 minutes initially, and much faster in the future as battery technologies mature.	Y
Promote business energy efficiency in Shropshire	Economic Growth	The Business Energy Efficiency Programme (BEEP) is working across the Marches area. It's led by Worcestershire Council and utilises existing ERDF programme funds.	Y
<h2>POWER UP </h2>			
<h3>Current projects that increase generation of renewable energy</h3>			
Assess the feasibility of installing 2MWp of solar PV on the former tip in Maesbury Industrial Estate	Climate Change Task Force	Potential for a return on investment starting at 6% in 2021 and increasing to 9% by 2030. 5400 tCO ₂ e saving by 2030. 25-year lifetime net gain of £3.1m. Ecological and Historic Environment surveys completed. Site survey work has started by Nottingham City Council Energy Services. Feasibility study to be completed by Jan 2021.	Y
Assess the potential for Renewable Energy Opportunities on Council Land	Climate Change Task Force	A report on the potential for renewable energy generation on 10 areas of council owned land is being produced by Public Power Solutions (Swindon BC). It will be available by April 2021 and will assist in the aspiration to be energy self-sufficient by 2030. This will require an estimated 60MWp per annum. Currently the figure is 1.2MWp with Maesbury projected to add another 2MWp.	Y

Title	Lead org / Dept	Notes / work underway	More info needed?
Assess the potential to establish a Virtual Power Plant (VPP)	Climate Change Task Force	Proposals have been prepared for new build and retrofit of solar and battery systems for new build housing schemes, which would operate as part of a Virtual Power Plant (VPP), together with a variation which could provide a VPP installation 'offer' for SC employees as part of an Employee Benefits Salary Sacrifice Scheme.	Y
Assess the feasibility of constructing a hydro-electric generator at Shrewsbury Weir	Climate Change Task Force	Discussion between Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council (as landowner) are on-going.	Y
Assess the feasibility of establishing a Heat Network in north Shrewsbury	Climate Change Task Force	Shropshire Council is working with the Midlands Energy Hub and the Shropshire Climate Action Partnership to prepare a bid for feasibility funding for a heat network study for Shrewsbury.	Y
Renewable Energy grants for non-domestic buildings	Economic Growth	European and Government 50% grant for the installation of eligible renewable technologies on non-domestic buildings in the Marches. MarRE is underway in SC with a dedicated project officer	Y
<h2>SEQUESTER CARBON </h2>			
<h3>Current projects that help store carbon in vegetation and soils</h3>			
By 2050 plant 345,000 trees. This is a minimum of 11,500 per year.	Planning Services	Tree scheme re-launched in October 2020 with 12,500 trees allocated in just 9 hours. An additional 20,000 trees were allocated for 2020/21 planting season with funding from a Defra funded project. These have also been allocated without advertising. Trees not funded by the council or Defra will not be included in our overall carbon budgets to avoid double counting.	Y
Defra Trees Outside Woodland (TOW) project	Planning Services	Defra project will provide £500,000 over 2 years to help investigate methods of increasing the planting of Trees Outside Woodland. Shropshire Council is one of 5 Local Authorities piloting different approaches. Shropshire is leading on the agroforestry and orchards theme. A project officer will be recruited.	Y

Title	Lead org / Dept	Notes / work underway	More info needed?
Work with others to establish, a carbon credit scheme that invests in projects that sequester carbon locally (known as 'carbon in-setting')	Climate Change Task Force	A pilot is underway with a Council highways contractor to partly offset (in-set) their carbon emissions via provision of additional trees to the Community Tree Scheme.	Y
<h2>COMMUNICATION & EDUCATION </h2>			
<p>Current initiatives that increase understanding of the issues and the solutions</p>			
Report annually on progress with the action plan, emission reduction, and carbon sequestration. Publish as much data (including live data) as possible online.	Climate Change Task Force	Provisional data is provided within the Climate Change Strategy. Annual energy generation from existing PV sites are presented the Shropshire Council website.	N


2. Corporate Climate Action Plan


Actions are highlighted based on their approximate period for action		
Now	Soon	Later


Title	Lead org / Dept	Notes / work underway	More info needed?
POWER DOWN 			
Actions that reduce demand for energy and resources			
Create a strategy for staff related transport that follows the hierarchy of transportation modes	Human Resources	Initial estimate for carbon emissions due to staff commute is 2853 tCO ₂ e per year	N
Support staff to work from home and attend meetings virtually	Human Resources	Significant work underway in response to the Covid19 crisis.	y
Further promote national car-sharing schemes for staff and wider community	Human Resources	Initial estimate for carbon emissions due to staff commute is 2853 tCO ₂ e per year	N
Complete an assessment of the energy efficiency of staff homes using EPC data and ideally energy use data obtained from staff surveys	Human Resources	Work is underway linking staff addresses to national Energy Performance Certificate data	Y

Title	Lead org / Dept	Notes / work underway	More info needed?
Review Transport Policy and contracts to favour low carbon options	Highways	Does this impact Council emissions? Lessons to be learned from Cornwall total transport model. Existing work on Park and Ride developments; links with Health sector around school transport; shared vehicle assets; school runs and patient transfer, DfT work, etc	Y
Prepare a pipeline of bids in advance for active travel funding	Highways	Seek support from Sustrans	Y
Buy 5 electric cargo bikes for Council use or loan by 2025	Highways	A bid was submitted in early summer 2020 but was unsuccessful. Additional funding sources will be sought	Y
Revise Council procurement strategy to reflect carbon performance of those we purchase from	Finance, Governance & Assurance		N
Divest funding for fossil fuels from Shropshire Council pension fund by 2023	Finance, Governance & Assurance		N
Continue roll out of superfast and ultra-fast broadband and rural hubs to reduce dependency on car journeys, etc, for business and access to services	Economic Growth	Estimates of carbon savings could be determined using staff distances to work. These calculations are being worked on.	Y
Seek energy bills from staff for the last 12 months to help assess the Council's Scope 3 emissions.	Climate Change Task Force	Consider linking to the mandatory training on sustainability.	N
Seek funding to retrofit energy efficiency measures into all homes that need it	Climate Change Task Force		Y

Title	Lead org / Dept	Notes / work underway	More info needed?
Working with industry, facilitate workshops and collate online resources to assist skills development of building retrofit workforce	Property Services Group		N
Use SEPUBu framework to add an assessment of energy efficiency measures to existing property condition assessment	Property Services Group		Y
By 2021 adopt good design standards for development control that incorporate natural features like shade trees, green walls and roofs, and water features that help with natural cooling and creating a healthy environment	Planning Services		Y
Provide informed advice and publish links to guidance, best practice case-studies, and appropriate technologies for energy efficiency measures in historically sensitive buildings	Planning Services	A cross departmental working group has been established to consider appropriate investment and maintenance of the Council's 'historic estate'.	Y
Include annual mandatory training on climate change issues for staff via the 'Leap Into Learning' platform	Human Resources	An existing learning programme on sustainability issues is available for staff. This requires updating and consideration of it being a mandatory requirement or not.	Y
Replace all fleet vehicles with electric or hydrogen vehicles by 2030	Highways		Y
Replace all pool vehicles with electric or hydrogen vehicles by 2030	Highways	Pool vehicles currently add approximately 24 tCO2e per annum. 8 pool cars are hybrid vehicles.	N

Title	Lead org / Dept	Notes / work underway	More info needed?
Consider a Workplace Parking Levy	Highways	Consider a Workplace Parking Levy to encourage sustainable travel options.	Y
Revise procurement guidelines to be clear that low and zero emission transport modes of suppliers is inherent to our social value scoring process	Finance, Governance & Assurance		N
Consider increasing social value weightings within procurement processes with specific reference to low carbon and with a minimum percentage scoring introduced	Finance, Governance & Assurance		N
Seek funding to retrofit Council housing stock to Passivhaus standard or equivalent with an ambition for all housing stock to reach this standard.	Property Services Group		Y
POWER UP 			
Actions that increase generation of renewable energy			
Ensure any roof-top maintenance works to council buildings considers installation of solar PV to help reduce costs of installation.	Property Services Group		Y

Title	Lead org / Dept	Notes / work underway	More info needed?
Commission a study by the end of 2021 into the viability of water-source heat pumps in the development of the Riverside area of Shrewsbury and potentially elsewhere.	Climate Change Task Force		Y
Produce guidance for Neighbourhood plans to ensure they are aware of their ability to promote on-shore wind	Planning Services		Y
Commission research into the potential for Shropshire Council to become energy self-sufficient by 2030	Climate Change Task Force	Electricity used is already from entirely renewable sources. We currently generate over 900 MWh every year which, since 2012, has saved the authority over £700,000.	Y
<h2>SEQUESTER CARBON </h2>			
<h3>Actions that help store carbon in vegetation and soils</h3>			
Establish a network of Tree Wardens in association with the Tree Council	Planning Services	This may fall under the remit of the new project officer associated with the Trees Outside Woodland Project.	N
By 2021 adopt good design standards for development control that incorporate carbon rich materials like hempcrete, glulam, and timber, in the construction that act as a carbon store and reduce use of carbon intensive materials like steel and concrete.	Planning Services		Y

Title	Lead org / Dept	Notes / work underway	More info needed?
Of the SC owned land not already tree covered or built-up, plant 5% with native local provenance trees.	Planning Services	Need a better estimate of the potential for tree planting on SC land. This is a provisional guess until more accurate figures can be generated.	Y
COMMUNICATION & EDUCATION			
Actions that increase understanding of the issues and the solutions			
By March 2021 publish a new Climate Crisis area of the web site that provides lists of resources and funding sources to encourage home energy saving	Communications	Keep Shropshire Warm Scheme already in place via MEA and Energy Savings Trust. New £5k funding from gov. Existing web site does have links to resources and a Climate Resources Pack.	Y
By 2021 develop a climate communications strategy to make the most of both internal and external communication channels	Communications		Y
Provide free or subsidised venues for community activities that promote resilience and adaptation to the climate crisis or results in lower carbon lifestyles.	Commercial Services		Y

This page is intentionally left blank



Committee and Date

**Communities Overview Committee
25 January 2021**

Item

Public

OUTDOOR PARTNERSHIPS TEAM - PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY UPDATE 2021

Responsible Officers

Pete Banford/Shona Butter

e-mail: Shona.butter@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01743 255062

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report provides the Communities Overview Committee with an update on the management of the Public Rights of Way network and actions taken following reports to the Committee in March and September 2019.

2.0 Background

2.1 On 18 March 2019, the Communities Overview Committee received a report from the Outdoor Partnerships Team regarding their work to maintain public rights of way within the Shropshire Council area and on 16 September 2019 a follow up report was presented highlighting key service pressures.

2.2 The committee heard that Shropshire Council maintains a network of 5,600km of public rights of way, the third largest in the United Kingdom. It heard that the council has a duty under the Highways Act 1980 to “protect and assert” the network, namely, to ensure that it remains open and accessible.

2.3 Like many services, the team’s funding has reduced in recent years, and the service has faced staffing pressures particularly within the Mapping & Enforcement Team due to the retirement of two of its most senior and longstanding officers.

2.4 This combination of funding and staffing pressures has reduced capacity to maintain the network and ensure it remains accessible, resulting in the percentage of the network that is easy to use dropping from 85% in 2009 to 66% in 2019. Surveys have not been undertaken since this date, but it is likely that this percentage has reduced further.

2.5 The team also highlighted the issues of maintaining bridges and other infrastructure along rights of way for which Shropshire Council has a statutory responsibility. The service estimates the costs of these repairs to be approximately £1 million, with a similar amount required should the council receive public notices of obstructions or required repairs, which the council is required to respond to within strict deadlines.

- 2.6 The service has made some effort to mitigate these cuts in funding, by growing its team of 340 volunteers through 64 Parish Paths Partnerships, which together provide unpaid work equivalent to 5.5 full-time officers. These groups carry out much of the maintenance work in their parishes, such as cutting back vegetation and repairing stiles. In doing this, they have slowed the rate of decline in the percentage of the network that remains open. Although these groups provide invaluable support, they still require professional support from Shropshire Council Officers to negotiate improvement works with landowners.
- 2.7 The Rights of Way, Maintenance and Mapping and Enforcement teams also generate income annually. This has increased steadily since 2015 when the Contracting arm of the Maintenance Team was initiated to make the most of the skills held by the team and to try to offset budget reductions particularly capital funding.

3.0 Update on Actions

- 3.1 A capital bid was submitted for the maintenance of bridges and has resulted in £200k being secured for bridge works on the network and the allocation within the Mapping and Enforcement Teams budget for a grade 8 Bridges and Rights of Way Inspector Post. (Please note this post has yet to be recruited due to COVID-19).
- 3.2 A business case has been agreed by senior officers for the recruitment of 2 additional Rights of Way (Legal Orders and Enforcement Officers) within the Mapping & Enforcement Team, pending final approvals. This will reduce the risk of potential claims of maladministration against the Council and address the Legislative Reforms due to come into force under the Deregulation Act 2015, which intend to simplify, speed up and reduce costs and administrative burdens associated with rights of way procedures.
- 3.3 Additional temporary Officers have been recruited within the Maintenance Team to ensure income generation can be sustained through the Contracting Arm of the Team and statutory rights of way functions are maintained.
- 3.4 A report was due to be taken to Cabinet highlighting the issues identified by the Overview Committee however due to meetings being cancelled and the pandemic this did not take place.

4.0 Current Situation

- 4.1 As stated above officers have been unable, due to other work pressures to undertake the biannual condition survey to assess the accessibility of the network. It is likely that the percentage will have decreased.
- 4.2 Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the rights of way network and staff.
- There has been a 215% increase in the number of issues being logged on our Management System
 - A 187% increase in general issues being reported
 - Issues with being able to work from home due to IT provision and the requirement to have access to legal records and files. A business case is being drafted to highlight the IT requirements.
 - Volunteers have been unable to undertake works.
 - Legal Orders have not been progressed due to the inability to fulfil parts of the statutory function due to restrictions.

- 4.3 Despite these challenges the Team should be congratulated on the work they have been able to achieve, amidst the pressures of the pandemic. During the initial lockdown Outdoor Partnerships Staff were fundamental in delivering food boxes, supplies to food banks and Public Protection Equipment. The pandemic was also seen as an opportunity to focus on some of the large scale contracting works at schools and despite the unprecedented rise in issues being reported the team has maintained health and safety, and public access across the ROW network.
- 4.4 The pandemic has further highlighted the importance and value of the rights of way network to enable access to the countryside for recreation and people's health and wellbeing.

5.0 Future Pressures

- 5.1 These include the following:
- Additional Budget Cuts.
 - Loss of staff/insufficient staff to cope with demands.
 - Introduction of the Deregulation Act 2015 provisions relating to public rights of way.
 - Lack of ongoing Capital Investment for bridges and resurfacing on the network.
 - Inability to reinvest income from Contracting Works back into the Service.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 2020/21 has been an extremely difficult and challenging year for everyone. The on-going pandemic has seen unprecedented increases in members of the public accessing the Public Rights of Way network. Whilst this supports the position that outdoor access is beneficial for health and well-being, active travel, rural economies and social value, it also comes with an increased workload. The increase in access has generated more reports, heightened tensions between users and landowners/managers, and raised expectations about the management of the network. Thus, more than ever the rights of way statutory function needs to be adequately funded and resourced.

This page is intentionally left blank



Committee and Date

**Communities Overview
Committee**

25 January 2021

Item

(leave blank)

Public

**Bereavement Services: Update On Provision Of Burial Space, Cemetery Extension
And Service Related Developments.**

Responsible officer

Mark Foxall, Bereavement Services Manager
Email: mark.foxall@shropshire.gov.uk
Tel: 01743 255936

1.0 Summary

1.1 Bereavement Services last reported to Communities Overview Committee in February 2019. This paper briefly details progress since made on the following strands of work;

- Development of new areas for burial within Longden Road Cemetery,
- Provision of burial space for Muslim faith community,
- Extension of Minsterley and Church Pulverbatch Cemeteries,
- Installation of the Infant Ashes Memorial,
- Future cemetery provision,
- Countywide burial provision and collaboration during the pandemic,
- Environmental impact, resource use and ecology.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That Overview Committee consider the report on progress made and current position and identify any future course of action or work programme required.

3.0 Opportunities and risks

3.1 Elements of the bereavement service are statutory, attract constant demand and minor operational and legislative risk. Finite and diminishing new burial space, particularly to serve Shrewsbury is an issue to be addressed.

4.0 Financial assessment

- 4.1 There is no immediate significant financial impact and the service generates steady revenue from provision of services. Minor expenditure to fund the progress reported upon has been met from Bereavement Services budget. If it becomes necessary to acquire land for cemetery development this will require funding from the council's capital programme.

5.0 Report

5.1 Development of new areas for burial within Longden Road Cemetery.

Since the last report in 2019 burials have commenced in new areas referred to as Extensions 27 and 28 (see appendix 1 – Pink area). In the 12 month period from 1st January to 31st December 2020, 37 new grave spaces have been provided at Longden Road Cemetery, this is typical of annual demand, fees generated are retained by the council.

- 5.2 Extensions 29 and 30 are yet to be utilised. Extension 30 (see appendix 1 – Green area & appendix 2) is nominally identified as an extension for Muslim faith burials. As a municipal cemetery, areas are already set aside for Christian, Catholic, Romany and nonconformist burials.

- 5.3 Extensions 25 and 26 flank the entrance road (see appendix 1 – Orange area) and provide in the region of 210 new grave spaces in total. During March 2020 a large quantity of soil was removed from the rear of Extension 20 (see appendix 1 – Blue area). Removal of soil from this area has created further space that can be utilised for burial, improved the aesthetics of this area and improved access to maintain the trees that form the site boundary. The space created will provide for around 100 new graves.

- 5.4 Further small areas exist around the cemetery where landscaping changes would enable further grave spaces to be created. However, a new cemetery is required to provide for the need beyond the short-term future.

5.5 Provision of burial space for Muslim faith community.

The committee will be aware that for many years Shropshire's Muslim community has been petitioning for dedicated burial space that meets their faith requirements, specifically in terms of the orientation of graves. This has been a particular issue in south Shropshire although there is a lack of provision throughout the county.

- 5.6 Landscaping changes made at Longden Road Cemetery has created new space to provide for 41 graves orientated as required. Constructive consultation and site meetings took place with the Church of England Diocese of Lichfield and Muslim community leaders to agree arrangements for this provision.

5.7 Space exists for 41 graves for Muslim faith community in Extension 30, plus 18 graves orientated conventionally, sold at the point of need. There is an understanding that other faiths or those of no faith might need to also be buried in this section, depending on the availability of space.

5.8 **Extension of Minsterley and Church Pulverbatch Cemeteries.**

In recent weeks the authority has completed on the legal transfer to the authority of a parcel of land adjoining the current Minsterley Cemetery. I should like to record on behalf of Shropshire Council grateful thanks to the family of the benefactor. Assessment will be necessary to determine site characteristics and suitability for burials. This will require installation of boreholes, geological and ground water assessments, all of which will take time to complete. Subject to the site survey being positive and obtaining the necessary consents it is hoped the site will be developed for burial in line with conditions set by the transferor.

5.9 Drainage works and works to reinstate the boundary to a parcel of land adjoining Church Pulverbatch Cemetery and owned by the authority were completed over the course of 2020. The adjoining land has the requisite planning consent in place for use as a cemetery. Further works to improve landscaping and the quality of the aesthetics will be beneficial and will commence as the appropriate growing seasons and weather conditions permit.

5.10 **Installation of the Infant Ashes Memorial.**

A memorial to commemorate the lives of babies sadly passed away and then cremated at Emstrey when ashes were not routinely produced and recovered has been installed in the cloister garden at Longden Road Cemetery. Parents have also been offered memorial name plaques and inscriptions within the book of remembrance. The memorial has generally been well received. A further memorial is planned for those parents who wanted a different design and location.

5.11 **Future cemetery provision.**

As detailed earlier in this report progress is being made to optimise the existing space at Longden Road Cemetery. Extensions at Church Pulverbatch and Minsterley are also in progress. Unused space exists at Emstrey Cemetery although currently there are restrictions limiting the use of this space. Further assessment is being made of the Emstrey site to see what may be achievable, this would require Environment Agency agreement.

5.12 The search continues to identify a new site to develop as a cemetery to serve Shrewsbury's long-term need. A number of potential sites already within the council's estate have been considered for development as a cemetery over the last year or so, two sites have merited further investigation, one on the northern fringe of Shrewsbury and one east of the town and east of the A49, neither site displayed great prospect. Site options within the council's current estate are

limited meaning it may become necessary to acquire a site, this will require capital monies for both the acquisition and development. The primary concern is to identify a site with the right environmental credentials.

5.13 Countywide burial provision and collaboration during the pandemic.

Two rounds of surveying Shropshire Town and Parish Council has yielded data on the countywide provision of burial space. The dataset is incomplete as not all councils have responded, despite repeated contacts.

5.14 In addition to municipal provision, faith and private providers also operate within the burial sector. Each Church of England parish church has an idea of the burial space it has but this is not currently grouped or collated into an overview such as at Deanery or Diocesan level. Over the last 12 months Bereavement Services has received communication from and assisted Bridgnorth, Broseley and Highley council's where it is known there is a low supply of new burial space.

5.15 In the early weeks of the Covid-19 pandemic Bereavement Services initiated significant contact with partner councils, the Diocesan Offices of the Church of England covering Shropshire and various contractors. The result has created a useful contact list and inventory of who has what equipment and resource. The aim being to facilitate the pooling of such resource in times of significant need. It is apparent that provision of the county's bereavement service would benefit from a combined, collective overview due to the small resource active in the sector and our large and mainly rural county.

5.16 Environmental impact, resource use and ecology.

The Bereavement Services estate comprises of several cemeteries and maintenance responsibility for several rural closed churchyards, combining to form in region of 75 acres of green space. The service is keenly aware of the environmental, resource use and ecological impacts it has both positively and negatively.

5.17 In recent months the service has worked with tree planting groups, seeking to identify where further trees can be planted. Rechargeable battery powered hand tools are now in use by volunteer groups marking a shift away from petrol powered tools. The old part of Longden Road Cemetery continues to be managed for the benefit of its wildlife and numerous bird and bat boxes have been installed. The service is reviewing use of water, imported soils and the management of green wastes with the aim to lessen the negative environmental impacts of the service.

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

Bereavement Services Report to Communities Overview Committee – 10th September 2018.

Bereavement Services Report to Communities Overview Committee – 4th February 2019.

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Dean Carroll - Adult Social Services and Climate Change.

Local Members

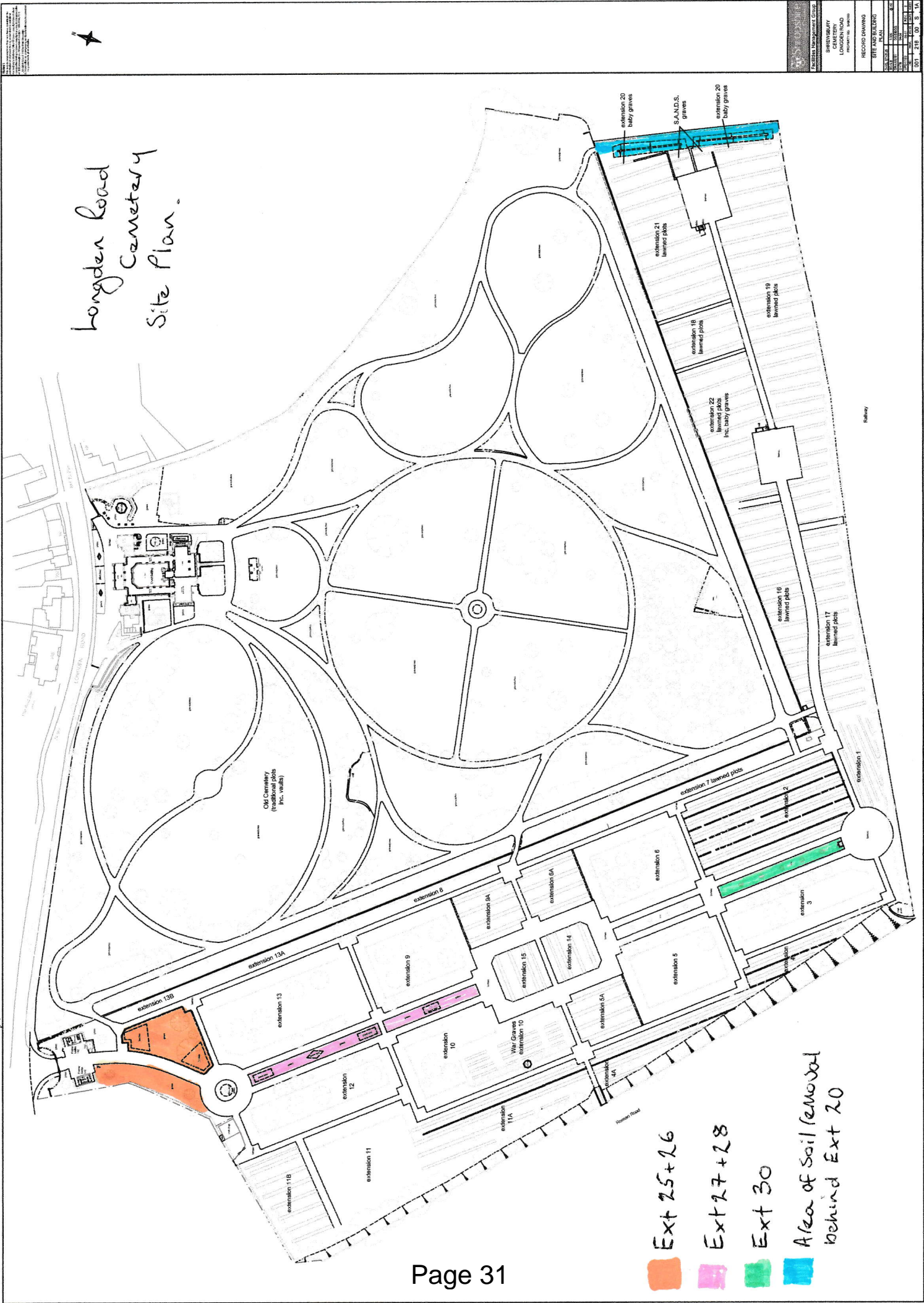
All

Appendices

BSR – MF- 25-01-21 Appendices 1 & 2

This page is intentionally left blank

Longden Road
Cemetery
Site Plan.

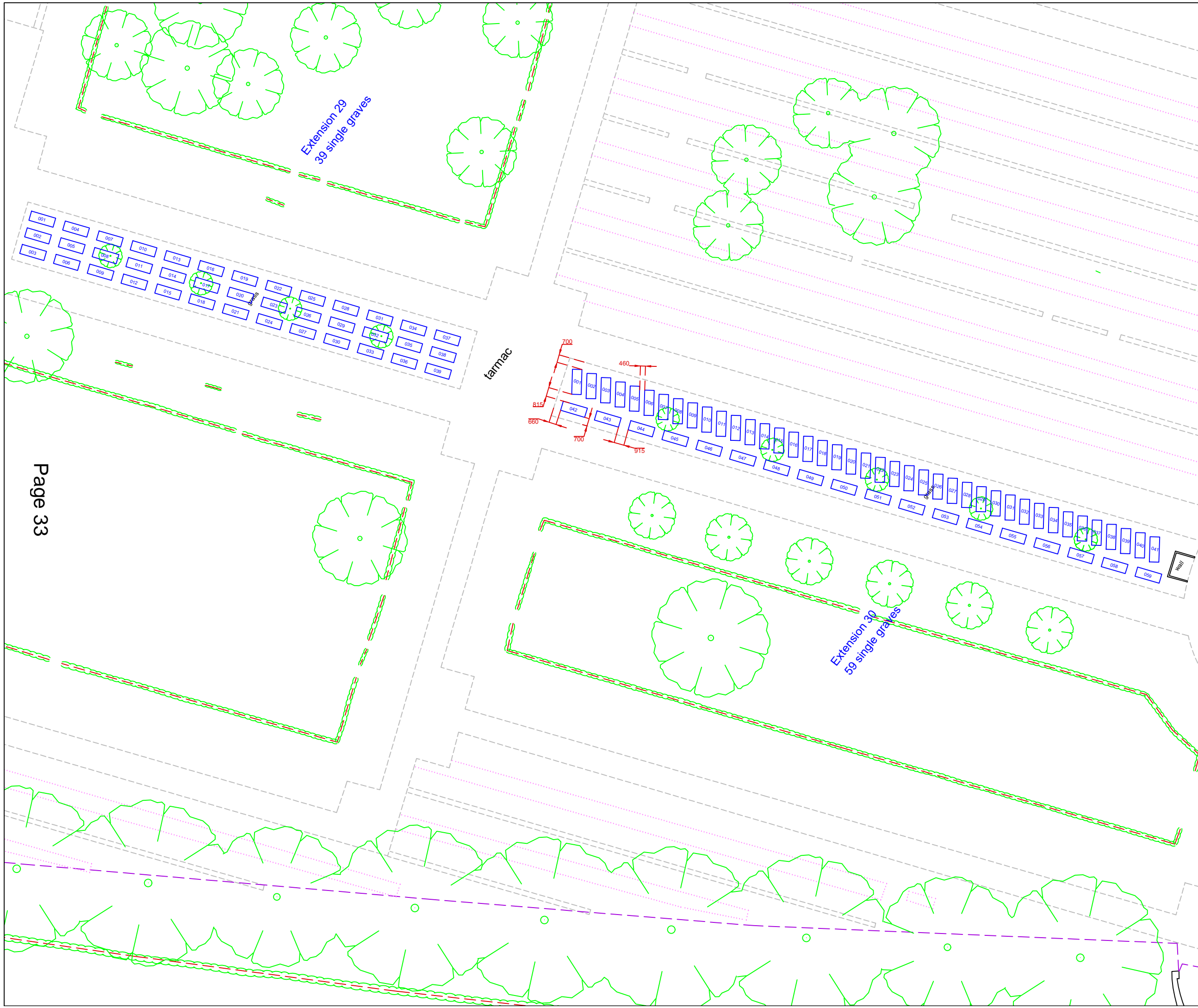


APPENDIX 1 - MARK FOXALL

SHEWELLBY CHURCH ROAD PROWSEY HILL, SHEWELL SHEWELL, LEICESTERSHIRE LE12 6LW	
PROJECT NO.	10000000
DATE	10/03/08
SCALE	1:1000
DRAWN BY	MARK FOXALL
CHECKED BY	MARK FOXALL
DATE	10/03/08
NO.	001
REV.	218, 00, 5, 1, A

RECORD DRAWING
SITE AND BUILDING

This page is intentionally left blank



Page 33



DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING
 © Crown copyright and database rights
 2019 Ordnance Survey 100049049

Survey Features Legend

ab	airbrick	ib	illuminated bollard
catv	cable tv cover	thl	threshold level
bo	bollard	il	invert level
cl	cover level	th	trial hole
bt	telecom cover	lp	lamp post
d.c.	drainage channel	utl	unable to lift
rs	road sign	ffi	finished floor level
dp	downpipe	vp	vent pipe
re	rodding eye	mh	manhole
er	earth rod	wo	washout
st	stop tap	mhc	combined manhole
ep	electric pole	wm	water meter
sl	silt level	mhs	storm manhole
fh	fire hydrant	wl	water level
tp	telegraph pole	mhf	foul manhole
gly	gully	ic	inspection chamber
tl	traffic light		

Utility Services Legend

Detected (D), As-Built (AB), Record Drawing (RD)
 Statutory Authority Records (SA)

o/h	Overhead Service
u/g	Underground Service
E	Electric
T	Telecom
W	Water
G	Gas
?	Unknown

INFORMATION ON UNDERGROUND SERVICES IS BELIEVED TO BE CORRECT BUT NO GUARANTEE IS GIVEN OR IMPLIED

Building Survey Notes

- Floor plans produced with MBS survey software, using both laser and tape measurements.
- All dimensions shown in millimetres unless otherwise stated.
- Accuracy is as specified in RICS guidance notes at 1:100 survey scale or better.

1	REV	AMENDMENT	ORG	ODAT
---	-----	-----------	-----	------



SHREWSBURY CEMETERY
LONGDEN ROAD
 PROPERTY NO: SABC169

RECORD DRAWING

PROPOSED OPTION 3
EXTENSIONS 30

DWG. STATUS	-			
SCALE	N.T.S		@ A3	
DRAWN BY	DD/DE/DG			
DATE	041994			
UPDATED	02.11.2020	REV.	3	
AREA	PROP.	PHASE	AEMFS	SHEET
001	218	00	S	04

This page is intentionally left blank



Committee and Date

**Communities Overview
Committee**

25 January 2021

Item

Public

Shropshire Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme – suggested revisions

Responsible officer

Danial Webb – overview and scrutiny officer
danial.webb@shropshire.gov.uk
01743 258509

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report lists suggested areas of review of the current Shropshire Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme, in order to assist Shropshire Council's Housing Services Manager to update the policy.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That the Communities Overview Committee agrees to forward the suggested changes to the Shropshire Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme to Shropshire Council's Housing Services Manager.

2.2 That the Communities Overview Committee review the draft revised Shropshire Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme before it is considered by Cabinet or Council.

2.3 That the Communities Overview Committee scrutinises Shropshire Council's Armed Forces Covenant, to ensure that it supports members of the armed forces fully, with particular regard to housing allocation.

3.0 Opportunities and risks

3.1 The Shropshire Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme ensures that housing associations and other social landlords agree a single policy that allocates social housing fairly while also meeting the local authority's corporate objectives. It also provides residents and those from outside Shropshire seeking to apply for social housing with clear and consistent criteria with which to determine if and when to apply for housing.

3.2 A failure to update the Shropshire Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme could result in a policy that does not take into account new legal and regulatory obligations that have come into force since approval of the previous

draft of the policy. Furthermore, a policy that does not reflect corporate, community or social objectives could result in allocating properties to residents deemed to be not a priority for social housing. This could in turn erode trust in the allocations policy among Shropshire residents and those seeking to move to Shropshire.

4.0 Financial assessment

4.1 Drafting and reviewing the housing allocations policy is an administrative task that forms part the council's regular work. There are therefore no cost implications in carrying out this review.

5.0 Report

5.1 In November 2020 the Communities Overview Committee received a report from Shropshire Council's Housing Services Manager that gave an overview of Shropshire Homepoint. At this meeting, it was noted that the Shropshire Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme (the allocations policy) had not been updated since 2014. At the manager's suggestion, the committee agreed to carry out a review of the policy, with a view to providing elected member input into a revised policy.

5.2 A working group of the Communities Overview Committee (the group) carried out this work in an informal meeting with the housing services manager in December 2020.

5.3 To support this review, the committee also invited other elected members of the local authority to contribute through a questionnaire sent out to all members. In total 21 elected members contributed to the review through this questionnaire. The group considered these responses in tandem with its section-by-section review of the allocations policy.

6.0 Suggested amendments to the housing allocations policy

6.1 The group suggests the following changes to the allocations policy.

6.2 The group noted that the allocations policy is rather long, making it difficult for a lay member of the public to understand what housing priority band they might be allocated. The group felt that this might act as a disincentive to some people who seek housing. **An executive summary with the most important elements of the policy might help people determine their likely band.**

6.3 The allocations policy affords a higher priority for people whose work (or offer of work) would require them travel more than an hour in each direction. However it does not differentiate between types of work. The group discussed the difficulty in attracting some key workers to Shropshire such as care home staff and social workers. It therefore **suggests that people employed in an agreed list of key**

professions receive priority over other workers, irrespective of commuting time.

- 6.4 At present the allocations policy states that “reduced preference may be given to households whose income and / or capital resources exceed £63,000.” Although the policy stated that this would be reviewed annually, no review had taken place since 2014. The group discussed the continued increase in property prices making £63,000 of housing capital relatively modest, for example in a shared property following separation where the spouse may wish for the rest of the family to remain in the home. The group therefore **suggests that this figure be reviewed upwards.**
- 6.5 The allocations policy’s priority housing bands are named *Priority*, *Gold*, *Silver* and *Bronze*. The group agreed that these names might cause unnecessary confusion. It **recommends that the *Priority* band, which is the highest possible band allocation, be renamed *Platinum*.**
- 6.6 The Rent (Agriculture) Act 1976 requires a local housing authority to use their best endeavours to provide accommodation for a qualifying displaced agricultural worker. The allocations policy advises that in doing so it may refer to the local Agricultural Dwelling-House Advisory Committee. The group learned that these committees were abolished shortly after the allocations policy was agreed. However, the group recognises an ongoing priority housing need for agricultural workers. It therefore **suggests that this section of the policy be updated, and that agricultural workers whose tenancies are tied to their employment continue to receive a higher than *Bronze* banding.**
- 6.7 The group discussed at length the various criteria for a higher banding on the grounds of health conditions. Officers confirmed that the allocations teams spent a large amount of time evaluating banding on grounds of health. Elected members not at the meeting who responded to the group’s questionnaire also frequently raised concerns about a lack of certainty about banding. The group agreed that this was a highly complex matter. It noted that health conditions could improve or deteriorate once an application had been made, making the job of the allocations officer more difficult still. It also accepted that sometimes it might be better for someone with a long-term condition to wait longer for a property that better suited to their needs, which could be difficult to explain to the applicant. The group therefore **suggests that the revised policy contain a dedicated section that explained how the policy prioritised allocations based on health conditions.**
- 6.8 Young people leaving the care of the local authority were identified by the group as a particular priority for the council. The group agreed with the Gold banding currently in place for this group, but felt that the restrictions in the allocations policy were unnecessary. It **suggests that the allocations policy be updated to**

remove those restrictions and that the revised allocations policy be strengthened to emphasis the council’s commitment to ensure young people moved into suitable accommodation when they left care.

- 6.9 The current allocations policy awards a Gold banding to “people experiencing ongoing serious violence or harassment who need to move”. The group agreed that this definition may not adequately protect people who were the victims of domestic abuse. It therefore **suggests that a specific criteria of domestic abuse be created, and that the criteria for this align more closely with the work of the Shropshire Domestic Abuse Partnership.**
- 6.10 The group discussed at length the current bedroom allocations policy. In their responses to our questionnaire, this was the foremost concern of elected members. In particular, members and the group raised two specific concerns, couples where one partner required sole use of a bedroom because of medical need, and divorced couples living separately with joint custody of a child. Officers told the group that a medical need for sole use of a bedroom was already covered by the policy. Officers also informed the group that the current policy aligned with rules when determining the housing benefit element of Universal Credit. Although the housing policy could choose to be more generous in allocating additional bedrooms to families with children or shared care of children, It was considerably more likely that doing so would render the property unaffordable to those in receipt of Universal Credit, which compromised the majority of those applying for social housing through the allocations policy. The group accepted this explanation, and agreed that the policy remain unchanged. It did however **suggest that the allocations policy redraft the bedroom entitlement section to clarify the criteria for additional bedrooms based on medical need, and the criteria for bedrooms allocated to children within a family unit or shared care arrangement.**
- 6.11 The group were pleased to note the additional support provided to members of the armed forces. It agreed that a Gold banding was suitable for those serving more than four years who had been discharged or were about be discharged honourably. **The group suggests that the requirement be changed so that there was no requirement to have been unsuccessful in finding suitable permanent accommodation.** The group also noted the lack of pledge regarding accommodation in the council’s Armed Forces Covenant. It therefore recommends that the Communities Overview Committee review the covenant as part of its future programme of work.
- 6.12 The group noted that there was no specific allocation for young people in work. Younger people in work typically receive lower than average wages in a local economy that is already relatively low-waged compared to elsewhere in England. The group did not agree that younger people should automatically receive a higher allocation banding, but did agree that there should be some form of

additional support or allocation for this group. This was a view shared by elected members responding to the group’s questionnaire. The group therefore **suggests that the allocations policy review explores ways by which it could offer more support to young people in work.**

6.13 Similarly, the group noted that there was no provision in the allocations policy to prioritise applications on the basis of income. The group did not feel that a low income should result in a higher banding, as the majority of applicants were already likely to be on relatively low incomes. It did however **suggest that the applications policy, as with younger people in work, should explore ways by which it could offer some support to this group.**

6.14 One of the more commonly raised issues among elected members responding to the group questionnaire was a concern that applicants did not receive a regular update on how near they were to the front of the queue within their banding. The group understands that this information would have to be supplied within the context of how rapidly people in each band were allocated a property. Nonetheless it felt that some indication would be better than no indication at all. It therefore **suggests that the updated allocations policy should include a review of how the council updates applicants on their application.**

7.0 Next steps

7.1 The group recommends that the revised allocations policy return to the Communities Overview Committee, for further scrutiny before it is referred to Cabinet or Council for approval.

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

Shropshire Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Portfolio Holder – Housing and Strategic Planning

Portfolio Holder – Communities, Place Planning and Regulatory Services

Local Member

All

Appendices

None

This page is intentionally left blank



Communities Overview Committee	<u>Item</u>
25 January 2021	<u>Public</u>

Communities Overview Committee Work Programme 2020-2021

Responsible officer

Danial Webb, overview and scrutiny officer

danial.webb@shropshire.gov.uk

01743 258509

1.0 Summary

1.1 This paper presents the Communities Overview Committee's proposed work programme for the remainder of the 2020-2021 municipal year. The committee has based its programme on issues arising from Shropshire Council's Strategic Action Plan. During the course of its work programme, the committee will also

- scrutinise thematic priorities
- respond to emerging issues and
- follow up on previous work.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Committee members to:

- agree the proposed committee work programme attached as **appendix 1**.
- suggest changes to the committee work programme and
- recommend other topics to consider

3.0 Background

3.1 The Communities Overview Committee bases its work programme on issues arising from Shropshire Council's Strategic Action Plan. It also

- scrutinises thematic priorities
- responds to emerging issues
- follows up on previous work
- carries out cross-committee work through task and finish groups.

3.2 A refreshed overview and scrutiny work programme for this committee is attached as **appendix 1**.

4.0 Next steps

4.1 Overview and scrutiny updates this report on an ongoing basis and presents it to each overview and scrutiny committee. This will allow members the opportunity to contribute to its development at each committee meeting.

List of background papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information) None
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) All
Local Member All
Appendices Overview and scrutiny work programme Overview and scrutiny task and finish groups

**Appendix 1
Overview and Scrutiny work programme 2020 to 2021**

Communities Overview Committee

Topic	Intended outcomes or objectives	What output is required?	Who needs to be heard from?	Expected impact or added value	Work date
climate change draft action plan and quantified carbon budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To scrutinise the draft action plan and quantified carbon budget, as requested by the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee. 	Plan and budget	Service Manager for Climate Change Portfolio Holder	The draft action plan meets the objectives of the council's climate change strategy.	25 Jan 2021
Public rights of way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide an update on work to maximise access to public rights of way, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital works Accessibility of the public rights of way network Links to open space 	Overview report	Culture, Leisure and Tourism Manager	Shropshire Council ensures that a high percentage of its network of public rights of way remains accessible.	25 Jan 2021
Burial capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To receive an update on building burial capacity in Shropshire 	Overview report	Bereavement Services Manager	Shropshire has adequate burial capacity, and is planning for future need.	25 Jan 2021

Communities Overview Committee

Topic	Intended outcomes or objectives	What output is required?	Who needs to be heard from?	Expected impact or added value	Work date
Housing Allocations policy- report of the working group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To receive an update from the committee's recent working group review of Shropshire Council's housing allocations policy 	Committee report	Overview and scrutiny officer	Communities Overview Committee contributes to development of a revised housing allocations policy	25 Jan 2021
Public transport funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To receive an update on funding for public transport 	overview report	Director of Place	Shropshire Council supports a well-integrated public transport network	15 March 2021
Libraries strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutinise Shropshire Council's draft strategy for the development of libraries and community services. 	Overview report	Assistant Director - Homes and Communities	Libraries and communities provide a valuable resource for Shropshire communities.	15 March 2021
Rural Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To scrutinise Shropshire Council's draft rural strategy To recommend a framework for engaging communities based on evidence of what works and is best for Shropshire. 	overview report presentation	Director of Place	Shropshire Council provides effective services to rural communities.	15 March 2021

Communities Overview Committee

Topic	Intended outcomes or objectives	What output is required?	Who needs to be heard from?	Expected impact or added value	Work date
Local Housing Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutinise the creation of a local housing company in Shropshire 	<p>Overview report</p> <p>Presentation</p>	Director of Place	Shropshire's Housing Development Corporation builds homes that support the council's strategic objectives.	June 2021

Appendix 2

Current and proposed task and finish groups

Title	Objectives	Reporting to
Road casualty reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the nature of road traffic collisions in Shropshire. Understand feelings of road safety, and the effect of feeling unsafe when travelling. Understand the factors that contribute to safer travel Scrutinise how Shropshire Council and its partners work together to make travel safer. Explore how Shropshire Council responds to new models of Government transport funding. 	Place Overview Committee

Title	Objectives	Reporting to
Brexit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider the information brought together to develop a view for Shropshire of the possible implications of Brexit for the Shropshire economy and the achievement of the Economic Growth Strategy. • To identify, with the relevant officers, the key evidence and related requirements of what Shropshire would require from a future UK funding approach. • To make evidence based recommendations to Cabinet. 	Performance Management Scrutiny Committee
Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand how Shropshire Council currently uses Section 106, CIL and NHB and the impact that this has had • To understand how Section 106, CIL and NHB could be used in Shropshire to enable or encourage projects or initiatives for economic growth and prosperity • To learn from other places how they have used Section 106, CIL and NHB to enable or encourage projects or initiatives for economic growth and prosperity • To make evidence based recommendations on how Section 106, CIL and NHB could be used in Shropshire to enable or encourage projects or initiatives for economic growth and prosperity 	Performance Management Scrutiny
Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review Shropshire Council's existing work to reduce its CO2e output. • To scrutinise existing council policy and practice and recommend policy changes that would support further carbon reduction. • To identify and evaluate opportunities to reduce spending and generate income by adopting low-carbon technology and practices. 	Place Overview Committee