



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

Date: Friday, 28 May 2021

**Committee:  
Cabinet**

**Date: Monday, 7 June 2021**

**Time: 1.00 pm**

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

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

Members of the public will be able to access the live stream of the meeting by clicking on this link:  
[www.shropshire.gov.uk/Cabinet7June2021](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/Cabinet7June2021)

*There will be some access to the meeting room for members of the press and public but this will be very limited in order to comply with Covid-19 regulations. If you wish to attend the meeting please e-mail [democracy@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@shropshire.gov.uk) to check that a seat will be available for you.*

Tim Collard  
Interim Assistant Director – Legal and Democratic Services

**Members of Cabinet**

Lezley Picton (Leader)  
Steve Charmley (Deputy Leader)  
Gwilym Butler  
Dean Carroll  
Rob Gittins  
Kirstie Hurst-Knight  
Cecilia Motley  
Ian Nellins  
Ed Potter

Your Committee Officer is:

**Amanda Holyoak**

Tel: 01743 257714

Email: [amanda.holyoak@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:amanda.holyoak@shropshire.gov.uk)

# AGENDA

**1 Apologies for Absence**

**2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

**3 Minutes (Pages 1 - 4)**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2021, attached

**4 Public Question Time**

To receive any questions from members of the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. Deadline for notification is not later than 1.00 pm on Thursday 3 June 2021

**5 Member Question Time**

To receive any questions from members of the council. Deadline for notification is not later than 5.00 pm on Wednesday 2 June 2021

**6 Scrutiny Items**

**7 The Marl - Local Nature Reserve Designation (Pages 5 - 16)**

Lead Member – Councillor Cecilia Motley – Portfolio Holder for Communities, Place, Tourism and Transport

Report of Executive Director of Place attached

Contact Mark Barrow, 01743 258916

**8 UK Levelling Up Fund (Pages 17 - 26)**

Lead Member – Councillor Edward Potter - Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Planning

Report of Executive Director of Place attached

Contact: Mark Barrow 01743 258916

**9 Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 4 2020/2021 (Pages 27 - 38)**

Lead Member – Councillor Gwilym Butler – Portfolio Holder for Resources

Report of Interim Executive Director of Resources attached

Contact: James Walton 01743 258915



## Committee and Date

Cabinet

7 June 2021

## **CABINET**

**Minutes of the virtual meeting held on 29 March 2021 in the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND  
1.00 - 1.50 pm**

**Responsible Officer:** Amanda Holyoak  
Email: amanda.holyoak@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257714

### **Present**

Councillor Peter Nutting (Chairman)  
Councillors Steve Charmley (Deputy Leader), Gwilym Butler, Dean Carroll, Lee Chapman, Steve Davenport, Robert Macey, David Minnery, Lezley Picton and Ed Potter

### **242 Apologies for Absence**

No apologies for absence were received.

### **243 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

No disclosable pecuniary interests were declared.

### **244 Minutes**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meetings held on 8 March 2021 and 11 March 2021 be confirmed as correct records.

### **245 Public Question Time**

The Legal Services Manager confirmed that all preamble, statements of fact and opinions submitted with questions had been circulated and read by Cabinet Members but that he would only be reading out the questions submitted.

Questions were submitted by the following members of the public:

Paul Gill (and a similar question also submitted by Susan Coleman) – regarding the continued use of digital technology (Zoom, Teams) to hold Parish and Town Council meetings.

Ian Burgess – regarding the implementation of Integrated Care Systems in line with Government and NHS proposals.

Ian Burgess – regarding the timescales for resurfacing of Abbey Foregate (between Bell Lane and the Column) as the current condition poses a danger to both cyclists and motorcyclists.

Susan Coleman – regarding improvements to cycleways used by pupils of both Meole Brace and Priory Schools in Shrewsbury before the start of the Autumn term 2021.

Leslie Maguire – regarding the possibility of CCTV coverage at the skate park in Eastern Oswestry and the Future Oswestry Partnership to give consideration to the improvement of skate park facilities in the town.

Louis Katz – regarding the introduction of a new funding/grant scheme for job creation by the support of business start up and small business expansion.

The full questions and answers provided are available from the webpage for the meeting: <https://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=130&MId=4150&Ver=4>

## 246 **Member Question Time**

Member Questions were received from the following Councillors:

David Turner – regarding making strong representations to Government on the continued use of technology for Council meetings stressing the associated cost savings and increased engagement of the public.

Ed Bird – regarding the Local Plan and Shifnal not being used for any unmet housing need from the Black Country.

David Vasmer – regarding plans to support sufferers of Long Covid in Shropshire.

The full questions and answers provided are attached to the web page for the meeting <https://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=130&MId=4150&Ver=4>

## 247 **Scrutiny Items**

There were no scrutiny matters for consideration.

## 248 **Rectory Wood and Field - Local Nature Reserve Designation**

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Waste and Communications presented the report supporting the delegation of powers to Church Stretton Town Council to enable the designation of Rectory Wood and Field as a Local Nature Reserve. She drew particular attention to the positive impact of this initiative; including increased visitor usage, raised public profile and a myriad of health and wellbeing benefits.

**RESOLVED**

That the Council delegates power to Church Stretton Town Council to enable the designation of Rectory Wood and Field as a Local Nature Reserve.

**249 Oswestry High Streets Heritage Action Zone Update Report**

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Assets, Economic Growth and Regeneration presented the report providing detail on the successful bid to Historic England for Oswestry to become a High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ). He drew attention to the total budget of the HSHAZ scheme of £1.25m, including a contribution from Oswestry Town Council and anticipated private investment.

**RESOLVED**

To authorise the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Assets the ability to formally agree the governance structure and management of the Oswestry High Street Heritage Action Zone programme as set out within the Partnership Agreement with Future Oswestry partners.

To authorise the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Assets to agree variations within the HSHAZ budget and seek any additional funds from Historic England as the opportunity arises.

Authorise the Executive Director of Place and Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders to negotiate and accept the anticipated contract from Historic England to act as the accountable body for the delivery of the Cultural Consortium programme.

**250 Exclusion of Press and Public**

**RESOLVED**

that in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and Paragraph 10.4 (3) of the Council’s Access to Information Rules, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item.

**251 Exempt Minutes**

**RESOLVED**

That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date: .....

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## DELEGATION OF POWERS TO CHURCH WHIXALL PARISH COUNCIL TO DESIGNATE THE MARL ALLOTMENT AS A LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

**Responsible Officer** Clare Featherstone, Culture, Leisure and Tourism Manager  
Email: Clare.featherstone@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 255067

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### 1. Summary

- 1.1 The Marl Allotment is a 2.5ha area of greenspace in the parish of Whixall. It lies adjacent to Whixall Moss and provides a safe stepping stone into the wilder meres and mosses landscape. The area is owned by Whixall Parish Council for quiet recreation and features footpaths, benches and managed habitats for people to enjoy the great outdoors near to where they live.
- 1.2 Shropshire Council has the power under the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 to dedicate land as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). This is an executive function for the purposes of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 and accordingly can be delegated to another local authority by Cabinet. Sections 13 and 19 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012. Whixall Parish Council is also required to formally accept the delegation.
- 1.3 Environmental designation raises the profile with the public and can increase visitor usage and the health and wellbeing benefits this provides. LNR designations also provides some protection for the site's nature conservation and recreation interest. Declaring The Marl Allotment as an LNR will:
  - improving local quality of life, health and wellbeing.
  - Create opportunities for education, enjoyment and recreation, helping attract visitors and preserves links with the local community's past.
  - Safeguards local ecosystem services – the benefits nature provides for people – such as reducing carbon in the atmosphere or absorbing surface water.
  - Protecting and enhancing the natural heritage as a key part of building sustainable communities.
  - Raises the nature conservation and recreation interest.
  - Recognition of the site's wildlife value
  - Recognition of local community involvement
  - Protection within the planning system from future development.
- 1.4 The anticipated benefits of a Local Nature Reserve dedication in this location lead to the conclusion that it would be appropriate to formally delegate the Council's power to make a

Local Nature Reserve dedication in accordance with section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act in respect of the land known as The Marl Allotment, to Whixall Parish Council.

- 1.5 Whixall Parish Council will therefore also be responsible for undertaking the necessary formalities to give effect to the dedication.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Council delegates power to Whixall Parish Council to enable the designation of The Marl Allotment as a Local Nature Reserve.

## **REPORT**

### **3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal**

- 3.1 Along with the benefits identified above, LNR designation meets the following Shropshire Council strategic outcomes set out in the following Strategies:
- Vibrant Shropshire- Cultural Strategy for Shropshire (draft) 2021-31
  - Shropshire's Great Outdoor Strategy 2018-2028
  - Shropshire's Economic Growth Strategy- developing the visitor economy, agricultural support post- Brexit, developing skills, improving Quality of Life and ensuring attractive environments.
  - Shropshire's Local Plan- Better planning of meaningful greenspace and non-motorised access, new destination country parks, protecting environmentally-sensitive sites.
  - Shropshire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy- harnessing the power of the outdoors to increase physical activity, address mental health issues and help people stay independent for longer.
  - Local Transport Plan for Shropshire- encouraging walking and cycling.
  - Shropshire Council Corporate Plan- helping deliver across the board: resilient communities, healthy people and prosperous economy.
- 3.2 There are no discernible risks to Shropshire Council of making this delegation.
- 3.3 The designation of The Marl Allotment to a Local Nature Reserve will enhance the site status giving greater emphasis on community involvement and giving rise to enhanced opportunities for external funding and support. LNR designation will safeguard the site into the future. It will encourage stronger community benefit and support the local volunteer group, together with the Parish Council of Whixall. The process of designating The Marl Allotment as an LNR has full Natural England backing. Letters of support is attached separately in appendix 1.
- 3.5 Other opportunities and impacts:
- Impact on Looked After Children – No negative impacts identified
  - Impact on Vulnerable Children, Young People and Adults – No negative impacts identified – Enhanced opportunities for experiencing Shropshire's great outdoors contributing to physical and mental well-being.
  - Supports family approach, community resilience. - Enhanced community cohesion and opportunities for experiencing Shropshire's great outdoors contributing to physical and mental well-being.



- Human rights – No issues identified.
- Equalities – No issues identified.
- Environmental consequences of the proposal – Enhanced protection of the site and access to additional external funding allowing greater protection of habitat and species in the long-term.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications of the delegation beyond staff time to create this report. Whixall Parish Council will be responsible for making a formal resolution to accept the delegation from Shropshire Council and a separate resolution to make the dedication. They will then be responsible for undertaking all relevant procedures with Natural England etc to give effect to the dedication.

#### **5. Climate Change Appraisal**

- 5.1 Local Nature Reserves are important habitats, offering carbon storage and biodiversity gains helping to mitigate the impact of climate change and aid nature recovery.

#### **6. Background**

- 6.1 The six-acre Marl Allotment, also known as the Marlot, is a surviving example of 'common land'. In the early 1800s the majority of land in England was enclosed by wealthy landowners, but the Marl Allotment survived intact as common land. The Common Registration Act of 1965 placed any remaining areas of common land under the protection of local authorities. In April 1975 two Whixall Parish Councillors were summoned to Shrewsbury to sign for legal ownership of the Marl Allotment on behalf of the Parish Council and the parishioners. Up to World War II it was used for rough grazing of stock and for digging up the agriculturally valuable mineral resource of marl, a crumbly limestone clay which would have been left behind by retreating ice-age glaciers. Marl was spread as a fertiliser on poor ground on the edge of Whixall Moss. The clay may also have been used to line the canal, which may explain why there are so many ponds on the common.
- 6.2 The use of marl as a fertiliser was no longer practised in the area; the common had become over-grown, neglected and sadly afflicted by the dumping of metal drums, old cars and tyres. Countryside Stewardship funding, post 2000, enabled Natural England staff and the Parish Council to undertake clearance work to remove dumped rubbish, manage the trees and undergrowth, clear pathways and provide picnic tables. In addition, the circular Whixall Mosses Trails have been established and the Marl Allotment has been incorporated as a valuable element of those routes. In 2006, the Whixall Environmental Group was created to continue the work and manage the site for the enhancement of biodiversity and the enjoyment of the local community.

#### **7. Legal requirements and other criteria to consider**

- 7.1 Schedule 11 (12) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, which replaced Section 15 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (1949 Act), describes a 'nature reserve' as:
- land managed solely for a conservation purpose, or

- land managed not only for a conservation purpose but also for a recreational purpose, if the management of the land for the recreational purpose does not compromise its management for the conservation purpose.
- 7.2 Land is managed for a conservation purpose if it is managed for:
- providing, under suitable conditions and control, special opportunities for the study of, and research into, matters relating to the fauna and flora of Great Britain and the physical conditions in which they live, and for the study of geological and physiographical features of special interest in the area; or
  - preserving flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features of special interest in the area or for both these purposes.
- 7.3 Land is managed for a recreational purpose if it is managed for the purpose of providing opportunities for the enjoyment of nature or for open-air recreation.
- 7.4 The power to dedicate a Local Nature Reserve rests with Shropshire Council as the principal authority under the 1949 Act. However, under that 1949 Act, the local authority must first have or acquire a legal interest in the land in question through ownership, lease or an agreement with the owners and occupiers involved. Shropshire Council does not have a legal interest in the The Marl Allotment, and therefore cannot dedicate it as a Local Nature Reserve.
- 7.5 Shropshire Council does have powers under Sections 13 and 19 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities and (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012 to delegate its functions in this regard to a parish, town or community council. The Council's Constitution allows Cabinet to delegate Cabinet functions to another local authority or Cabinet of another local authority. Declaration of a Local Nature Reserve is an executive function and accordingly can be delegated to another local authority by Cabinet.
- 7.6 The Council receiving the delegation will need to formally resolve to accept the delegation and then make the dedication and undertake the necessary formalities with Natural England.
- 7.7 Natural England believes LNRs should be of high value locally for environmental education and/or research. People are more likely to be aware of and value the natural environment when they can experience it at first hand in places such as LNRs. LNRs can help safeguard not just rare but also more common, locally valued species, habitat and geodiversity. They can play an important part in Local Biodiversity Action Plans and Local Geodiversity Action Plans.
- 7.8 Natural England recommends that everyone should have an accessible greenspace of 2 ha within 300m of home; at least one accessible 20 ha site within 2km of home; at least one accessible 100ha site within 5km of home; and at least one 500ha site within 10km of home. LNR's can contribute to these targets and the ANGSt standard of a minimum of 1ha of LNR per 1000 head of population.
- 7.9 The Natural England LNR Visitor Standards set out what an LNR should offer to provide a quality experience for visitors.

## 8. Consequences of designation as a Local Nature Reserve

- 8.1 In terms of the management of The Marl Allotment, there will be no change. The site will continue to be managed by Whixall Parish Council as an area of public open space for quiet recreation and for the enhancement and protection of flora and fauna together with cultural and historic access.
- 8.2 Designation will benefit the site in terms of recognition by local residents and visitors, offering encouragement to enable continued positive input by the community.

## 9. Procedure to declare a local nature reserve

- 9.0 The site needs to be identified *as suitable for an LNR*. Natural England have confirmed suitability following correspondence and a site visit with an LNR Officer. The Management Plan has been accepted by Natural England with a review due to take it to 2029. Interested parties must be informed of the intent to proceed to declaration. In this case Shropshire Council departments, Estates, Property Services and Outdoor Recreation have been informed of this declaration.
- 9.1 Once a decision is approved, as a result of this report, Shropshire Council must then write formally to the Natural England regional team to the effect that it intends to delegate power to Whixall Parish Council.

## 10. Conclusions

- 10.0 It is considered that designation of The Marl Allotment as a Local Nature Reserve will enhance the sites status within Shropshire as an area for quiet recreation, nature conservation and heritage interpretation, along with offering Climate Change mitigation. . In order for this to take place it is therefore considered appropriate to delegate the power to designate the land as a LNR to Whixall Parish Council.

<b>List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information):</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>
<b>Included within Forward Plan:</b>
<b>Name and Portfolio of Executive Member responsible for this area of responsibility:</b> Cllr Cecilia Motley Portfolio Holder for Communities, Place, Tourism & Transport
<b>Local Member:</b> Cllr Peter Broomhall Cllr Edward Towers
<b>Appendices:</b>

1. Letter of support from Whixall Parish Council. Attached separately.
2. Location Map
3. Site Maps
4. Criteria for designation

**Appendix 1- Letter of support from Whixall Parish Council. Attached separately.**

**Appendix 2. Location Map**



**Appendix 3. Site Maps**



#### **Appendix 4- Criteria for designation**

Is the site the focus of local community interest and concern, or does it have the potential to capture people's imagination? Have local people (both those living and working nearby, and interested groups and users) been involved in the selection process?

**Yes**

Will interested communities be involved in steering the site's development, management and monitoring?

**Yes, via regular volunteer work parties coordinated by Whixall Parish Council**

Is the site reasonably close to schools, community education centres and/or field study centres? Will there be opportunities for local schools to get involved and for schemes such as the Forest School programme or a Watch group to be set up?

**Yes**

Are there areas where children are welcome to play?

**Yes, informally.**

Is the site in an area generally lacking in publicly accessible natural heritage?

**No**

Is there some public access – rights of approach, entry or use that are legally defined or established through long-standing use? Is the site linked to wider public access networks, green networks, other open spaces, etc?

**Yes**

Is it safe and physically easy to get into and around the site, accepting that access to highly sensitive areas may need to be restricted wholly or periodically?

**Yes**

Can people enjoy the access rights and feel comfortable about using the site, for example without fear of crime?

**Yes**

Can people get to the site by active and public transport? Does the site have, or could it have, car parking, and provision for safe delivery and pick-up for educational visits?

**There are informal laybys adjacent to site entrances.**

Does the site lend itself to being a safe educational resource, for example with good site interpretation, without adversely affecting its special interest?

**Yes**

Is the site safeguarded, notably through the development plan process, or can safeguarding be included in the next Local Plan revision?

**The Marl Allotment is designated Open Access Land and registered common land but has no other safeguards.**

Has the site been (or is it likely to be) identified of local importance in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan or Local Geodiversity Action Plan?

**The site is adjacent to Whixall Moss, an internationally important SSSI and wetland Ramsar site and as such has great potential to mirror these habitats through appropriate management.**

Are there any implications for neighbouring areas, or other sites or facilities?

**No**

Is the site's future secured for some time? There is limited benefit in investing resources in an LNR that will be de-declared and subsumed into the development cycle in the short, or perhaps even medium-term.

**Yes**

What is the existing use of the site and how can this be taken into account when planning the LNR development? Will alternative provision have to be made, and will there be an overall public benefit?

**The Marl Allotment is currently used for quiet recreation and is managed to enhance local biodiversity with community involvement and interpretation for a wider audience. This will continue and be enhanced once LNR designation is granted.**

Is the site a viable management unit with appropriate access for management, etc?

**Yes**

What are the likely costs to be incurred during the life-cycle of the LNR (including initial developmental, establishment, staffing costs, etc), and has provision been made for these?

**Costs are on-going and unaffected by LNR designation**

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# WHIXALL PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Mr Ian Mercer

Mr Shaun Burkey,  
Countryside and Heritage Sites Manager (North),  
The Wardens Bungalow,  
Outdoor Recreation,  
Shropshire Council,  
Swan Hill,  
Ellesmere,  
SY12 0DQ

By email: [shaun.burkey@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:shaun.burkey@shropshire.gov.uk)

## **Marl Allotment Local Nature Reserve Application – Request for Delegated Authority Approval**

At the Parish Council meeting held on 10 February 2021, Whixall Parish Council agreed its wish to declare the Marl Allotment (Marlot), common land registered under the ownership of the Council, as a Local Nature Reserve under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

As it is not a principal authority, Whixall Parish Council formally request that Shropshire Council approves delegated authority be given to the Parish Council in order to allow an application for Local Nature Reserve designation of the Marlot to be submitted to Natural England.

Whixall Parish Council will have to provide proof of authorised delegation to Natural England therefore it is requested that written authorisation from Shropshire Council be provided for completeness.

In accordance with the application process the Whixall Parish Council Marl Allotment Management Plan is provided for your information and consideration to this request.



Amanda Roberts  
Parish Clerk

Enclosure:

Marl Allotment (Marlot) Management Plan Approved 10 February 2021

Parish Clerk: Amanda Roberts, Westmead, Tilley Road, Wem, SY4 5HA  
Tel: 01939 234830

E-mail: [clerk.whixallPC@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:clerk.whixallPC@hotmail.co.uk)  
Website: [www.whixallparish.org.uk](http://www.whixallparish.org.uk)

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<u>Committee and Date</u>
Cabinet 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2021

<u>Item</u>
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## **UK Levelling Up Fund – Shropshire’s opportunity.**

**Responsible officer: Mark Barrow**

**Email: [markbarrow@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:markbarrow@shropshire.gov.uk)**

### **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 Following the announcement of UK Levelling Up Fund (LUF) in March 2021, Officers have been liaising with MP’s to understand priorities in their constituencies as well as understanding the guidance and criteria for applications to be put forward in the first round of levelling up funding.
- 1.2 Prioritising the bids which will have the greatest likelihood of success is key and ensuring they meet the expectations and strict eligibility criteria for the first round of ‘Levelling Up’ Funding is critical to ensure that the three bids recommended to Members are those that are most likely to be successful.
- 1.3 Government has stated that further rounds of funding will be coming forward and Officers will work with elected Members and MP’s to understand their priorities for any further bids which may be appropriate to submit.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

That Cabinet support and approve

1. The submission of three bids for Shrewsbury, Oswestry and Craven Arms in the first round of the Levelling Up programme.
2. Delegation to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Section 151 officer and the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, regeneration and planning to submit the final bids for the 18 June 2021 deadline.

## 2.0 Background

- 2.1 Government announced its plan for 'levelling up', decentralising power and working more directly with councils, local partners and communities across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. It is considered that they are best placed to understand the needs of their local areas and more closely aligned to the local economic geographies to deliver quickly on the ground.
- 2.2 The Levelling Up Fund was announced in the 2020 Spending Review. The Fund focuses on capital investment in local infrastructure building on and consolidating prior programmes such as the Local Growth Fund and Towns Fund.
- 2.3 The Levelling Up Fund has been designed to invest in local infrastructure that has a visible impact on people and their communities. This includes a range of high value local investment priorities, including local transport schemes, urban regeneration projects and cultural assets. The Fund is jointly managed by HM Treasury (HMT), the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Transport (DfT). There is £4.8bn available through the programme to 2024. The Fund will focus investment in projects that require up to £20m of funding for each constituency area.
- 2.4 Details of the first round of the Fund and the prospectus were announced on 3rd March this year and will focus on three themes: smaller transport projects that make a genuine difference to local areas; town centre and high street regeneration; and support for maintaining and expanding the UK's world-leading portfolio of cultural and heritage assets, in particular:
- Transport investments including (but not limited to) public transport, active travel, bridge repairs, bus priority lanes, local road improvements and major structural maintenance, and accessibility improvements.
  - Regeneration and town centre investment, building on the Towns Fund framework to upgrade eyesore buildings and dated infrastructure, acquire and regenerate brownfield sites, invest in secure community infrastructure and crime reduction, and bring public services and safe community spaces into town and city centres.
  - Cultural investment maintaining, regenerating, or creatively repurposing museums, galleries, visitor attractions (and associated green spaces) and heritage assets as well as creating new community-owned spaces to support the arts and serve as cultural spaces

- 2.5 The Fund states that investment proposals should focus on supporting high priority projects that will make a visible impact in local areas, recognising what constitutes priority investment will vary across local authorities and geographies, including in rural areas of the UK.

### **For Shropshire**

- 2.6 Following the announcement of the Levelling up [prospectus](#) in March, Officers have been reviewing the guidance and applications forms in more detail. Shropshire is in a position to submit 3 bids, one for each MP constituency area fully within the authority boundary and MP's are only able to formally support one bid in their constituency area. There is potential to submit a cross boundary bid with Telford and Wrekin Council, where MP's span more than one Local Authority. Each local authority has been prioritised in a category of tier 1, 2 or 3, being tier 1 as the highest priority. Shropshire is in tier 2.
- 2.7 There is a significant amount of work required to submit a single bid so only projects which are already well developed can be considered to meet the strict gateway criteria for the funding and those with the most likelihood of success in the first round of levelling up funding.
- 2.8 The fundamental gateway for bids is projects which are ready to mobilise quickly and meet the criteria set out in the technical guidance [link](#) . This includes being able to spend within year (2021/22).
- 2.9 There will be a three staged approach to assessment and decision making that Government are using.

**Stage 1 Gateway:** The first stage is a pass/fail gateway criterion, where bids will be assessed against whether they can deliver some LUF expenditure in 2021/2022. Bids that do not meet this gateway criteria will not be assessed further and will not be eligible to be considered for funding in this round.

**Stage 2 Assessment and Shortlisting Bids:** Bids will be assessed against the criteria set out in the Prospectus to deliver a shortlist of the strongest bids. To create a shortlist, applications will be assessed at the bid level against place characteristics, strategic fit, deliverability and value for money.

**Stage 3 Decision Making:** Once bid assessment and moderation has concluded, and the shortlist is drawn up, Ministers will make funding decisions.

- 2.10 The timescale for the submission of bids is extremely tight and they must be made by 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 12pm. In effect this along with other set criteria mean that these first round submissions have to be based upon existing projects that already have a degree of project planning already completed.
- 2.11 The three bids, which are being put forward in this first round of levelling up funding need to meet the key objectives of the funding and critically can show spend in 21/22. Officers understand that other areas may have projects that they wish to be considered for future rounds of funding and these will be captured as well as those ideas and projects which could be looked at for any further rounds of Levelling up or future prosperity funding.
- 2.12 **South – Craven Arms** - A major infrastructure project to include a new online roundabout on the A49, a road bridge over the railway line, and spine roads and utility provision on key employment sites. This supports the planned growth of Craven Arms through accelerating the delivery of infrastructure to unlock the allocated Local Plan housing and employment growth on the northern edge of the town. This will enable sites within the town centre to be redeveloped for more appropriate town centre uses including housing.
- 2.13 **North – Oswestry**
- A package of projects is proposed focussing in two key locations.
- Town centre investment to support the regeneration and recovery of the centre, through increased footfall supported by public realm improvements and through measures to support businesses to stimulate economic growth. Current projects under consideration include public realm improvements on Church Street and Cross Street, extending capital grants available to re-purpose underused buildings in the town, support new activities and facilities at the Library, and develop new co-working business spaces within Council owned assets. These proposals complement existing activities and schemes such as the High Street Heritage Action Zone scheme.
  - Improvements to support the planned housing and employment developments around Mile End, through site preparation for the employment land and development of a Skate Park. These proposals will be complemented by existing works to improve the road network and proposed improvements to walking and cycling connectivity.

The combined interventions will stimulate growth, support businesses through the provision of new business space, increase

town centre footfall to support the turnover of existing businesses and the visitor economy, and support improvement to walking and cycling infrastructure. These improvements are not standalone projects, but build on current part of a wider strategy to improve the town supported by existing activities and public/private investment already secured.

- 2.14 **Central area** – Shrewsbury Big Town plan package of projects which consists of:

**Making Movement Better:** Shrewsbury Town Centre: Key Routes & Corridors Improvements.

Public realm improvements (widened pavements, traffic calming, wayfinding) within the town loop. As well as including additional allowance for improvements to key public spaces along the routes & targeted side road works.

These projects will support the aspiration of work undertaken to date to enhance the experience of moving through and around the town centre

#### **Town Centre accelerating Smithfield Riverside Regeneration**

Demolition, site preparation and infrastructure investment to support the Smithfield Riverside Strategic Development Framework.

This will help to unlock, get the site ready and accelerate the development of Smithfield Riverside through the delivery of the Strategic Development Framework.

These interventions will stimulate growth through the provision of new public realm and infrastructure that will increase town centre footfall, enhance and support the visitor economy, strengthen economic activity and stimulate developer confidence and appetite in bringing forward Shrewsbury most significant riverside regeneration site. These integrated portfolio of improvements will provide cross-cutting support of the aspirations and objectives of the Shrewsbury Big Town Vision (December 2020), namely the 'Big Moves' that advocate the connecting of communities, celebrate heritage, provide quality public spaces and creating opportunities for growth.

### **REPORT**

3. **Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal**

**Do nothing option.**

No bids are submitted from Shropshire, and the opportunity to bring in additional capital resource is lost. Potential reputation damage for not submitting bids to help address the imbalance across the Country in economic prosperity. The LUF has had a high profile nationally.

Although a round 2 has been indicated, there is no guarantee that a future round will be announced, when or what changes there will be to the investment themes. Also spend could still need to be defrayed by 2024 regardless of the timing of a future round.

**Submit less bids.**

Shropshire submits less than the number of bids it is able too. This is possible but given that there are three project or package of projects which are ready and able to submit applications, it is considered this could be detrimental to the economy of our local communities and areas. A second round for the Levelling Up Fund has been indicated, however the timescales for the second round is unknown, and the investment theme and eligible activities are likely to be amended for future rounds. There is no guarantee that the pipeline projects will be eligible for the next round of funding.

**Submit bids for all areas.**

Shropshire submits three strong bids in the first round of the fund to support identified projects in these areas with the potential to support infrastructure, redevelopment, sustainable growth and movement. The application guidance has indicated that those elements of the application submitted that could weaken the overall application will affect the appraisal and scoring for that application. Prioritisation of the projects to be submitted is therefore required to submit robust proposals.

As part of the application. A Risk Register will be required for each of the projects. Each application will be required to demonstrate that robust internal financial governance, reporting and evaluation processes are in place. If successful, Shropshire Council will scrutinise the terms of the contract agreement and conditions prior to acceptance by the S151 Officer.

**Human Rights Act Appraisal**

- 3.1 The recommendations contained in the report are compatible with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.

**Equalities and Opportunities Appraisal**



3.2 The UK government has committed to levelling up across the whole of the United Kingdom to ensure that no community is left behind, particularly as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. This Fund is one part of government's broader offer to level up opportunity across the UK.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 The Levelling Up Fund is a competitive fund, with funding distributed on the basis of successful project selection. Each bid, or package of bids, can submit for up to £20m of capital funding to support priority projects. Projects will be prioritised if they are able to demonstrate deliverability on the ground in the 2021-22 financial year and it is expected that all funding will be spent by 31 March 2024.

4.2 The guidance to support 'levelling up' bids require at least a 10% match which can be made up from public and private funding. At this stage in the process, the bids are giving a high level of indication of the likely match funding which will be available to support proposals. The proposals in all 3 areas are looking at a range of match funding to support the bids, including land acquisitions/land holdings, developer contributions including S106 and CIL, funding allocated as part of current Council commitments and in-kind support. Where possible we will also look to utilise existing match funding to support bids.

4.3 The full financial details and business cases would need to be considered in further detail and where appropriate, decisions made to support these if any of the bids were successful to the next stage in the process.

4.4 Once funding awards are decided, responsibility for their delivery will sit with Shropshire Council. Further contributions will not be provided, and any cost overruns will need to be managed by Shropshire Council.

#### **Support for BID preparation**

4.5 Through the Big Town Partnership, external support has been brought in to support the partners to bring a BID forward. This has been funded through the partnership at a cost of £25,000 from existing partnership funding.

4.6 Craven Arms – Balfour Beatty have provided support through the SCAPE framework at no cost to the Council, to help with project development, scoping and costing. The following activities and outcomes will have been completed by the point of bid submission;

Tasks undertaken to develop bid through the “SCAPE Feasibility Stage”;

- Feasibility workshops
- Review client’s vision and values
- Agree project success factors
- Identify key roles including PM & designers
- Engage local and strategic supply chain
- Identify social value opportunities and agree targets (TOMs)
- Consider site investigation and enabling works
- Identify performance management strategy
- Develop solution – design options and prepare initial risk register
- Agree programme and costs

#### Outcomes

- Feasibility and delivery plan presented
- Value for money solution agreed
- Information for funding and approvals developed
- Relationship Management Plan established
- Social Value Action Plan presented
- 75% market tested
- Community needs considered in plan

4.7 Oswestry – Support for consultancy has been brought in at a cost of £10,000 to help with project development, scoping and costing of the transport and public realm projects and for consultancy support to assist and test the economic case consistent with the MHCLG and DfT appraisal guidance.

4.8 Each of the three respective MP’s are supportive of the first round submissions and engaged in promoting these schemes to government.

#### 5.1 **Climate Change**

5.2 The Council’s Climate Strategy has three main objectives as a **route map** to zero carbon:

- **Mitigate** the causes of climate change through carbon reduction of our services
- **Adapt** services and their delivery to respond to changes in the climate
- **Promote** sustainable practices via all services.

5.3 The bids submitted under the theme of clean and inclusive growth work towards reducing carbon impacts and mitigating increased carbon outputs through sustainable and balance growth in existing communities, reducing the need to travel for work, providing more

sustainable options for travel as well as opportunities for new low carbon development.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

- 6.1 Looking to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund next year, Government is changing the way it supports local economic growth so it can support levelling up for the long term. The government has stated that it will work with local partners throughout 2021 to develop an approach that delivers the infrastructure and regeneration priorities local leaders want to see in their area.
- 6.2 Officers are working to ensure we capture projects from local areas, stakeholders, partners and communities that will build a strong picture and opportunity for Shropshire to access and put forward further funding bids through the UK shared prosperity funding, further rounds of levelling up and other opportunities that are deemed suitable.
- 6.3 Later in the year it is expected that further details on the Community Ownership Fund will be announced as well as publishing an Investment Framework for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund – the replacement to European Union structural funds – which will commence in 2022.

<b>List of Background Papers- none</b>
<b>Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Edward Potter- Economic Growth, regeneration and planning</b>
<b>Local Member ALL</b>
<b>Appendices</b>





<u>Committee and Date</u>	<u>Item</u>
Cabinet 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2021	<u>Public</u>

## Quarter 4 Performance Report 2020/21

**Responsible:** James Walton, Interim Executive Director of Resources.

e-mail: [james.walton@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:james.walton@shropshire.gov.uk)

01743 258915

### 1. Summary

- 1.1. This report presents Cabinet with the Council's Performance against its key Outcomes for Quarter 4 2020/21.
- 1.2. The Corporate Plan for 2020/21 and the High-Level Outcomes provide the shape and focus of the updated Performance Management Framework. The measures in the framework have been refined to reflect the updated strategic action plans for the year.
- 1.3. The framework is presented with seven key outcome areas: A Healthy Environment, A Good Place to do Business, Sustainable Places and Communities, More People with a Suitable Home, Embrace our Rurality, Care for those in Need at any Age and Your Council
- 1.4. The online performance portal has continued to be developed to present performance information to be used in conjunction with this report, and can be accessed here -  
<https://shropshireperformance.inphase.com/>
- 1.5. This is part of improving access to performance information and that of data transparency. Member and user feedback will help to inform further developments of performance information, which will form part of the IT system developments.

## **2. Recommendations**

### **Members are asked to:**

- A. Consider the emerging issues in this report
- B. Review the performance portal and identify any performance areas that they would like to consider in greater detail or refer to the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee.

## **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.

## **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**

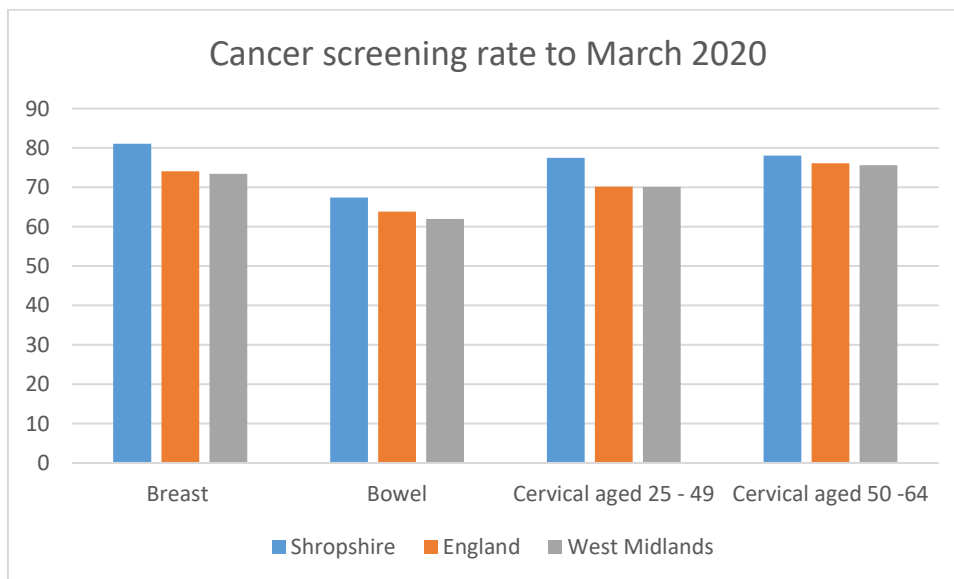
- 5.1. Each of the seven outcome areas contains a number of sub-outcomes with a range of associated performance measures. The frequency of the availability of the data varies from monthly and quarterly updates to annual updates. All measures, regardless of frequency will be available on the performance portal to improve accessibility to information.
- 5.2. Quarterly reports will be used to highlight performance exceptions and changes to measures reported annually.

5.3. The Quarter 4 report is written and presented under yet more challenging circumstances. The report covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. The country entered the third national lockdown period during January with a brief respite in December. The corporate performance measures are presented against the backdrop of the Covid 19 crisis, this quarter 4 report finds most facilities in Shropshire including schools closed.

## 6. A Healthy Environment

6.1 The sub outcomes for A Healthy Environment are; The Council is Improving Energy Efficiency, Providing access to Shropshire’s Great Outdoors, A Clean and Attractive Environment is maintained, Participation in Positive Activities for Health and Well being, Improving Public Health Keeping People Safe.

6.2 A number of Public Health measures relating to health improvement and healthcare to prevent premature mortality have been updated for the year to March 2020. Health Improvement measures around cancer screening compare favourably to the England and West Midland rates. It is likely that results to March 2021 will be impacted by the diversion of resources to manage the covid emergency.

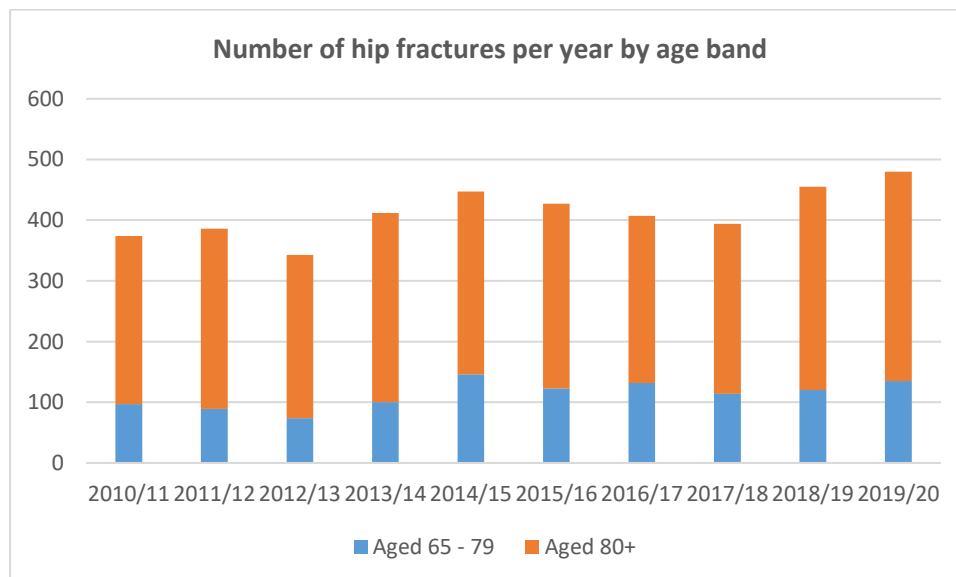
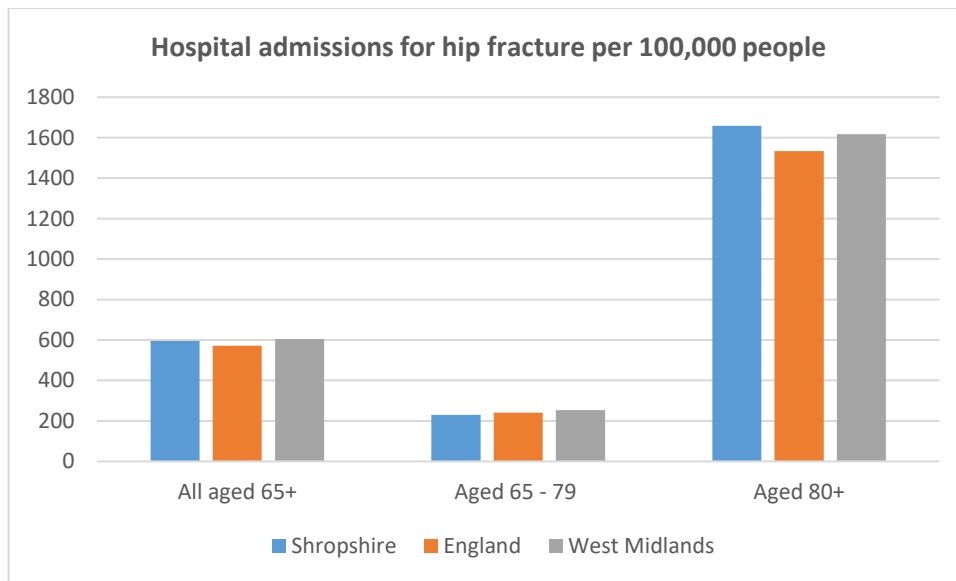


Source: Public Health England Outcomes Framework

Hip fracture is a debilitating condition. Only one in three sufferers return to their former levels of independence and one in three ends up leaving their own home and moving to long-term care . Hip fractures are almost as common and costly as strokes and the incidence is rising. In the UK, about 75000 hip fractures occur annually at an estimated health and social cost of about £2 billion a year.

The average age of a person with hip fracture is about 83 years with about 73% of fractures occurring in women. The National Hip Fracture Database reports that mortality from hip fracture is high - about one in ten people with a hip fracture die within 1 month and about one in three within 12 months.

Overall rates in Shropshire are similar to the comparator groups. Rates for those aged 65 – 70 are slightly lower, whilst slightly higher for those aged 80+. The rate per 100,000 in Shropshire has remained comparatively unchanged for a number of years. However, the annual number of cases does show slight increases and is likely to be a reflection of the aging population profile of the county.



Source: Public Health England Outcomes Framework



- 6.3 The health of people in Shropshire generally compares well with other areas. Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy is higher than national or regional averages. Many health indicators within the Public Health Outcomes Framework compare favourably. However, the Public Health effects of the COVID pandemic has been far reaching and may have long-term impacts on the future health of our communities. Areas of concern include:

More than 26,000 cases of COVID in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin with 10% of people thought to have long COVID.

24% increase in pupils eligible for Free School Meals  
72% increase in people using local foodbanks

19% say they have a less healthy diet  
27% say they drink more alcohol  
30% of adults say they have put on weight

20% of adult carers' mental wellbeing affected  
Almost doubling of adults suffering depression or anxiety, rising from 10% to 19%

- 6.4 The Theatre Severn has remained closed during Q4. The plans for reopening are at a provisional stage and depending on the easing of restrictions, current plans are to restart film screenings from 21<sup>st</sup> May with reduced capacity and social distancing. Selected live events are scheduled at the theatre for June-August again with social distancing and reduced capacity.
- 6.5 The Old Market Hall cinema has now been closed for a year for film screening, the café is currently serving outside.
- 6.6 Visits to libraries are significantly down at Q4 as they were closed for general access, libraries were open for click & collect only and emergency public PC access. Online services and virtual events and activities continued to be developed to maintain engagement with library customers. Libraries re-opened on 12th April. Even when libraries were open visits were low due to reluctance of older/vulnerable library customers to go out, reduced library services in branch, greater focus on digital services, no events or activities in libraries.
- 6.7 The Outdoor recreational figures have seen a reduction at Q4 as travel under the lockdown was restricted. However, the annual figures have been positive as outdoor exercise and activities became a key part of daily lives over the last year. The Outdoor rec recorded a total of 611,515 visitors

during 2019/20 but this increased to 996,228 during 2020/21, this is a significant 63% increase.

- 6.8 There were 0 visitors to visitor attractions during Q4 as everything remained closed during lockdown. The total number of visitors to Shropshire Museums during 2020/21 was 52,668 a significant reduction on the 2019/20 figure of 197,527.
- 6.9 The projected Recycling and Composting rate for quarter 4 20/21 is 53.1% which is above the target of 52.5%. The long-term trend shows that recycling rates continue to improve gradually, albeit with seasonal variations. Current performance exceeds the national targets for English councils to recycle 50% of household waste by the end of 2020. The next challenge is to meet the 65% target by the end of 2035.

## 7 A Good Place to do Business

- 7.1 The sub outcomes for A Good Place to do Business are; A Well Qualified Workforce, A Good Place to Start, Grow or Locate a Business, Employment Opportunities, Employment Conditions and Infrastructure and Conditions.
- 7.2 Claimant count figures to March 2021 show that the number of claimants aged 16+ stands at 8,640 an increase of 4,630 (115%) compared to March 2020 (4,010). The sharp rise reflects the severe economic downturn as a result of national lockdown during the Covid-19 pandemic. Please note: Under Universal Credit a broader span of claimants are required to look for work than under Jobseeker's Allowance. As the Universal Credit Service is rolled out the number of people recorded as being on the Claimant Count will increase.

Shropshire claimant rates continue to compare favourably with comparator groups December 2020:

	Shropshire	West Midlands	Great Britain
18 – 24	8.2%	10.1%	9.1%
16 - 64	4.5%	7.4%	6.5%

- 7.3 The economic and employment measures tracked in the corporate plan are highly likely to be impacted by the current lockdown situation. Many economic measures are reported annually, towards the end of the year, therefore it will take some time before the scale of impact and rate of recovery emerges in official statistics.

## **8 Sustainable Places and Communities**

- 8.1 The sub outcome for Sustainable Places and Communities are; Community Volunteering, Communities Feel Safe and quality of life for adult social care users.
- 8.2 The provisional end of year rate of permanent admissions of adults for those aged 65+ into residential or nursing homes is lower (better) than the profile. (409 people per 100,000 against a target of 600.) Admissions for those aged 18 – 64 is also better than target. (4.9 people per 100,000 against a target of 10.) The actual number of admissions of those aged 18 – 64 remains relatively low and therefore small changes in numbers shows a higher percentage variance. 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.
- 8.3 Despite the pandemic and a reduction in our ability to provide supported employment or keep day centres open as usual Adult Social Care has been able to deliver supports to vulnerable people differently including through remote activities and socially distanced supports in the community
- 8.4 During this period Adult Social Care reviewed the needs of service users more regularly to ensure that their needs were being met and they were being supported where changes to their service provision has been necessary due to Covid.
- 8.5 We also increased the number of contacts with our Carers to ensure that they were being supported and where assessments have been required have undertaken these and provided the necessary support to ensure they can maintain their caring role.
- 8.6 Due to lockdown and social distancing the usual number of volunteer hours supporting libraries, museums and outdoor recreation service has been greatly reduced during the reporting period. The work of volunteers in supporting these services is greatly appreciated as is the tremendous work of all volunteers around the county who help improve the quality of life in so many ways.

## **9 More People with a Suitable Home**

- 9.1 The sub outcomes for More People with a Suitable Home are; Creating the Conditions for Housing Supply, Meeting the Demand for Suitable Housing, Prevention of Homelessness and Access to Affordable Homes.
- 9.2 Cornovii Developments Limited is Shropshire Council's wholly owned Local Housing Company, which aims to build upwards of 600 new homes between 2020 to 2025. The company has been formed to address unmet housing need in the county and to generate income for the Council. Work is progressing on target for their first development 'The Frith' in Shrewsbury, planning permission has been approved for the Ellesmere Wharf development and work on the development pipeline is on schedule. The company is currently investigating expansion into the Private Rented Sector to address unmet need in this sector.
- 9.3 For the current financial year, the number of completions of affordable homes during the year has been 266. This consists of 36 for quarter 1, 76 for quarter 2, 85 for quarter Q3 and 69 for quarter Q4. This is a draft figure and will be confirmed by Homes England at the end of June 21. There has not been a reduction in completions due to covid, although some sites were shut down during the first lockdown which has led to a few delays, but all sites are now back up and running. Overall the number of new affordable homes is higher than the 223 delivered in the year to March 2020.
- 9.4 The Shropshire Housing Strategy 2020 - 2025 was approved by cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021.
- 9.5 The draft Homelessness strategy deadline was extended in agreement with MHCLG but due to the increased work because of Covid19 and a need to prioritise frontline work, has still not been finalised. The aim is to have a draft document ready for consultation towards the end of June 2021.

## **10 Embrace our Rurality**

- 10.1 The sub outcomes for Embrace our Rurality are; Creating the Vision for our Rural Landscape and Communities, Rural Housing, Rural Transport and Rural Infrastructure.
- 10.2 The 3-year rolling annual average for the number of people killed or seriously injured has seen a welcome reduction in numbers. The latest annual average over 3 years is 144.1 compared to 164.3 at the same period in 2020. Early indications show that accidents and casualty numbers were

lower during the lockdown period. This may impact on reporting over the next 3 years as may changes to working and commuting patterns.

- 10.3 Shropshire Council's Connecting Shropshire broadband programme has been in place since 2013 and has contracted over £32.5m of public funding, through 3 separate supplier contracts with Openreach and Airband Community Internet Ltd. The programme has focused on delivering superfast broadband (with download speeds of at least 30mbps) to the Shropshire Council area programme where there is no commercial provision.

To date the scheme has enabled a total of 68,487 premises to be provided with access to superfast broadband.

## 11 Care for those in Need at any Age

- 11.1 The sub outcomes for Care for those in Need at any Age are; Young people receive appropriate and timely care, Young people are supported to achieve their potential and Adults receive appropriate and timely care.
- 11.2 Demand across all areas of Children's services has seen an increase during the year. In 2020/21, there have been 2,029 children referred to social care, which is 7.8% higher than the previous year.

Latest available benchmarking data indicates that Shropshire's referral levels are below most of its statistical neighbour (SN) group. The average for the group being 422.8 referrals for every 10,000 U18 residents, where Shropshire's y/e 20/21 figure gives a rate of 338.

Most referrals (94.6%) go on to receive a social work assessment, with only 5% requiring no further action.

The main referral source during the year has been the police (28%). As expected with covid-19 closures, referrals from schools fell during the various lockdown periods and spiked upon reopening.

- 11.3 At the end of quarter 4 2020/21, there were 504 Looked After Children. This is an increase of 26.3% over year end 19/20.

In 2019/20 there were an average of 9 new looked after children per month, which has increased to 16 in 2020/21. Children ceasing to be looked after were 8 per month during 2019/20, this has decreased to 7 during 2020/21. More children have started to be looked after during quarter four than during the same period last year, indicating an increase in the complexity of cases entering social care.

The rate of children looked after has increased during quarter 4 to 83 children per 10,000 Under 18s. National reports indicate that local authorities across the country have experienced an increased rate of Looked After Children during the Covid 19 emergency. However, early indications are that rates have grown faster in Shropshire.

The latest available comparator data for 2019/20 shows the Statistical Neighbour average per 10,000 as (60.4) West Midlands (82) England average (67) which are below the Shropshire rate of 84 at the end of March 2021.

## 12 Your Council

- 12.1 The sub outcomes for Your Council are; a financially stable council, an excellent workforce, Transforming services and Compliments and Complaints.
- 12.2 The quarter 4 finance report is to be presented to Cabinet on, figures 7<sup>th</sup> June will be updated in the performance portal after publication of the report.
- 12.3 The number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees as at the end of quarter 4 has increased by 22 to 2724.

Previous end of year FTE numbers are shown in the table below.

March 2021	2724
Dec 2020	2702
Sept 2020	2697
June 2020	2697
March 2020	2649
March 2019	2609
March 2018	2547
March 2017	2474
March 2016	2661
March 2015	2876
March 2014	3089
March 2013	3552

- 12.4 The total number of complaint investigations for Q4 2020/21 was 285 similar to the numbers received in the corresponding period for 2019/20 (247). Total complaints for the year reduced to 971, a decrease of 16%.

Period	Total Complaints	Complaints Statutory Children's Investigations	Complaints Statutory Adults investigations (inc provider)	Corporate Complaints Investigations
<b>Total 2018/19</b>	<b>1,281</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>1,085</b>
Q1 2019/20	314	9	25	280
Q2 2019/20	323	10	37	276
Q3 2019/20	247	9	22	216
Q4 2019/20	272	12	29	231
<b>Total 2019/20</b>	<b>1,156</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>1,003</b>
Q1 2020/21	165	5	6	154
Q2 2020/21	276	12	21	243
Q3 2020/21	245	15	11	219
Q4 2020/21	285	13	14	258
<b>Total 2020/21</b>	<b>971</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>874</b>

12.5 There were 285 complaint investigations within the quarter (258 were corporate complaint investigations). This total is a slight increase on previous quarter totals, but not dissimilar to the total in Quarter 2. Highways complaints continue to form a significant proportion of corporate complaint cases and additional performance reports are being produced to understand patterns and areas in need of attention.

12.6 There were 140 compliments were received within the quarter, a very similar total to the previous quarter. Many compliments were generated by activity undertaken in response to the pandemic. During the year the total number of compliments was 616 an increase of 51%

Period	Total Compliments	Total Comments
<b>Year - 2018/19</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>522</b>
Q1 2019/20	73	164
Q2 2019/20	112	171
Q3 2019/20	91	152
Q4 2019/20	131	234
<b>Year - 2019/20</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>721</b>
Q1 2020/21	179	159
Q2 2020/21	158	263
Q3 2020/21	139	190
Q4 2020/21	140	191
<b>Year - 2020/21</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>803</b>

### 13 Conclusion

- 13.1 This performance report provides an update on the results achieved and the impact on delivering the outcomes for Shropshire
- 13.2 Performance for Quarter 4 of 2020/21 has seen unprecedented changes to the delivery of services. Service areas who were particularly impacted by lockdown started to make tentative returns to ‘normality’ whilst others are adopting to new ways of working and delivering services.

Despite these challenges there continues to be good areas of performance

- The number of complaints about the council reduced during the year whilst the number of recorded compliments increased by 51%.
- Good progress has been made during the year housing objectives. More affordable homes have built than in the previous year, work is progressing on the first development from Cornovii and community led housing schemes are now coming forward.
- The number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads has seen a significant reduction in the past year

There are also challenges to services including:

- Children’s social care continues to receive more demand on services with higher numbers of Looked After Children
- Leisure, libraries, theatres and cultural attractions have all experienced a significant downturn in visitor numbers.

**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 2018/19 – 2022/23

Corporate Plan 2019/22

**Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)**

Cllr Gwilym Butler

**Local Member All**

**Appendices** <https://shropshireperformance.inphase.com/>