



## **Committee and Date**

Transformation and  
Improvement Overview and  
Scrutiny Committee

10 January 2024

## **TRANSFORMATION AND IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2023**

**In the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND**

**10.00 - 11.30 am**

**Responsible Officer:** Ashley Kendrick Democratic Services Officer

Email: ashley.kendrick@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 250893

### **Present**

Councillor Claire Wild

Councillors Roger Evans (Vice-Chair), Joyce Barrow, Thomas Biggins, Julia Buckley, Paul Gill, Rob Gittins, Alan Mosley and Peggy Mullock and Andrew Sherrington

### **31 Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Councillor Dan Thomas (substituted by Councillor Paul Gill), Councillor David Vasmer (substituted by Councillor Andrew Sherrington), Billy Webster – AD of Transformation and Councillor Gwilym Butler – PH Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities.

### **32 Disclosable Interests**

None

### **33 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

### **34 Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

### **35 Member Question Time**

There were no member questions.

### **36 Capital Strategy Task and Finish Group**

The Chair of the Capital Strategy Task and Finish Group, Councillor Julian Dean, presented the report which set out key findings, conclusions, and recommendations of

their work. He gave his thanks to officers who have supported the group and the members who had provided their insights.

Councillor Dean drew members' attention to the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1 – Realistic Capital Project Timelines, avoiding slippage and improved reporting of delivery, progress and impact

Recommendation 2 – Local member awareness and input.

Recommendation 3 – Systematic review and learning from capital project delivery.

Recommendation 4 – Establish an 'opportunity register' and central external funding team.

Recommendation 5 – Geographic visualisation of capital projects.

Recommendation 6 – Highways Capital Programme

Recommendation 7 – Responding to recommendations and delivery actions

Concern was raised that members are sometimes unaware of large planning applications or large capital projects being brought forward in their area and a request was made for all members in that electoral area to be notified and that the local member protocol should be updated to reflect this. It was suggested that Councillor Dean raises this when taking the report forward to Cabinet.

Members queried whether place plans were considered in the determination of capital projects and it was questioned whether these were used in the overarching capital strategy. It was acknowledged that this had not been investigated as the group's focus was more so on the adult and children's areas rather than the Place directorate. It was stated that the aim of the task and finish group was to improve the process and make it more robust, and not to take anything away from what is already included; which may well include place planning. Councillor Dean welcomed the suggestion and would work with the Scrutiny Manager to ensure it is included within the report which would be taken to Cabinet next week.

Councillor Dean was thanked for his time and effort involved in producing the report and it was

#### **RECOMMENDED:**

To accept the report.

### **37 Pros and Cons of System Working Task and Finish Group**

The Scrutiny Manager provided an update to advise members that the work of the task and finish group was still going ahead but that they were battling with competing priorities. A meeting would be held before Christmas, with a further two or three meetings in the New Year.

## 38 Period 7 Financial Monitoring

The Executive Director for Resources presented the verbal report which had been requested at the previous committee meeting. Members were advised that period 7 is up to the end of October and detailed figures are now appearing as per the agreed timetable.

It was stated that £51.4m of budget savings were due to be delivered over the financial year which have been split into savings which have been achieved and those forecast to be delivered by the end of the year; the latter being £40.87m and of this figure, £35.5m has been delivered and is in the bank. Overall, there is still around £7m of savings yet to be achieved.

Members were reminded that in addition to the unachieved savings, there were demand pressures particularly within the People directorate where demand cost and mitigation works are to take place over the next 12-18 months, which is in the region of £25-26m. With this being taken into account, and with potential mitigation would leave a potential £7m overspend by the end of the financial year. The Executive Director of Resources was keen to stress that this figure should not be relied upon until the Period 7 work had been completed.

Dissatisfaction was expressed that monthly written updates were not being provided as previously stated. The Executive Director for Resources clarified that monthly written updates are provided to members and staff via email with detailed reports being provided at the end of every quarter as the Council does not have the resource to produce them monthly. Members were reminded that they had been advised at the last meeting that the information would not be available in time for today's meeting and it had been agreed that a verbal update was to be provided.

It was further stated that written reports should be provided to allow the committee to carry out their role within scrutiny. The Executive Director for Resources confirmed that final figures for period 7 would be available by the end of the week and would be circulated to members.

Members sought reassurance regarding the demand mitigation measures. Their attention was drawn to the Q2 report where further detailed information had been made available with regards to the ways in which these costs could be addressed, such as the use of external funding and earmarked reserves. Members were advised that further information was also being collated by the Transformation task and finish group such who were looking at mitigation techniques and the impact they will have on figures.

It was confirmed that the savings that had already been made were year on year savings unless otherwise stated and that further information was contained within the financial strategy which was adopted in March 2023.

Members were advised that the figures which had been provided to members were based on projections and information provided by different service areas. Managers provided monthly updates which were key in a sometimes changeable situation due to demand pressures. Members noted that services must continue to be delivered, but it was about the way in which these services were paid for, especially when the services affected the

most vulnerable residents. It was stated that the team were always open and available to have discussions on any areas of concern members had.

It was suggested that a members briefing be held on demand management to ensure members are aware of the measures being considered and their impact. The Scrutiny Manager advised that the Assistant Director for Transformation had set up a Teams site for the task and finish group and that this may contain some of the information which could be used for a members briefing.

Thanks were given to the Executive Director for Resources, the Assistant Director of Finance & ICT and the finance team who are under incredible pressure to deliver.

**RECOMMENDED:**

That members noted the verbal update.

**39 Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Manager reminded members of the task and finish groups which were ongoing and clarified that the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024 had been retained for the committee to consider the alternative budget proposals. There was also an additional meeting taking place on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024 to ensure Q3 finance and performance monitoring reports had come to scrutiny before going to Cabinet, together with the transformation and MTFS report.

Work programming was due to commence in March for the upcoming year.

**40 Date of Next Meeting**

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee was 10 January 2024.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date: .....