



Committee and Date

People Overview and Scrutiny
Committee

22nd October 2025

PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2025

In The Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ

10.00 - 11.07 am

Responsible Officer: Shelley Davies

Email: shelley.davies@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257718

Present

Councillor Andy Davis (Chairman)

Councillors Mandy Duncan (Vice Chairman), Thomas Clayton, Susan Coleman,
Rhys Gratton, Duncan Kerr, Vicky Moore, Mark Morris, Alan Mosley and Teri Trickett

5 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Sian Lines (Diocese of Hereford - CE) and Carol Morgan (Diocese of Shrewsbury - RC).

6 Disclosable Interests

None received.

7 Minutes

That the minutes of the meeting held on 26th February and 22nd May 2025 be confirmed as an accurate record subject to the following amendment to the minutes of the meeting held on 26th February 2025:

Minute 28 (3rd bullet point of paragraph 5) to read 'Bedstone' College and not 'Bedstones' College'.

8 Public Questions

A public question was received from John Palmer, in relation to Telecare Charging.

The full question and response provided can be found on:

[Public Questions - 02.07.25.pdf](#)

9 Member Questions

There were no member questions.

10 Appointment of Co-optees to the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Chairman confirmed the re-appointment of the two diocesan co-opted Members, Sian Lines and Carol Morgan and provided an update on the recruitment process for the two vacant parent governor positions.

11 Call In of Cabinet Decision - Telecare Charging Consultation

The Chairman explained the purpose of the item and referred to the options available to the Committee in relation to the call in and the procedure that would be followed as set out in appendix 4 to the report.

The Chairman invited Councillor Duncan Kerr, on behalf of the Green and Progressive Independent Group to explain the reasons for the call in of the decision. Councillor Kerr referred to the reasons as set out in Appendix 1 of the report and requested that the Committee uphold the call-in and refer the decision back to Cabinet for re-consideration on the following grounds:

1. The telecare service was a preventative service, but the costs in health and financial terms to the Council and the wider Health and Social care ecosystem of imposing these charges and thereby removing 30% of users from it have not been ascertained. (National data shows a potential £14bn saving to the Country from the extension of telecare and the Council has learnt the hard way the consequences of cutting early help in Children's Services).
2. The outcome has not been compared with the costs and disbenefits of removing other preventative services operated by the same department for example help with cleaning and gardening services to those who also don't have a care plan.
3. If these exercises identify this service as having the lowest cost to benefit ratio of any discretionary service, we should then consider alternative options such as funding by Parish Councils or the charity model now being used in Children in care services to enable them to go Above and Beyond their statutory functions.
4. Decision makers have not been provided with the unit costs of this system. It is evident that a significant portion of the cost is fixed, and we need to understand if the charges proposed will result in some users subsidising others. We must determine who is subsidising whom and consider whether it is right to impose these charges simply because we have the ability to do so.
5. Too much (sole) reliance and justification has been placed on practice in other authorities, which doesn't make it right, we should be justifying decisions in terms of our own objectives and priorities of our own residents and their representatives not those of other authorities.

Councillor Alan Mosley seconded the proposal to refer the decision back to Cabinet to reconsider the decision made.

The Chairman asked if there were any questions for Councillor Kerr at this stage of the meeting and as there were none, went on to ask the Portfolio Holder for Social Care and officers to explain the background to the decision made and respond to the call in.

The Portfolio Holder for Social Care noted the critical role of preventative services in keeping people safe and well at home and advised that such services usually incur a small charge. It was explained that mitigations were in place to prevent financial hardship, including support to maximize income and benefits for those affected by telecare charges.

Lesley Brown, the Commissioning Service Manager, gave a presentation to address the call-in points and outlined the mitigations and support strategies for the introduction of telecare charging. She advised that:

- The Council would continue to fund telecare services for those unable to pay after financial assessment, for those with existing Council-funded social care, for recipients under Section 117 of the Mental Health Act, and for those receiving short-term reablement packages.
- Approximately 300 current users already have funded care and would not be charged and noted that the current system was not equitable.
- A dedicated telecare officer would support high-risk individuals, conduct home visits, and follow-up calls for those discontinuing the service and provide reassurance and customer-focused support during the implementation of telecare charging.
- The proposed charge was subsidised and benchmarked against other West Midlands Councils, where charging was standard practice.
- The charge would help make the service financially sustainable.
- The mitigations were robust, aligned with best practice and included regular reporting to the Portfolio Holder.

Committee members were invited to ask any questions of officers and the Portfolio Holder.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- A significant proportion of current telecare users would not pay for the service as they would be exempt from charges.
- The information in the report was up to date and stated that the consultation feedback was included in the Cabinet report.

- The current administration would have supported the introduction of charges to ensure equity with neighbouring authorities and to maintain a subsidised, sustainable service, regardless of the inherited financial plan.
- Expanding eligibility and making the service more accessible was being considered, it was noted that private providers were generally more costly.
- Communication strategies would be strengthened to raise awareness and encourage uptake of the service.
- The model had been informed by benchmarking with other councils, however, the Council was open to working with voluntary sector partners, especially to provide support for high-risk individuals.
- The suggestion of a 12-month review of the impact and effectiveness of the telecare charging would be considered, along with ongoing monitoring and data collection.

Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance emphasised the Council's difficult financial position and warned that failure to remain financially solvent could result in government intervention and service cuts. He went on to note that the proposed telecare charge was still subsidised and that the charge was necessary to help the council stay financially viable.

It was proposed and seconded that the matter be referred back to Cabinet for the reasons set out in the call in the notice and during the meeting.

On being put to the vote, this proposal fell.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee should take no further action regarding the Cabinet decision in relation to the telecare charging consultation and the decision therefore becomes effective from the date of this meeting.

12 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the People Overview and Scrutiny Meeting will be taking place on at 10.00 a.m. on Wednesday 22nd October 2025.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: