



Committee and Date

People Overview and Scrutiny
Committee

14th January 2026

PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2025

**In the The Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ
10.00 am - 1.02 pm**

Responsible Officer: Shelley Davies

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Present

Councillor Andy Davis (Chairman)

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

13 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Jamie Daniels, Councillor Vicky Moore and Sian Lines, Diocesan Board of Education.

14 Disclosable Interests

None received.

15 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July 2025 be confirmed as an accurate record.

16 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

17 Member Questions

There were no member questions.

18 Quarterly Performance Monitoring Report

Tanya Miles, Interim Chief Executive and Executive Director DASS introduced the Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 4 which gave an update on key areas of performance across Care & Wellbeing and Children and Young People services. She emphasised the importance of identifying specific areas for future scrutiny and asked the committee to consider which performance areas they would like to focus on for the next meeting in January.

Natalie McFall, Service Director - Care & Wellbeing and Amanda Allcock, Service Manager - Ops South, outlined key areas of the report in relation to Adult Social Care. It was reported that there were ongoing challenges due to demographic pressures, increased complexity of cases and a high number of weekly referrals, but proactive measures were in place and the service was working closely with commissioning to improve delivery models and address demand.

In response to questions in relation to Adult Social Care members were advised that:

- There was a specific mental health pathway for young people preparing for adulthood and the focus was on measuring success by achieving safe transition and appropriate support.
- The main challenge regarding self-funded care was identifying and reaching people who were not known to adult social care, as these individuals often make decisions in crisis without information regarding the support available.
- The team was focusing on improving advice and information in regard to self-funded care through family hubs and community outreach, to help people make informed choices before their savings were depleted.
- The team was working to improve advice and information to enable families to make more appropriate decisions and avoid unnecessary early entry into care homes by recommending alternative pathways, such as reablement services or domiciliary care.
- It was important to reach those not yet known to Adult Social Care through partnerships with GPs, pharmacies, and other health providers before their needs escalate.
- The family hubs initially focused on children, but adults were now being integrated into the model. It was acknowledged that some areas of the County may need bespoke or outreach models due to local needs and limited existing infrastructure.
- Adult Social Care has already taken £34 million out of its budget over recent years by transforming service delivery and that every possible efficiency was being explored including benchmarking against other councils and inviting independent scrutiny to identify further opportunities for sustainable budgeting.

David Shaw, Director Children's Services and John Rowe, Head of Education Quality and Safeguarding outlined key areas of the report in relation to Education. It was reported that there was a need for more challenge and support for Academies and it was noted that a new education excellence strategy to increase the local authority's role in challenging, supporting, and intervening in all schools, including academies, to improve pupil outcomes was being developed.

In response to questions in relation to Education members were advised that:

- Electively Home Educated (EHE) pupils were monitored by a specific service (EAS), which has become more proactive, especially regarding safeguarding and ensuring children receive a good education. It was suggested that Jo Kelly, Virtual Head Teacher who leads this area, could provide more detail at a future meeting.
- The Council monitors planning applications and large housing developments to estimate the number of children likely to result from new developments and a formula was used to inform decisions in relation to school capacity.
- The new education excellence strategy aims to increase its influence over academies, focusing on robust, constructive, and challenging conversations with Multi Academy Trust CEOs in relation to pupil outcomes.
- The Council's ability to monitor academies was constrained by the removal of the school monitoring and brokering grant in 2022, which previously funded these activities. As a result, the Council has limited capacity and relies on existing staff to support monitoring, making comprehensive oversight of academies challenging.
- Resources such as the inclusion development grant and outreach programs were used to support students at risk of exclusion.

Lisa Taylor, Principal Educational Psychologist and Preventative Lead outlined key areas of the report in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). It was reported that the rising demand of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) continues to strain resources and the need for early intervention and system changes to manage demand and maintain strong relationships with families and schools was emphasised.

In response to questions members were advised that:

- Achieving financial sustainability for SEND and high needs by 2028 was extremely difficult due to a large and growing deficit, low mainstream school funding, and increasing complexity and demand. It was stressed that the problem was national in scale, and there was no straightforward solution or high confidence that EHCP growth can be contained within budget.
- Settings were advised to use early intervention and additional resource pathways before pursuing an EHCP to provide targeted support for short-term or specific needs, potentially preventing the need for a long-term EHCP.

Sonya Miller, Service Director Children's & Young People outlined key areas of the report in relation to Children's & Young People Social Care noting in particular the flow of children through the service and the impact of early help on reducing statutory interventions. She highlighted that the number of children in statutory services was at its lowest in over six years which indicated that the investment in early help was working.

In response to questions members were advised that:

- Shropshire had a higher than- average number of large sibling groups, which increased case complexity, especially when multiple parents were involved. It was also noted that there had been an increase in child exploitation cases.
- There was a lack of dedicated early intervention services for parents facing issues such as mental health, substance misuse, and domestic abuse and the need for more joined-up, early intervention services for families with multiple, complex needs was emphasised.
- Shropshire Council uses both direct (in-house) foster carers and independent fostering agencies and that both were needed to ensure children were placed appropriately, with matching based on needs rather than whether the carer was in-house or agency.
- The Council was not allowed to actively approach agency foster carers to bring them in-house but conversations about the Council's offer do occur, especially if carers have children placed with them long-term.
- The Council has improved support through initiatives like the Mockingbird model and Stepping Stones to help foster carers manage challenges and prevent placement breakdowns.
- Shropshire Council participates in the national transfer scheme for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and the government funding just about covered accommodation and living costs but does not cover all costs, such as social work time, travel, or PA support.

All officers were thanked for their reports and commitment to supporting people in Shropshire.

RECOMMENDED:

That the report be noted and the following areas be added to the work programme as future topics for the Committee:

- Adult social care: Focus on the self-funding market - Joint item with HOSC.
- Education - Academy liaison programmes and support, including sharing updates on the Academy strategy.
- Virtual school – Jo Kelly to be invited to a future scrutiny meeting for more detail on electively home-educated children, children missing education and the outreach programme for supporting children with additional needs.
- Fostering - Report on private foster carers versus local authority foster carers, including numbers and breakdowns.

- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children - hearing directly from young people about their outcomes and experiences.

19 Care Quality Commission (CQC) Update Report

Tanya Miles, Interim Chief Executive and Executive Director DASS presented the report which provided an update on the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Adult Social Care Assessment.

Daniel Powner, Service Manager, Community Partnerships and Day Opportunities advised that the assessment focused on working with people, providing support, ensuring safety, and leadership/governance. He reported that Adult Social Care had been rated “good” with notable strengths in Care Act compliance, carer engagement, user experience, and innovative rural delivery. The key improvement areas included streamlining processes, reducing assessment delays, enhancing carer support and learning from complaints and it was noted that a ‘towards outstanding action plan’ (TOAP) was in place to address these areas.

In response to a request from a member for the inclusion of dates on the Action Plan at Appendix 2, Daniel Powner advised that the appendix was an extract of a larger document but progress dates would be added for future meetings.

Officers were thanked for their report.

RECOMMENDED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

20 Local Youth Transformation Pilot

David Shaw, Director Children's Services provided background information in relation to the Local Youth Transformation Pilot and introduced Helena Williams, Youth Support Team Manager.

Helena Williams gave a presentation in relation to the Local Youth Transformation Pilot, a system transformation pilot to build sustainable youth work across Shropshire.

In response to questions members were advised that:

- The funding for youth services under the Local Youth Transformation Pilot was expected to come from a combination of sources, including town and parish council precepts, partnerships, and identifying different funding pots that Shropshire Council may not be able to access directly.

- The project would be challenging due to the need for sustainable funding and collaboration with town and parish councils, which have limited resources and varying capacities.
- The pilot included a grant, but only a small portion was for direct delivery, the majority was for building capacity, structures, and sustainable systems to create lasting change rather than temporary fixes.
- The Council cannot fund all youth services directly but can support coordination, share good practice, and help bridge gaps between well-served and underserved areas.
- The development of youth services and the Local Youth Transformation Pilot strategy must be co-produced with young people, ensuring their involvement in every element of the project, from local youth partnerships to strategic decision-making.

Councillor Andy Hall, Portfolio Holder for Children and Education congratulated the Team for securing the funding which will support the transformation of youth provision in Shropshire and provide much needed training for youth professionals.

The Chairman thanked the officers for the presentation and welcomed a future report on progress of the Local Youth Transformation Pilot.

RECOMMENDED:

That the presentation be noted.

21 Work Programme

Sophie Foster, Overview & Scrutiny Officer noted that a number of topics to be added to the work programme had been suggested during the meeting and she suggested that an additional meeting via Teams be arranged to discuss the priorities for the Committee.

RECOMMENDED:

That an additional Teams meeting be arranged to discuss the Work Programme.

22 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 14th January 2026.

Signed (Chairman)

Date:

