



DRAFT

Committee and Date
StrettonDale with Craven Arms
and Rural combined Local Joint
Committee

Thursday 9 June 2016

7.00pm
Acton Scott Village Hall

Item

5

Public

**STRETTONDALE AND CRAVEN ARMS AND RURAL COMBINED
LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE**

**NOTE OF DECISIONS AND ACTIONS
FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 9TH JUNE 2016
AT ACTON SCOTT VILLAGE HALL
7.00 PM – 8.30 PM**

Responsible Officer Lisa Bedford

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Committee Members Present:

Shropshire Council

Tim Barker, Burnell Electoral Division

Lee Chapman, Church Stretton and Craven Arms Electoral Division

David Evans, Church Stretton and Craven Arms Electoral Division

Cecilia Motley, Corvedale Electoral Division

Town/Parish Councils

StrettonDale:

Paul Harris, Leebotwood and Longnor Parish Council

Lee Crowhurst, Condover Parish Council

Mel McFarland, Rushbury Parish Council

Jeremy Dale, All Stretton, Smethcott and Woolstaston Parish Council

Steve Pennington, Cardington Parish Council

Bob Welch, Church Stretton Town Council

Gareth Ball, Acton Burnell Group Parish Council

Steve Jones, Eaton Under Heywood and Hope Bowdler Parish Council

Craven Arms:

Robin Gatehouse, Stanton Lacy Parish Council

Richard Rallings, Munslow Parish Council

David Mills, Craven Arms Town Council

Andrew Pike, Culmington Parish Council

Mike Flannigan, Wistanstow Parish Council

Rob Loynes, Hopesay Parish Council

Tom O'Boyle, Diddlebury Parish Council

Co-opted members:

StrettonDale:

Nicola McPherson, Mayfair Centre

Dave Ruck, Acton Scott Parish Meeting

Craven Arms:

Neville Stephens, Craven Arms Area Youth Group

Catherine Collier, Grow Cook Learn

Mark Trafford, Sibdon Parish Meeting

Also present: -

Clive Wright, Chief Executive, Shropshire Council

Lisa Bedford, Community Enablement Officer, Shropshire Council

There were approximately 30 members of the public present at the meeting.

1. Election of chairman for the meeting

Cllr David Evans was appointed as chairman for this joint meeting.

2. Welcome and introduction

Cllr Evans welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from; Hilary Claytonsmith [Church Stretton Town Council], Rebecca Deakin [South Shropshire Housing Association], Tony Mantle [Onibury Parish Council].

4. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None declared

5. Community Safety Update

West Mercia Police were unable to attend as they were operationally committed. A written report was provided and circulated to those present [See appendix A].

6. Shropshire Council – Update from Chief Executive, Clive Wright

Clive outlined the Big Conversation consultation exercise that has taken place over the last six months. There were over 2000 responses. It was a general survey to identify the areas that residents think the Council should focus on. There were also additional focus groups such as Town and Parish Councils and special interest groups.

There was support to increase the Council Tax, which has now been implemented, plus the additional 2% for adult social care.

There was strong support to increase levels of volunteering, although on 20% of respondents felt they should volunteer.

Those services identified as the top priorities were:

- Safeguarding young people
- Education
- Older people

The next stage is to produce the corporate plan for the Council, with a clear theme of reducing costs and delivering more for less with a focus on being an enterprising council. Outdoor partnerships are the latest service area to produce business plan to be cost neutral to the council in two years.

The Big Conversation highlighted the desire to see more work between the Town and Parish Councils, voluntary sector.

Management costs have been reduced significantly. There are now less management costs than Bridgnorth District Council had on its own in before Shropshire became a unitary authority.

Shropshire Council has saved £140 million per year over the last 3 / 4 years. The gross budget is £500 million per year, of that £220 million is for schools and benefits, a further £80 million is attributed to waste/ adults and children's services. A further £25 million of savings is required. What used to cost £200 million, now has to cost £25 million. There is also a predicted £10 million per year increase in costs due to the demographic of the county and increasing aging population. All controllable budgets have been halved and there are very little savings to be made now from efficiencies within the council.

The Council is now looking at alternative ways of delivering and funding local services.

7. Questions from members of the public

Q What are the pension liabilities?

The pension fund is largely in good order.

Q Why don't we increase the council tax

First and second tier authorities are capped and cannot increase their council tax by more than 2% (plus an additional 2% for adult social care), unless a referendum is carried out.

Q Why don't we have a referendum?

That is a political decision. It would cost £700,000 to £800,000 to undertake.

Q How are you monitoring progress and activities?

Not all new ways of working have been successful, and therefore alternatives are always being considered.

Q There is inequality in the current approach with regards to Town and Parish Councils, this needs to be reconsidered.

There will be a meeting with Town and Parish Councils next week for these issues to be discussed.

Q Can transport and health services be delivered more innovatively and effectively?

Work is continually taking place to integrate the workforce and train across services to decrease the number of visits through the door of the same residents.

Q What impact would academy status have for Council budgets?

The Council has had a decreasing role in education with many schools buying the council support they require which would continue with academies. Academies are not always more successful and can be difficult for the smaller rural schools. The council is much more directly involved if a school is put into special measures.

Q How many Shropshire Council staff took part in the Big Conversation?

The information is available in the report.

Q What is the Council's approach to tourism given that it contributes £500 million to the local economy each year.

As a non-statutory service, the Council will be looking to the industry itself to be more cohesive and work together to support the sector. The same approach needs to be developed for the food industry. Our economic development needs to focus on key sites and anchor businesses and attracting businesses with higher wages and increased opportunities for young people, to assist retention within Shropshire.

There was concern that the perception is the top priorities won't get cuts, but there are already cuts proposed to housing support and CAB which impact significantly on the top priorities.

There was also concern about the decreasing back office staff that would be available to support new delivery bodies including Town and Parish Council, therefore devolving services without the expertise.

Clive was thanked for his attendance and answering all questions as fully as possible.

8. Any other businesses

No other items were raised.

Meeting closed at 8.30pm

Signed..... Chairman

Date: 2016