

SHOPSHIRE COUNCIL

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2018

2.00 - 3.10 pm in the Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury,
Shropshire, SY2 6ND

Responsible Officer: Julie Fildes

Email: julie.fildes@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257723

Present

Councillor Claire Wild (Chair)

Councillors Gwilym Butler (Vice-Chair), Karen Calder, Roger Evans, Alan Mosley,
Peggy Mullock and Dave Tremellen

54 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hannah Fraser.

55 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None were disclosed.

56 Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2017

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6th December 2017 were confirmed as a correct record.

57 Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

58 Member Question Time

There were no Member questions.

59 Report of the Financial Strategy and Budget 2018/19 Task and Finish Group

The Chair of the Financial Strategy and Budget 2018/19 Task and Finish Group introduced the Group's final report. She reported that the Group had met on four occasions over four weeks, the meetings were well attended and discussion had been useful. She observed that the Group felt that they could have added more value if meetings had taken place over a longer time span and a recommendation of the Group was that a further Task and Finish Group should be established which could work alongside the development plans for the 2019/20 Budget.

In response to a Member's question, the Chair of the Task and Finish Group stated that despite short notice most of the Portfolio Holders and Directors had been able to accept the invitation to attend the meetings and answer questions. She continued that the Group had received evidence from all the parties it wished to see.

In reply to a Member's request, the Director of Place and Enterprise agreed that paper copies of the Risk Assessment document for the purchase of the Shopping Centres in Shrewsbury could be distributed to Members of the Task and Finish Group. He explained that the document remained confidential and not for publication as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

The Chair proposed that to enable Members to further consider the report and the appendix to the report which had been tabled and was not for publication, press and public should be excluded and the meeting should go into private session. This was duly seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and Paragraph 10 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules, the public and press be excluded during consideration of the following item.

The Chair of the Task and Finish Group observed that the Group had identified the importance of identifying whether the Council had the appropriate skills, experience and capacity to deliver innovation and generate income through the Council's assets to close the budget deficit. Members considered the list of 'Economic Development Buildings, Net Controllable Costs, Economic Development Estate – Base Yield Analysis' provided by the Director of Place and Enterprise. Members commented that the list was incomplete as it did not contain the staffing and central services costs which had been requested. The Chair observed that it was not possible to understand how commercial services were performing without the relevant financial information. The Director of Place and Enterprise explained that current IT systems were not capable of providing a detailed breakdown, although it was anticipated that better information would be available following the changes to the financial system resulting from the Digital Transformation Programme.

A Member observed that the Committee did not necessarily need to know the full break down of costs to understand whether an asset was making a profit or loss and cautioned against requesting too much detailed information, which would not inform discussion. Members observed that it was a Councillor's role to provide targets for Officers for the management of the Council's assets and noted the importance of good management to maximise return as a counter to the decline in income.

The Leader of the Labour Group requested that it be minuted that he felt the work of the Task and Finish Group was a step in the right direction but he could not endorse the Financial Strategy.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group commented that he felt that the Terms of Reference had not been satisfied and as such he was unable to endorse the recommendations contained within the Report. He continued that he also believed that due to the tight timescales it had not been possible for the Group to drill down to obtain detailed information on funding for Highways Maintenance and Adult Social Care.

Members observed that any final decisions regarding funding had to be taken by Cabinet, the role of Scrutiny was purely advisory.

The Chief Executive advised Members of new delivery models making use of modern technology and investments in infrastructure to improve services and reduce costs for both the Local Authority and CCG and to generate finance for Adult Social Services. Members discussed the reasons for delays in implementing decisions taken before the Local Elections in May 2017. The Chief Executive advised despite some unavoidable delays, many of the projects discussed were progressing slightly ahead of schedule.

RESOLVED:
That the recommendations of the Financial Strategy and Budget 2018/19 Task and Finish Group be endorsed and the report taken forward to Cabinet.

The meeting was re-opened to the public and press.

60 Establishment of the Financial Strategy and Innovation and Income Generation Task and Finish Group

RESOLVED:
That, subject to the inclusion of risk management being added to the second bullet point under information required, the terms of reference for the Financial Strategy and Innovation and Income Generation Task and Finish Group be approved and the Group be established.

61 Work Programme

Members noted that the Council’s review of its estates function was due to start imminently. The Statutory Scrutiny Officer advised that topics for the Work Programme had been identified but it was also a dynamic document and responsive to immerging topics. He continue that it was anticipated that in March 2018 the Scrutiny and Overview Committees would be involved in a review of strategic topics to be added to each Committee’s Work Programme.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: