



<u>Committee and Date</u>
South West Shropshire LJC Thursday 22 nd February Marton Village Hall, 7pm

<u>Item</u>
1
<u>Public</u>

SOUTH WEST SHROPSHIRE LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE

NOTE OF DECISIONS AND ACTIONS STEMMING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 20TH JULY AT NORBURY VILLAGE HALL 7PM

Responsible Officer Mathew Mead
e-mail: mathew.mead@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 252534

Committee Members Present:

Shropshire Council

Nigel Hartin	Clun
Jonny Keeley	Bishop's Castle (Chair)
Heather Kidd	Chirbury and Worthen

Town/Parish Councils

John Croxton	Clunbury Parish Council
Jane Carroll	Bishops Castle Town Council
Valerie Whately	Bettws-y-Crwyn Parish Council
Felicity Bevan	Chirbury Parish Council
Jonathan Kemp	Bedstone and Bucknell Parish Council
Oliver Goode	Myndtown Parish Council
Godfrey May	Lydbury North Parish Council
Ralph Graves	Worthen with Shelve Parish Council
Jonathan Roberts	Clungunford Parish Council
Sandra Davies	Newcastle Parish Council
Jack Limond	Clun Town Council with Chapel Lawn

Officers Present:

Mathew Mead, Community Enablement Officer, Shropshire Council
Peter Davies, Shropshire Council Leisure Services Manager

Jean Shirley, Richard Whately and Ruth Houghton attended on behalf of the SpArC Charity

10 members of the public were in attendance

1. Welcome and apologies

Councillor Keely welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Councillors and members of the public for their attendance. Apologies had been received from Andrew Beavan Llanfairwaterdine Parish Council

2. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members were reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate. No interests were declared at the meeting

3. Note of the Previous Meeting

The Committee members agreed that the draft notes of the LJC meeting held on 9th February 2017 should be adopted as an accurate note of that meeting.

Mathew Mead said that the Public Transport Consultation discussed at the last meeting had now closed and the Council were reviewing its findings. There is now a new Portfolio Holder for Public Transport and the results of the consultation will feed into a new Public Transport Strategy which is likely to be launched in the autumn, so it may be appropriate to invite officers to attend a future LJC meeting

4. Update on proposals to merge Shropshire Fire and Rescue and Police Service Nigel Hartin

Nigel that this consultation had been launched by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), and investigated the potential for the Fire Authority to also come under the remit of the PCC to create efficiencies of operating the services. The two services are currently separate.

As the consultation is led by the PCC concerns have been raised by a number of authorities into the scope and timescale of the consultations, and the Fire Authority in Shropshire are not a statutory consultee. However they have held an extraordinary general meeting to discuss the consultation and commissioned their own independent review of the PCC business case and feel some of its assumptions are not correct.

Shropshire Councillors have discussed the consultation, and will be holding a scrutiny review into the process. They have delegated responsibility for responding to the consultation to the Leader of the Council

The consultation runs until 11th September and Town and Parish Councils and members of the public are encouraged to have their say. The PCC is proposing the take over happens in April 2018 but if the Fire Authorities object to the proposals the decision has to go to the Secretary of State for approval.

The Shropshire Fire Authority feel the PCC plans do not outline clearly where cost savings will be made, and point out that they have already made significant savings from their budget over recent years. Fears have been expressed that savings can only come from reducing the workforce, and concerns have also been raised about losing local knowledge if call centres are merged. So its important people in Shropshire have their say

5. Update on the future of the SpArC Centre and Shropshire Council Leisure Strategy

The Committee heard presentations from the two sides of the SpArC Centre campaign. Firstly, Ruth Houghton and Jean Shirley from the SpArC Community Charity provided an update on how the charity had progressed in the last 6 months and this was followed by an update on the Shropshire Council Leisure Strategy from Pete Davies Leisure Services Manager at Shropshire Council.

SpArC Charity update

Ruth outlined how the SpArC Community Charity had now been set up and registered with the Charity Commission. This had allowed them to set up their own bank account which makes managing the fundraising easier and gift aid can also be claimed. £70,000 has been raised and a grant from M&S was secured for a new pool cover. A group of trustees representing user groups and communities in the area is now in place and meets regularly to plan the charities activities.

The Charity responded to the draft Shropshire Leisure Strategy and were pleased to see SpArC included as a hub facility, but now look forward to seeing what level of funding it will receive from Shropshire Council.

The charity also commissioned the County Sports Partnership, Energize, to look at the current operation of SpArC and suggest key markets it should focus on in the future. The report produced some very interesting findings and alongside traditional leisure centre provision it suggested the centre should play a wider role in the general health and well being of the population of South West Shropshire. The finding of the report will also be shared with Shropshire Council who part funded the report and help shape the future delivery of the centre.

The charity is now looking at four main short term areas of work which are

- A) Starting a meaningful dialogue with Shropshire Council and Teme Leisure over the centres future operation, including what its key activities will be and how the contract will be managed.
- B) Making sure the essential maintenance of the centre is kept up, and opportunities to invest in energy saving measures which reduce running costs are followed up
- C) Working to draw up regular, year on year revenue streams through working with Town and Parish Councils and setting up a 500 club
- D) Using some of the charities funds to provide training to staff and school teachers so that more activities can be run at the centre – such as swimming assistant training for school teachers

The longer term objectives of the charity are to look at the management of the site; its infrastructure and to secure long term external funding through organisations such as Sport England. Initial conversations with this funding body have been very favourable.

The charity is keen to establish a strong partnership with Shropshire Council and the operator of the centre, as well as with Bishop's Castle Community College and local Primary Schools who all use the centre. The future of the centre depends on it being community focused.

Pete Davies Shropshire Council

Pete said that the situation facing the SpArC Centre had changed quite significantly in the last 18 months. Shropshire Councils initial financial strategy for Leisure had indicated a zero budget for SpArC from 2017 onwards, but partly down to the Councils finances being healthier, and the work of the SpArC Charity the centre was in a stronger position, but much work still needs to be done.

The revised Shropshire Leisure Strategy has reviewed SpArC in the hierarchy of leisure centres in the county and upgraded it to a hub, in part due to its rural location and difficulty in local residents being able to access other centres. But the role of the community in campaigning to save the centre and raise funds to support it had been a significant factor too. The strategy was formally adopted by Shropshire Council on 21st June

Funding equalling around £100,000 had now been agreed to replace the existing dehumidifier system, which was causing significant problems in the changing rooms, which will also be redecorated at part of the works. This should take place over the late summer period.

The next stage of looking at the future of SpArC will be to develop a 5 year business plan based on Shropshire Council funding and support from the community. This is a process other leisure centres are going through and a conference hosted by Energize on 12th September will start to look at how this process will be managed. At a local level more detailed discussions between Teme Leisure and Shropshire Council, along with the SpArC charity will also need to take place.

While Shropshire Council will continue to offer some revenue support to the centre, the exact amount needs to be established as part of the Councils long term financial plan. Support from other sources will be needed, and reducing running costs by looking at infrastructure improvements to the building also need to be considered. Sport England have published a new strategy for their funding and this indicates a need for leisure centres to provide a greater range of activities for the wider community and this too needs to be reflected through our leisure centres.

Shropshire Council recognises the community frustrations with the way the centre is managed and that it has limited opening times, and as we move forward we'll need to address these with the operator but also by working with the community and charity too.

6. South West Shropshire LJC grant scheme

The committee received a report on the amount of funding in the grant pot, and also agreed to maintain the existing grant criteria of projects being able to bid for up to £150. Committee members were encouraged to promote the scheme locally to businesses who may wish to contribute to the fund. New applications should be sent to Mathew to process

7. Youth funding report

The Community Enablement Officer presented to applications to the Committee, one from Worthen Youth club to support young people attend an outdoor adventure scheme; the second was from Lydbury North PCC to help purchase equipment for a youth group that meets in the village. Both projects were awarded grants by the committee, but it was recommended that the Lydbury North project was regularly monitored to check the numbers of young people attending the club.

Funding will continue to be made available through the LJC until March 2018, so local groups were encouraged to apply for funding as soon as possible

8. Public Question Time

Oliver Goode from Myndtown Parish Council gave an update on their parish project, which was looking at enhancing roadside verges to encourage a greater diversity of wild flowers. They were working on this project with the AONB and local volunteers, and had started talks with Shropshire Councils Highways team who also needed to play a role in the work as they cut the verges.

Examples from elsewhere in the country, such as Lincolnshire showed what was possible with some imaginative thinking. A public meeting to get wider support from other parishes was planned for August.

9. Date of Next Meetings and Future Agenda Items:

Suggested meeting dates

Planning Meeting – Thursday 28th September 7pm

Full Public Meeting – Thursday 26th October 7pm

These were approved by the Councillors. Suggested topics for discussion at the public meeting included Planning issues, such as the local plan review and planning enforcement; the new public transport strategy; and potentially the next stages of the Future fit review

Signed.....

Date.....