

# SHOPSHIRE COUNCIL

## PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2019

2.00 - 3.40 pm in the Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate,  
Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

**Responsible Officer:** Julie Fildes

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### **Present**

Councillor Claire Wild (Chair)

Councillors Joyce Barrow, Karen Calder, Roger Evans, Hannah Fraser, Cecilia Motley and Peggy Mullock

### **63 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**

Apologies were received from Councillors Alan Mosley and Dave Tremellen.

### **64 Appointment of Vice Chairman**

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Joyce Barrow be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the municipal year.

### **65 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

None were disclosed.

### **66 Minutes of the meeting held on 6th February 2019**

Consideration of the minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019 was deferred to the next meeting of the Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

### **67 Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

### **68 Member Question Time**

There were no questions from Members.

### **69 Digital Transformation Programme Update**

Members received a presentation from the Technology and Communications Manager on the My Shropshire Portal, customer relationship management tool. In response to a Members question he confirmed that pictures had been added to the pothole reporting system following advice from other Councils already using the system on optimising correct reporting

Member noted that work being undertaken as part of the Transformation Programme had been built into the programme and that it could be developed further in line with the development of the programme. He confirmed that it was anticipated that Street Scene would be incorporated into the system in July 2019. Members requested that the agreed schedule should be circulated after the meeting.

Members discussed the possibilities of expanding the system as different areas of personal information were added and the ability to link this information with other government organisations as the law allowed. The Chief Executive confirmed that the system enjoyed the same security levels as those employed by the police and security services.

Members noted that a Members portal was in development. Members suggested that Member Briefings on the system would be useful for all Members. In response to a Member's question, the Director of Workforce and Transformation advised that the system would be accessible on iPads, laptops and phones.

A Member requested that the Director of Workforce and Transformation should provide the Committee with written reports for future meetings. Members observed that the situation with the Digital Transformation Programme was changing so rapidly that in the time taken for a report to be written the information would be out of date and irrelevant. It was suggested that the Portfolio Holder would be invited to attend the next meeting.

## **70 Quarter 3 2018/19 Corporate Performance Report**

The Intelligence and Insight Manager introduced the Quarter 3 Performance Report 2018/19 which outlined the Council's performance against its key Outcomes for Quarter 3 2018/19. Members noted a number of the significant trends set out in the report.

Members raised concerns about the performance of the CAMs service. The Chair of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee reported that this was a jointly commissioned service between Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Councils and had been identified as a topic for the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme. In response to a Members query regarding the possible establishment of a Task and Finish Group to consider this issue, it was suggested that this might be a joint Task and Finish Group commissioned by both the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the People Overview Committee.

In response to a Members question regarding an increase in the numbers of looked after children, the Intelligence and Insight Manager confirmed that this was in line with the national trend. Although the Council's number of looked after children was close to the national average, because Shropshire previously had a lower than average number, the figures showed a greater statistical increase. Members considered whether the rise in the number of looked after children and increases in crime figures were linked to reduced services and support caused by Government austerity policies.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) That the key underlying and emerging issues in the reports and appendices be noted.
- ii) That the performance portal be noted.

**71 Quarter 3 2018/19 Financial Monitoring Report**

The Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance introduced the Quarter 3 – Financial Monitoring Report which had previously been considered by Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> February, and highlighted the significant trends outlined in it and the action taken to reduced predicted overspends.

Members discussed the projected increase in the Children’s Services overspend for the current financial year and the cost of looked after children. Members noted that the Service was proposing to reduce costs and make a potential saving of £50,000 per annum through the establishment of new in-county care homes. Members heard that the procurement process was still to be undertaken and it was expected that they would not be operational until the new financial year.

Referring to section 1.5 of the report which categorised £3.33m of £15.541m planned savings were categorised as red and further work was required within the service areas to ensure delivery, the Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance confirmed that these had been taken into account in the Financial Strategy.

In response to a Members query on the £6.9m saved through a wages and procurement freeze, the Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance advised the there would not be a sharp rise in expenditure at the start of the new financial year and he reassured Members that essential posts had been filled at the appropriate time.

Members observed that Children’s Services costs were difficult to predict. They noted that modelling had been undertaken to predict the required growth projection for the 2019/20 financial year. The Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance agreed that due to the large costs of individual looked after children a small change in numbers could significantly disrupt the model, he continued that the Adults Social Service growth projection was easier to model.

Members discussed the capital programme and the use and management of capital receipts. In response to a Member’s question the Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance assured Members that the management of capital receipts did not impact negatively on the delivery of programmes, he continued that where there were shortfalls other financing methods were available.

In response to a Member’s concern regarding the rolling forward of funds to the next financial year from the Broadband Project and the reprofiling of Empty Properties in the Public Health budget, the Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance agreed to provide Members with the reasons for funding being taken forward.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**72 2017/18 Complaints that took 50 days or more to respond to**

The report was introduced by the Intelligence and Insight Manager. Members noted that of the 1119 complaints received by the Council only thirty-four took longer than fifty days to resolve and that these were complex complaints. Seventeen of which had related to Adult or Children's Services and had to follow a statutory procedure. Some of the remaining complaints were made jointly to the Council and the NHS which had a longer time period for dealing with complaints.

In response to a Member's question, the Intelligence and Insight Manger explained that each complaint was unique, and no pattern of complaints had been observed. He confirmed that the Council had a procedure in place for vexatious complainants, but it was important to view each complaint on an individual basis and not immediately dismiss it because the complainant was known to be a previous vexatious complainant. He added that a case management system was in place to find the balance with people being able to raise concerns and officers performing their role.

Members discussed the potential role of the new software introduced through the Digital Transformation Programme and possible efficiencies through improved monitoring and better recording systems.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the Council received a high number of Freedom of Information Requests and the law provided limits to the use of resources in answering them.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**73 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/19**

Members reviewed the Committees Work Programme. A Member suggested that the Committee should review the Council's House Building venture on an on-going basis. She noted that the proposed management board for the project would provide governance but not necessarily scrutiny.

Members requested that the topic of Children's school transport be added to the Work Programme of the People Overview Committee.

**74 Date/Time of next meeting of the Committee**

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date: .....