



Communities
Overview Committee

10 June 2019

10.00 am

Item

Public

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4
FEBRUARY 2019
10.00 AM – 11.40 AM**

Responsible Officer: Amanda Holyoak

Email: amanda.holyoak@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257714

Present

Councillor Cecilia Motley (Chairman)

Councillors Nick Hignett (Vice Chairman), Ted Clarke, Rob Gittins, Roger Hughes,
Vivienne Parry, Keith Roberts and Leslie Winwood

34 Apologies for absence and substitutions

Apologies were received from Councillor Tina Woodward.

35 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members were reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

36 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2018 were confirmed as a correct record.

37 Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

38 Member Question Time

There were no Member questions.

39 Burial Capacity In Shropshire

The Bereavement Services Manager was welcomed to the meeting and invited to present an update on progress made since he last reported to the Committee in September 2018.

The report covered:

- Update on responses to the survey previously issued to Town and Parish Councils
- An update on the position with regard to bringing further burial capacity on line at a number of cemeteries in the county, including: Longden Road – new section and old section; Church Pulverbatch; Minsterley; two sites in the Shrewsbury area under initial review for potential cemetery development.
- Other actions taken and progress made included a visit to the Souldon Long Barrow near Wem and further links established with local clergy and funeral directors, and the Council's ground maintenance provider being instructed to refocus resource to those cemeteries that are being used for burials to enable an improved appearance.

The following issues were raised during the Committee's discussions:

- Housing growth and increasing population in the county and an ageing population.
- The Council's Bereavement Service was well trusted by the public and earned good revenues.
- The creation of new capacity at Longden Road Cemetery had been well received.
- There had not yet been a great deal of progress on the burial offer for other faith groups, but when new capacity came on line it might be possible to sell a block for other faiths.
- Volunteers met on a fortnightly basis at Longden Road Cemetery and helped to look after the site and many rural cemeteries engaged with Caring for Gods Acre.
- How demand would be managed on the eastern side of Shropshire

The Bereavement Services Manager showed some slides to illustrate that although there was no potential for extension of Longden Road Cemetery, it had been possible to develop within it to create new burial spaces with some double depth graves. 500 new spaces would be made available over the next ten years, which gave some time to identify a new site and develop it.

Members also discussed issues around capacity of Minsterley Cemetery which could not be extended and Church Pulverbatch Cemetery, which was not popular as an alternative.

The Committee felt that it would be important to re-run the survey in the Spring to try and gain a response from Town and Parish Councils that had not responded previously. This would help identify what capacity issues were. It was also suggested that the Bereavement Services Officer work with Place Plan officers to gain a good picture of availability of cemeteries in the county.

The Chair thanked the Bereavement Services Officer for attending the meeting and it was agreed that he attend the meeting in September to provide a further update.

40 Engaging Diverse Communities

The Statutory Scrutiny Officer presented draft terms of reference and work programme for an Engaging Diverse Communities Task and Finish Group (copy attached to signed minutes).

He reminded Members that Council had agreed a motion asking for an Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group to be set up to help devise a strategy for engaging with the diverse communities of the County and supporting them to be resilient. In outlining the proposed terms of reference he referred to other pieces of work linked in on Place

Plans and Rural Strategies, and the overlap with the remits of the Place, Health and Adult Social Care and People Overview Committees.

During discussion members said there was a view among town and parish councils that communication with Shropshire Council was not as good as it should be and that there was a need to understand how to improve it. They felt that the work of the Task and Finish Group would be wide ranging and lengthy, should be managed in bite size chunks and that communication should be at the core of the work. The approach of the Group would probably involve whole day workshops and regular review by the Communities Overview Committee would be necessary.

The proposed terms of reference were agreed and the Statutory Scrutiny Officer was asked to identify the lead officer for the Group.

41 Work Programme

The Committee considered proposals for its work programme and looked forward to receiving a report on public rights of way. It was agreed to progress with the Community Transport Task and Finish Group. The Engaging Diverse Communities work was likely to subsume a number of other areas and it was agreed that the Scrutiny Officer and Chair meet to update the work programme in view of this.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: