

SHOPSHIRE COUNCIL

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2019

2.45 - 4.35 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, Alan Mosley, Cecilia Motley and Peggy Mullock

14 **Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**

Apologies were received from Councillors Les Winwood, Dave Tremellen and Hannah Fraser. Councillor Heather Kid attended as substitute for Councillor Hannah Fraser.

15 **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

None were declared.

16 **Minutes of the meeting held on 5th June 2019**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5th June 2019 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

17 **Public Question Time**

No public questions were received.

18 **Member Question Time**

No questions from Members were received.

19 **Digital Transformation Programme Update (Pages 49 - 54)**

The Director of Workforce and Transformation referred Members to the briefing note which had been circulated prior to the meeting [copy attached to the signed minutes].

In response to a Member's question the Director of Workforce and Transformation confirmed that there were outstanding defects in the implementation of the DTP, primarily with the Business World System. A large number of these issues were due to users being unfamiliar with the new systems and an underestimation of the levels

of staff IT literacy. The Director of Workforce and Transformation confirmed that training was being provided, and assistance and support offered to users.

The Director of Workforce and Transformation confirmed that the Business World system had been purchased as a predesigned system which had been adapted to the Council's requirements. She continued that the way the system operated was completely different to the previous system, which was intentional. Staff had used the previous system for a considerable time and had found 'work arounds' to solve problems which were now being picked up by the new system and the 'work arounds' were no longer allowed.

Members raised issues of care staff not having adequate equipment to use the new systems, the Director of Workforce and Transformation advised that this issue was being addressed with the provision of additional machines.

The Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance reminded Members that the Business World system was now fully functional and there had been tens of thousands successful transactions and for the majority of staff the system was working well.

In response to a Member's query, the Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance agreed that delays in the full implementation of the new systems delayed the delivery of the predicted savings, but provision had been made in the project's budget for this. The Director of Workforce and Transformation agreed to provide details of the risk register for the DTP which had been considered by the Audit Committee.

The Director of Workforce and Transformation confirmed that provision was made for residents to continue to contact the Council in traditional ways, but pressure was being put on the Council by Government to move towards an internet-based contact system, and the infrastructure had been put in place to enable this through the DTP. The Chief Executive added that contact mechanisms were in place to enable easy public access to the Council and to enable the Council to be easy to do business with.

20 **Asset Management Strategy** (Pages 55 - 72)

The Head Business, Enterprise and Commercial Service gave a presentation to Members on the Asset Management Strategy [copy attached to signed minutes]. Members attention was drawn to Section 4 of the report which set out the objectives of the strategy and how they were managed. Members noted the importance of decisions relating to land and property being in accordance with the aspirations for the county and to support carbon reduction. He added that all partners were aware of the need to work closely to effectively manage the County's assets.

Members noted that the Council's estate had a net book value of £640m and generated £6m yearly income. The Head of Business, Enterprise and Commercial Services continued that the management of the Council's assets was under constant review, with estate strategies and business policies co-ordinated to develop blue prints for future development.

Referring to section 6.3 of the report, Members raised concerns that assets not generating income should only be retained where the value was expected to increase significantly. Members discussed the importance of community assets essential for local communities but with little monetary value. The Head of Business, Enterprise and Commercial Services reassured Members that the total value of assets, including non-monetary community value, was taken into account before any decision for disposal was made. Members requested that this was clarified in the report.

The Director of Place advised that there were four reasons for retaining assets:

- Need to provide a service or community benefit;
- Income generation in an operational block;
- For investment income not directed at holdings for the community; and
- To support the development strategy for an area.

In response to a Member's question, the Head of Business, Enterprise and Commercial Services explained that the in-house Estates Team made decisions regarding the disposal of assets, but these decisions were underpinned by advice from external experts. The Council's investment rating had now gone from inadequate to good due to the external experts providing better data and additional skills not available in-house.

Members asked for further information about the role of Members in the Asset Management Strategy. The Head of Business, Enterprise and Commercial services assured that Members were involved at all levels of asset management. The Chief Executive added that Members were key to the development of Place Plans and all transfers of assets needed to be set out in Place Plans. He continued that Member involvement was now of particular importance since the Community Enablement Team had been disbanded.

RESOLVED:

That subject to paragraph 6.3 being amended to include the community value of assets as discussed and an additional point on member involvement and the importance of place plans be added, the draft framework for the Council's new Asset Management Strategy and the objectives set out in section 4 of the report be endorsed.

21 Community Infrastructure Levy Task and Finish Group Report

The Chairman of the Community Infrastructure Levy [CIL] Task and Finish Working Group, Councillor Claire Wild, presented the report.

A Member raised concerns that Town and Parish Councils had not been represented in the report due to a number of meetings with them being cancelled. He received assurance that the details contained within the SAMDev and Place Plans documents would provide details of community requirements.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities, Place, Planning and Regulatory Services confirmed that he had met with representatives from the Shropshire Association of Local Councils [SALC] and they were keen to speed up the decision-making process for the allocation of CIL funding. He advised that good progress had been made with all twenty Place Plans, which would support the use of CIL funds for small projects. He continued that many of the frustrations were not caused by the decision-making process but the Council's ability to deliver the projects.

Members commented that any changes to the decisions making process for CIL funding allocation should be publicized to Town and Parish Councils. The Leader suggested that the creation of a flow chart explaining the process would be useful.

Members discussed concerns regarding decisions being delegated to officers on the distribution of CIL funds where there was disagreement.

Members noted that a dedicated CIL Officer had been recruited to work three days a week.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations of the Community Infrastructure Levy [CIL] Task and Finish Group be endorsed.

22 Dog Welfare Task and Finish Group

The Chairman proposed that a Dog Welfare Task and Finish be established, the Group's Terms of Reference had been circulated with the agenda. She observed that Shropshire had low levels of prosecution for dog fouling compared to other areas and there were safety concerns regarding stray dogs. In response to a Member's comment regarding the existing legislation for dog control, she replied that it was proposed that the Group look at the enforcement of the regulations and public education.

RESOLVED:

That the Dog Welfare Task and Finish Group be established.

23 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20

Members were reminded that the Agenda Planning Workshop would now be held following the meeting on 4th September 2019.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

24 Date/Time of next meeting of the Committee

Members noted that the next meeting of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee would be held at 2pm on Wednesday 4th September 2019.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: