

SHOPSHIRE COUNCIL

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2020

**2.00 - 4.22 pm in the Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate,
Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND**

Responsible Officer: Julie Fildes

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Present

Councillors Claire Wild (Chair), Roger Evans, Hannah Fraser, Alan Mosley, Cecilia Motley, Peggy Mullock, Dan Morris (Substitute) (substitute for Karen Calder), Brian Williams (Substitute) (substitute for Joyce Barrow) and Michael Wood (Substitute) (substitute for Leslie Winwood)

42 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that the usual committee clerk Julie Fildes was currently unwell and asked that the best wishes of the committee be passed to Mrs Fildes. This was endorsed by all members present.

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Joyce Barrow, Karen Calder, Dave Tremellen and Les Winwood.

Councillor Dan Morris substituted for Cllr Karen Calder, Councillor Brian Williams substituted for Cllr Joyce Barrow and Councillor Michael Wood substituted Cllr Les Winwood

43 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of interest made.

44 Minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on the 13th November 2019 had been circulated.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee held on the 13th November 2019 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

45 Public Question Time

There were no questions from members of the Public

46 Member Question Time

There were no questions from Members.

With the agreement of the Committee the order in which items was taken was amended.

47 Parking Strategy 12 month review of implementation

The report of The Director of Place had been circulated.

The Chair expressed concern and disappointment that the report had been circulated less than 24 hours before the meeting as this did not give Councillors and other interested parties enough time to consider the contents of the report. Several other Members shared her concerns and stated that this was becoming more of a problem with all committees.

The Chair proposed that the item be deferred to a meeting in April to enable a full year's figures to be included in the report. She asked that the report be published in good time prior to the meeting in order that Members and Town and Parish Councils would have enough time to consider the contents of the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Parking Strategy 12 month review of implementation report be deferred to a meeting of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee in April.

The Chair then asked for any commented regarding the report. The following suggestions were made by Members:

- Graphic should be clearer;
- A year on year comparison should be included to allow comparison of performance and the effect on visitor numbers;
- A summary of the key findings should be included at the front of the report; and
- An index of the appendices should be included to allow easy navigation of the report.

A Member asked that the traffic regulation order referred to in appendix 2 be progressed.

The Chair invited the Deputy Mayor of Ludlow to address the meeting. He welcomed the deferral of the report as this would give the Council more time to consider the report and to formulate a full response.

48 Highways Presentation

The Chief Executive reminded members that as a result of pressures to the overall budget caused by increases in the costs of social care the highways budget had been reduced by £10 million. He informed Members that he and Cabinet Members had been to Parliament to lobby for more funding.

The Chief Executive informed members that it was thought that the Council would receive additional money from the Pothole Fund as in previous years but that this had yet to be confirmed. A Member asked whether the Council would be required to spend the additional money in the current financial year. The Chief Executive commented that the exact conditions of the grant were currently unknown but given how close we were to the end of the financial year there would need to be the potential for some carry over.

The Chief Executive advised Members that a number of measures had been instigated to address the current problems which included: -

- A reallocation of managerial responsibilities;
- The Customer Service Centre becoming the primary point of contact for the reporting of highway faults; and
- An increase in the number of gangs operated by the contractor to ensure a quicker response to repairs.

A Member commented that in the past local highways managers had had a budget allocated to them that they could use for local works and asked whether this could be reinstated. The Chief Executive advised there was a central budget available for such works.

The Intelligence and Insight Manager gave a presentation (copy attached to the signed minutes) which gave some background on the highways issues in Shropshire

49 Report of the Financial Strategy Task and Finish Group

Members received the report of the Intelligence and Insight Manager which set out the report of the Financial Strategy Task and Finish Group.

The Intelligence and Insight Manager informed members that the Task and Finish Group had centred their work around adult and child social care and the transformation programme and commented that a future group would need to pick up topics such as climate change.

A Member commented that the increasing costs of social care must be addressed and that the County's MPs should be made aware of the problems and should be working to secure more funding from central government.

A Member commented that prevention played an important part in the reduction of spending on expensive social care and expressed concern that there would be an increase in demand because of cutting the budgets of those services which provided some of the intervention work such as the youth service, and that there was a need for figures to enable monitoring of the situation going forward.

A Member commented that the crux of the matter was that we did not get enough funding from central government and that we should be working to secure fairer funding. The Director of Finance and Governance stated that the Fairer Funding Review had been ongoing for about 4 years but had not met for the last 15 months.

He informed the Committee that the LGA and Society of County Treasurers were carrying out work on developing a case for fairer funding for Adult Social Care.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee consider the issues set out within the report and identifies topics to be included in its work programme and put forward for the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- ii) That a strong cross-party representation of Shropshire Council Members, accompanied by all Shropshire MPs, should travel to Westminster to lobby the Prime Minister and Government more widely for better and fairer funding for Shropshire Council. In particular on more equitable funding through the Public Health Grant, the impact on costs of delivering services in a significantly rural area, and the pressures on Adult Social Care and Children's social care and the impact this has on other Council services.
- iii) Benchmarking information on cost and activity should be presented to Performance Management Scrutiny Committee annually [this is expected to be the meeting of the committee in January of each year].
- iv) A Financial Strategy Task and Finish Group should be in place for 2020/21 for the development of the Financial Strategy 2021-2024.
- v) That the availability and allocation of appropriate adapted housing that helps people to be independent, is reviewed by the Council on a regular basis. Thereby ensuring that need and right home are aligned, and best use of funding and resources is achieved.
- vi) Performance Management Scrutiny Committee should move on from its regular view of Digital Transformation to a focus on the Transformation of the Council, in particular on the required culture change that need to take place.
- vii) The Council needs to continue to promote the benefits of all forms of prevention for children and young people and for adults, and the pursuit funding through local partnerships such as the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) should be a priority. Prevention and investment in prevention should also be part of lobbying to Government for additional funding and support.

50 Digital Transformation Programme Update

Members had before them a briefing note which gave an update on progress with the Digital Transformation Programme.

The Technology and Communications Manager advised Members that the Members Portal would be going live in March, which was later then planned but would enable Councillors to receive training on all aspects of the new systems in one go. In response to a question the Technology and Communications Manager that Members would be able to obtain data at a parish level through the Members Dashboard.

51 Quarter 2 Finance Report

Members received the report of the Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance which set out the projected revenue expenditure for the financial year 2019-20 as at Quarter 2 and the capital expenditure to the end of Quarter 2.

The Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance informed the meeting that since the end of Quarter 2 there had been a significant reduction in the projected overspend primarily as a result of the spending and recruitment freeze that had been imposed.

A Member asked why the Quarter 3 reports would not be considered by Cabinet until March as in previous years it had been considered at the February Cabinet meeting. The Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance explained that this was due to the fact that the figures would not be collated in time to take them to the February Cabinet meeting which was relatively early in the month.

A Member asked what effect the recent increase in the minimum wage would have. The Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance informed the meeting that officers were currently looking at this, but early indications were that it was not outside the figures included for growth.

A Member asked whether all the required savings would be made. The Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance informed the meeting that he was confident that the predicted overspend would be reduced to manageable levels and that he was working with Directors to ensure that savings were met.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Financial Monitoring Report – Quarter 2 2019/20 be noted.

52 Quarter 2 Performance Report

Members had before them the report of the Intelligence and Insight Manager which set out the Council's performance against its key outcomes for Quarter 2 - 2019/20

A Member expressed concern that average pupil attainment was down on previous years

A Member suggested that targets around published strategies such as climate change should be added to the Performance Portal.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Quarter 2 Performance report 2019/20 be noted.

53 Future Work Programme

Members considered the report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer which set out the proposed work programme for the year ahead.

Members agreed that the Finance Task and Finish Group would continue to meet and that it would consider whether any amendment to its terms of reference was required at its first meeting.

Members agreed that a Task and Finish Group to look at Highways Improvements be set up and that the Terms of reference be brought at the next meeting of the Committee for approval.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the content of the Work Programme be noted
- ii) That the Finance Task and Finish Group continue to meet and that it considers whether any amendments to its terms of reference are required at its first meeting.
- iii) that a Task and Finish Group to look at Highways Improvements be set up and that the Terms of Reference be brought to the next meeting of the Committee for approval.

54 Date/Time of next meeting of the Committee

Members noted that the next meeting of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee would be held at 2.00pm on 18 March 2020.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: