



### **Committee and Date**

Communities Overview  
Committee

25<sup>th</sup> January 2020

## **COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2020**

**VIRTUAL MEETING**

**10.00 - 11.42 am**

**Responsible Officer:** Emily Marshall

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### **Present**

Councillor Cecilia Motley (Chairman)

Councillors Nick Hignett (Vice Chairman), Ted Clarke, Nigel Hartin, Roger Hughes, Vivienne Parry, Keith Roberts, Tina Woodward and Elliott Lynch (Substitute) (substitute for Leslie Winwood)

### **1 Apologies for absence and substitutions**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Les Winwood, Councillor Elliot Lynch was in attendance as his substitute.

### **2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

None were declared.

### **3 Minutes of the meeting held on 28th October 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

### **4 Public Question Time**

A question was received in relation to Agenda Item 6, 2020 Floods. The question was circulated to Members before the meeting commenced and a response was provided by Steve Smith, Assistant Director for Infrastructure at the meeting.

The full question submitted is attached to the signed minutes and the web page for the meeting.

### **5 Member Question Time**

There were none.

## 6 2020 Floods

The Chair welcomed Steve Smith, Assistant Director of Infrastructure to the meeting who had been invited to attend to present his report which provided an overview of the flooding that took place throughout Shropshire in February 2020, and the partnership response to those floods. The report also examined the lessons learned from the response and suggested recommendations to strengthen Shropshire's readiness for any future flooding.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor David Turner to the meeting, although not a member of the Committee, Councillor Turner had been invited to the meeting to hear the discussion and ask questions.

During the discussion and responding to questions from the committee, it was confirmed that:

Substantial remedial works were needed across the County and that there were limited resources across Shropshire Council and WSP, but that it was intended to roll out schemes throughout the summer of 2021.

The flood response from Shropshire Council and the Severn River Partnership was a comprehensive approach, not just focused on rivers.

With regards to highways, additional resources were being found to clear a backlog of maintenance and that this was an area where historical issues were being addressed.

Field run off did cause problems and the way fields were ploughed had an impact on water runoff. All larger land holders had a responsibility and a role to play. As part of the work of the River Severn Partnership, the Council was working with larger land holders to see how some of the problems could be mitigated.

With regards to the funding of Flood Action Groups, the Assistant Director confirmed that most Flood Action Groups were voluntary and therefore received limited funding. The Groups worked best when affiliated to the National Flood Forum and engage with other agencies, for example the Fire Service and Environment Agency.

Most new Flood Action Groups were affiliated to the National Flood Forum and with help and support they were a valuable resource and a useful source of local knowledge.

The Severe Weather Plan would identify best practice and ensure that agencies are better prepared and would identify key actions and when these should take place.

The team were working to identify new sand bag locations in Ludlow.

In response to question relating to pressures on rural highways during flooding incidents, the Operations Manager, Highways informed the Committee that Shropshire Council were working closely with Highways England to ensure sensible diversions were identified. It was noted that when major arterial routes were

affected, often traffic ended up on unsuitable routes which causes damage to the highway. The Operations Manager assured the Committee that the team were working closely with Highways England to ensure a coordinated approach.

In response to a question in relation to the Customer Service Centre and the need for a separate incident desk, The Assistant Director confirmed that his team were working with the Customer Service Centre and weakness had been identified. For example it had become apparent that a dedicated line was needed for Councillors who were often able to provide a broader and holistic picture and in some cases solutions. The result of the report was that there was now a greater understanding of the need for a receptive public face. Also, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, a better document sharing approach had also been developed.

The question was raised as to what financial support was available to those that rented properties damaged by flooding. The Scrutiny Officer confirmed he would take this question back to finance and provide a response after the meeting.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee thanked all of those officers involved in the collective response to the flooding of 2020.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That Shropshire Council develop a Severe Weather Plan to consolidate its preparation across all departments for future extreme weather events.
- 2. That the Severe Weather Plan should also include a plan to create a reserve officer capacity, to be deployed when an extreme weather event occurs.
- 3. That Shropshire Council support the establishment of a wider grants team to deliver future grant funding to allow officers to focus on their substantive posts.
- 4. That Shropshire Council should fund the National Flood Forum to assist in community engagement and the creation of flood action groups across Shropshire to provide support for residents and businesses post flood events.

**7 Work Programme**

Members agreed the future work programme of the Committee.

**8 Date/Time of next meeting**

It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held at 2pm on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date:

