

A COMMISSIONING STRATEGY FOR SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

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1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the results of the consultation on the Council's draft commissioning strategy 'Commissioning for the Future' and proposes adoption of this strategy. This report also identifies amendments to the original consultation draft which enhance the effectiveness of the strategy and which are proposed to be incorporated into the final version of the strategy.
- 1.2 Also incorporated is an update to the Council's Procurement Strategy which reflects the principles in 'Commissioning for the Future'.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is requested to:

- A. Approve the commissioning strategy 'Commissioning for the Future' for adoption.
- B. Approve the update to the Procurement Strategy.

REPORT

3.0 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 The draft commissioning strategy has been developed out of work commenced in 2012 following the 'Strategic Commissioning – Our Preferred Response to New Challenges' paper approved by Cabinet in May 2012. The principles in the strategy have been developed through close working with the Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly (VCSA) and reflect many of the themes in the Shropshire Compact.

3.2 The consultation period for the commissioning strategy has been the full 12 weeks as recommended in the Shropshire Compact in order to allow sufficient time for response. The consultation documents have been made widely available and were circulated directly to key stakeholders. The updated Procurement Strategy has been consulted with the Voluntary & Community Sector Assembly Board, the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin procurement forum 'Cogs' and internally within Shropshire Council. .

3.3 The commissioning strategy aims and principles provide a real opportunity for a shift in the way that Shropshire Council works with its customers, communities, partners and other stakeholders in order to transform services in Shropshire.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 The commissioning strategy supports and complements the delivery of the Council's Business Plan and Financial Strategy 2014-2017 and sets out how the Council will quickly move to its new role as a commissioning body and the principles it will adopt in carrying out its business. The strategy recognises that it has been developed in a time of significant changes in the way that public services are funded and sets out how the Council will respond to that.

4.2 The Procurement Strategy update reinforces the relationship between commissioning and procurement and how both disciplines complement each other and in particular has value for money and cost savings as one of its key values and describes how these will be achieved.

5.0 Equalities and Human Rights

5.1 An Equality Impact Needs Assessment (EINA) has been completed and is attached at appendix A.

5.2 This consultation has been targeted widely at a range of stakeholders and responses have been received from individuals, organisations and representative groups.

5.3 We do not consider there to be any Human Rights issues arising from adoption of this strategy.

6.0 Background

6.1 The draft commissioning strategy has been developed out of work commenced in 2012 following the 'Strategic Commissioning – Our Preferred Response to New Challenges' paper approved by Cabinet in May 2012. Work has been undertaken with the VCSA to develop the key commissioning principles over a period of time and has been refined in light of the current and enduring financial imperatives and the transformation of the Council into a commissioner as opposed to a deliverer of services.

6.2 The report at Appendix B details the consultation methodology used and the responses received to the consultation. In summary the Council received 29 individual responses to the consultation. 19 responses were received online and 10 were written or e-mail responses. The largest number of responses was received from VCS organisations, followed by town or parish councils

Some responses were on behalf of a larger group of organisations. These were from:

- The Voluntary & Community Sector Assembly (VCSA) Board. The VCSA represents many voluntary and community sector organisations across Shropshire.
- Mayfair Community Centre – on behalf of Mayfair and the Community Transport Consortium
- Shropshire branch of the Federation of Small Businesses

6.3 Key themes arising overall include:

- The organisation needs to demonstrate that it is 'living the strategy' and that this way of working is embedded across the organisation
- Collaboration and joined-up working is key to the success of the strategy
- Stakeholders, and in particular the VCS and provider market, would like to see more detail around specific commissioning intentions in order to help them with their planning
- Monitoring and quality assurance are crucial – both in respect of commissioned services and evaluation of the effectiveness or success of this strategy
- There needs to be sufficient capacity and capability amongst staff, the market and in communities to be able to deliver the transformational change which is needed.

6.4 Respondents suggested some proposals or amendments to the strategy which would enhance its effectiveness. The following shows what is proposed to be actioned. The commissioning strategy attached at Appendix C also shows any amendments in red font:

- How will the Council and its stakeholders evaluate the success of this strategy? By articulating this it will assist with ongoing evaluation and will help to identify where further targeted work needs to be done. *Statements beginning "When we are successful..." have been added in to the sections in the strategy headed 'How will we do this?' and 'What will this mean for our Customers?'*
- It is important to now roll out communications around the strategy and what it means for the various stakeholders. *Further work needs to be done with local councils to understand their needs with regard to how this strategy impacts on their work. It is proposed that a Communications Plan be developed to support this roll-out.*

- Further detail has been requested on the relationship between locality commissioning approaches and strategic or countywide commissioning. Some respondents expressed concern that these two approaches may not work alongside each other. *It is proposed that the additional resources referenced in the strategy, which are currently being developed, will include case studies showing how practically the various commissioning approaches work together.*
- It would be helpful to explain what we mean by the phrases ‘service user’ and ‘customer’. *An explanatory paragraph has been added in to the strategy.*
- The importance of skills development and capacity building. *This is included in the strategy but needs to be a key part of our approach to delivering on the strategy.*

6.5 Feedback on the Procurement Strategy update has been incorporated into the final document attached at Appendix D.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 The commissioning strategy ‘Commissioning for the Future’ sets out how the Council will approach the transformational changes required to move towards a role as a commissioning body as opposed to a direct deliverer of services. The consultation has helped to focus on those issues which are most important to stakeholders and has shaped the further actions, set out above, which will embed effective commissioning in the Council's work.

7.2 The Procurement Strategy update reinforces the relationship between commissioning and procurement and how both disciplines complement each other.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Councillor Keith Barrow, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Reputation Management and Communications

Local Members This report is of countywide significance

Appendices

Appendix A – Equalities Impact Needs Assessment

Appendix B – Draft Commissioning Strategy Consultation Methodology & Responses

Appendix C – ‘Commissioning for the Future’ – commissioning strategy updated from consultation comments

Appendix D – Procurement Strategy update