



Communities
Overview Committee

21 September 2022

10.00 am

Item
Public

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21
SEPTEMBER 2022
10.00 AM - 12.02 PM**

Responsible Officer: Emily Marshall
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Present

Councillor Robert Macey (Chairman)
Councillors Ted Clarke, Mark Jones, Duncan Kerr, Christian Lea, Elliott Lynch,
Dan Morris, Vivienne Parry and Mark Williams

51 Apologies for absence and substitutions

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Nick Hignett.

52 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None

53 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd March, 4th May and 12th May 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

54 Public Question Time

None received.

55 Member Question Time

None received.

56 Draft Housing Allocations Policy

The Chairman welcomed Jane Trethewey, Assistant Director Homes and Communities, Laura Fisher, Head of Service - Housing, Resettlement and Independent Living, Melanie Holland, Strategy & Development Manager and Councillor Rob Gittins, Portfolio Holder for Digital, Data, Insight and Built Housing to the meeting.

Jane Trethewey provided an update on the draft allocations policy and scheme for allocations to Council owned stock and nominations to housing associations. Background to the need for the review was provided explaining that there were limitations to the current system and these included a lack of preference for people with local connection, limited differentiation for different housing needs and the current policy did not allow for discretion. The changes reflected the need for the Council to comply with legislation and this was detailed in the report.

In response to questions from Members of the Committee, the Assistant Director Homes and Communities confirmed that:

- With regards to individuals fleeing domestic abuse, it was clarified that an individual could apply to any local authority and local connection did not apply. Ukrainian refugees also did not need to show a local connection, discretion would be used. Prison leavers would also be classed as exceptional and discretion could be used and it would usually be based on the individuals family connections, preventing homelessness and preventing reoffending. The decision-making process around the housing of prison leavers was outlined, there was a dedicated officer who worked with prisons, local police and prison officers and there was a dedicated pathway linking in with prisons in the area. Each case was considered on an individual basis.
- In terms of joint tenancies, landlords are hesitant to introduce joint tenancy because of the wider implications of legislation, it could not be stipulated.
- The vast majority of individuals are able to make their own bids on a weekly basis and choose the properties they wish to bid for.
- With regards to housing association disposing of stock, Melanie Holland explained that housing associations were looking at whether the rental income would support the work needed to bring a property up to net zero level, energy efficiency levels. Housing associations disposing properties if the work needed to bring them up to standard was greater than the rental income. The Committee felt that this was a problem across the whole of the local authority area and members asked whether the council could lobby central government for stop gap funding to help the issue. In response the Portfolio Holder explained that as well as lobbying government all that could be done was to explore solutions. The Committee felt that this issue could be a work programme item going forward.
- The annual review of the policy would be added to the work programme
- With regards to re-registration and the timescales involved, it was explained that the Shropshire Home Point Team were undertaking this work, additional resources would be needed within the Team and an IT upgrade was also in progress. An update would be provided to the Committee as the projects progress. The aim for the changes to the allocations policy to begin was from April 2023. An update on the timeline would be provided to Members prior to the switch to help them deal with any enquiries from residents.

The Committee agreed that the issue of housing association disposals should be added to the work programme, the update on the timescales should also come back and the annual review should come back to the Committee if there were any proposed changes.

The Chairman thanked officers and Members for their attendance and the informative update.

RESOLVED:

That the feedback on the draft policy and scheme be noted.

57 20 mph Speed Restrictions Outside Schools

The Chairman welcomed Steve Smith, Assistant Director – Infrastructure, Victoria Merrill, Highway Policy and Strategy Manager and Connor Parkes, Safer Schools Program Officer to the meeting.

The Assistant Director provided an update on the approach that had been taken to determine the feasibility of introducing a 20mph speed restriction outside individual schools.

In response to questions and comments from the Committee, the Assistant Director, Highway Policy and Strategy Manager and the Safer Schools Officer confirmed that:

- Part of the delay to timescales was making sure that opportunities to undertake surveys were at the appropriate time and it was found that there was a change in behaviour post covid, a lot more people were driving pupils to school rather than using school transport. Data that was captured reflected an almost worse-case scenario.
- The team would continue to engage with members and working with the communications team to ensure that there is proper publicity. The team was close to being able to share a programme of which schools and at what stage in the programme.
- The Council's new School Travel Plan Advisor will work with schools to identify and mitigate the issues that are happening outside schools.
- The Committee agreed that this issue should be added to the work programme.

The Chairman thanked officers for their update.

RESOLVED:

1. That the approach that has been taken to determine the feasibility of introducing a 20mph speed restriction outside individual schools be noted.
2. That the prioritisation approach used to inform the forward programme of design and implementation be noted.

- 3. That the further development of an approach for communicating with schools and associated Shropshire Council local members, where a mandatory 20mph speed restriction will not be introduced be noted.
- 4. That the approach for the ongoing review and introduction of enforceable parking measures outside schools be noted.

58 Work Programme

The Scrutiny Officer outlined some of the key areas of work that the committee had identified and how these could be put into order and develop direction. The Scrutiny Officer also provided an update on the work ongoing to develop a Domestic Abuse Strategy and was pleased to report that the Council has now recruited a Domestic Abuse Development Officer and work had begun on developing the strategy. The Committee also requested an update on the authority becoming a white ribbon council. It was suggested that the Committee look at this as it was developed.

An update was provided on Community Transport and the Better Bus Fund. Rough sleepers was also identified as a potential area of work, not just around homelessness but also around addiction.

It was agreed that it would be useful to meet informally to look at potential areas of work and develop a focused approach.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

59 Date/Time of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Communities Overview Committee would take place on Wednesday, 23rd November 2022.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: