



### **Committee and Date**

Communities Overview  
Committee

25<sup>th</sup> January 2023

## **COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2022**

**In the Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury,  
Shropshire, SY2 6ND**

**10.00 am - 12.39 pm**

**Responsible Officer:** Emily Marshall

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### **Present**

Councillor Robert Macey

Councillors Ted Clarke, Nick Hignett (Vice Chairman), Duncan Kerr, Christian Lea,  
Dan Morris, Mark Williams and Roy Aldcroft (Substitute) (substitute for Mark Jones)

### **60 Apologies for absence and substitutions**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mark Jones (Substitute:  
Councillor Roy Aldcroft) and Councillor Viv Parry (Substitute: Councillor Nigel Hartin).

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Rob Wilson to the meeting. Councillor Wilson was in attendance as a substitute member of the Place Overview Committee. The Chairman also welcomed Members of the Place Overview Committee who were attending remotely.

### **61 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

None

### **62 Minutes**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

### **63 Public Question Time**

A question was received from the Shropshire Flood Action Group Forum (SFAGF), presented by Mr Bob Haddon Chairman and group member of the SFAGF. A response from the Portfolio Holder was read out by the Scrutiny Officer.

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

Petition

A petition bearing over 1000 signatures had been received from Mr Chris Lemon, in relation to Arriva's proposal to stop the route 20 bus in April 2023.

Mr Chris Lemon was present at the meeting and presented the petition to the Committee stating that the proposal by Arriva to stop the route 20 bus in April was a cost cutting exercise and would greatly affect many sections of the community. The petition asked Shropshire Council to support the route 20 bus which provided an essential service for so many people in Radbrook.

Councillor Bernie Bentick, local ward councillor was also present at the meeting and spoke in support of the route 20 service and the lifeline it provided to local residents. Councillor Bentick shared the concerns that he had received from local residents and reported that when it was announced that the service was to be withdrawn he had received many letters and emails from concerned residents and for many it was the loss of a lifeline to vital services and their social network.

Mr James Willocks, Passenger Transport Group Manager was present at the meeting and responded to the points raised. The Passenger Transport Group Manager provided background to the reasons that Arriva had given for the withdrawal of the service and reported that Shropshire Council were providing support for the service which was in excess of the revenue support received by the Government. This funding was due to end in March 2023 and a number of other services across the county were also affected. Shropshire Council were working with Arriva to find out what support is needed going forward from March 2023. The Passenger Transport Group Manager explained that the team were looking at services, including the route 20 and the long term transformation of public transport through a cross party elected member working group.

Danial Webb, Scrutiny Officer read out a statement by Councillor Roger Evans, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group and Member of the cross party elected member, passenger transport working group. The working group supported the work of Shropshire Council to ensure the future viability of all bus services in the county. Although due to commercial sensitivity he couldn't give specific details, Councillor Evans provided reassurance to the people in the area of the Route 20 that the need for a bus service in their area is a top priority and when services are announced early in 2023, they will address their concerns about the viability of the service.

The Chairman, Councillor Robert Macey, thanked the petitioner, Councillor Bernie Bentick, The Passenger Transport Group Manager and Councillor Roger Evans for their input and attendance.

#### **64 Member Question Time**

None

#### **65 Tackling Domestic Abuse**

The Chairman welcomed Laura Fisher, Head of Service, Housing, Resettlement and Independent Living and Wendy Bulman, Domestic Abuse Development Officer to the meeting.

Wendy Bulman provided an update on work within the Shropshire local authority area to fulfil the duties of the Domestic Abuse Act 2022.

In response to questions and comments from the Committee, the following points were confirmed:

- An update on White Ribbon Day was provided and the recruitment of a project officer, whose priority would be to start work on Shropshire Council becoming a White Ribbon Authority, the accreditation timeline was in place and now the Council had a dedicated resource to work towards this. In terms of this year's campaign the resources had not been available to do a large campaign, but there were messages going out via social media and this would improve now a dedicated resource was in place.
- In relation to funding, the Council was confident that funding would be available but the Department for Levelling Up were due to announce details soon.
- With regards to the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board, the five main partners were outlined and their role explained.
- The Committee requested that Councillors and those who came into regular contact with the community, receive regular briefings, updates and information on the types of things that they should look out for and how they could help anyone who might reach out to them. Wendy Bulman agreed to add this to her work.

The Committee welcomed the update and the work that was in progress and particularly the recruitment of additional resources, however some concern was expressed that more needed to be done publicly to show support for this year's White Ribbon Day. The suggestion was put forward that the Committee recommended that the Portfolio Holder to issue a press release to endorse White Ribbon Week and this was agreed. Laura Fisher responded that this was a good proposal and she would take it forward.

Wendy Bulman reminded Members that there is Domestic Abuse Briefing online which could be accessed and raised awareness and provided information on the how you could help someone who reached out for help.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the work completed to set up a domestic abuse local partnership board to date, be noted.
2. That the production of the needs assessment and safe accommodation strategy be noted.
3. To refer back to Cabinet, that a statement be made by a male representative of Cabinet, publicly expressing the Council's support for White Ribbon Day.

4. That a reminder be sent to Members about the online briefing and some information be sent to Councillors and Parish/Towns Council if appropriate (via SALC) to raise awareness of the signs of Domestic Abuse and where to direct individuals who need help.
3. That the progress made to date be welcomed and that the Committee receive reports back in the future.

## 66 Economic Growth Strategy

The Chairman welcomed Hayley Owen - Growth Programme and Strategy Manager to the meeting. Hayley Owen introduced two Members of the Task Force who were present to represent the Partnership. Richard Sheenan, Chief Executive of the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce and Mike Goodall, Development Manager for the Federation of Small Businesses were welcomed to the meeting. Hayley Owen presented the report, the purpose of which was to inform the Committee of the Economic Growth Strategy (EGS) review 2022-2027 and provide a draft framework of the supporting Action Plan and development of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and associated governance arrangements.

The Chairman also welcomed members of the Place Overview Committee who were present online and had been invited to hear the presentation and join the discussion. Adrian Cooper, Climate Change Team Manager and Tracey Darke, Assistant Director for Economy and Place also joined the meeting remotely to answer any questions raised.

In response to questions from the Committee it was confirmed that:

- Regarding a Carbon Reduction KPI, the Climate Change Team Manager stated that he would support the idea of measuring our impact in carbon terms, however it was explained that it was a difficult thing to measure but it would help to understand how businesses were coping with the challenge. Shropshire Council, The Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses were working together as part of several initiatives working towards providing advice and support to businesses to help them navigate the challenges of the climate change agenda and measure where they are starting from and also their progress in making improvements to their performance in carbon terms. This work would help generate data that could be used to form a KPI.
- A dedicated post to work across the council had been appointed, the post was funded through grant funding and showed the level of commitment the council had to this area of work.
- The Chamber of Commerce reported that there had been changes in the workforce since the covid pandemic. There was work underway in terms of broadband and mobile telephony to support the change in workforce however there was still work to be done in the area in terms of improving broadband and mobile coverage across the county. There were also issues around transport in rural areas, the example was given of young people who wanted

apprenticeships but were unable to get to work as they might not be able to drive or afford a car.

- The Committee congratulated the Growth Programme and Strategy Manager and her team for their work and it was clarified that although it was an ambitious piece of work it was a partnership approach and the engagement had been exemplary.
- The Task Force had been valuable in bringing information together and escalating messages and using the task force as one collective voice for Shropshire. With regards to rising fuels costs and what could be done to support businesses before they are forced to close due to higher energy costs, support and advice will be given to business but it was inevitable that there would be some losses. There would be a number of different approaches that businesses would take to overcome some of the challenges they are facing.
- Procuring locally was raised as an important theme and how much money was spent procuring locally.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. That a note of thanks to the wider partnership as well as the work being done by teams within Shropshire Council and in particular Hayley Owen, Growth Programme and Strategy Manager and her Team, be recorded.
2. That the Action Plan be brought back to the Communities Overview Committee to review.
3. That a Key Performance Indicator in relation to the Shropshire pound be developed.
4. That the Committee receive an annual review and update, including a review of challenges and any specific areas that the Committee may need to look at more closely (e.g. young workforce mobility), to which Place Committee members were welcome to attend.
5. That the development of the Economic Growth Strategy be noted and supported to progress to Cabinet.
6. That the approach of the Draft Action Plan framework be noted and provide insight and feedback to help inform its development through the Shropshire Economic Partnership and that climate change be included as a key theme within the Action Plan.
7. That the development of KPI's to support the Economic Growth Strategy and the Shropshire Plan and provide an overview and insight to inform the ongoing work to produce a dashboard of KPI's be noted.

- 8. To have overview of the Economic Growth Strategy through the Shropshire Economic Partnership and an annual report on progress, performance and monitoring.
- 9. That the Performance Management Committee be requested to look at small business and procurement to see if there is more that could be done in this area.

**67 Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Officer presented his report which outlined the Communities Overview Committee’s proposed work programme for the 2022-2023 municipal year. It was agreed that housing and transport were priority areas of work that crossed over with the Place Overview Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

That the proposed committee work programme attached as appendix 1 be approved.

**68 Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 10.00 a.m.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date: .....