



Committee and Date

Council
30th March 2023

Item

Public



Performance Management Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2021/22

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| Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder): | All | | |

1. Synopsis

Performance Management Scrutiny Committee looked at a range of key topics in 2021/22 which are summarised in this paper.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Shropshire Plan includes ‘Healthy Organisation’ as a priority outcome and the Strategic Objective that “We will ensure councillors are supported to advocate for their constituents but to also be ambassadors for the council”. This report shares the annual statement for 2021/22 for the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.3 The annual statements for each overview and scrutiny committee for 2022/23 will be reported to Council during 2023/24

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. Members are asked to consider and comment on the 2021/22 annual statement for Performance Management Scrutiny Committee.

REPORT

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. Effective Overview and Scrutiny is a feature of the Council's governance arrangements, particularly where the Council is operating executive arrangements. There are a range of factors that could result in risks to Council of not doing O&S effectively.
- Failure to challenge and hold decision makers to account.
 - Failure to link O&S work to the delivery of the council's priorities and risk management – failure to demonstrate added value
 - Failure to carry out thorough and appropriate research to make evidence-based recommendations.
 - Failure to engage partners and providers.
 - Failure to ensure that structures and models of operation are fit for purpose and match ambition and available resources.
 - Failure to ensure that O&S can operate as the voice of communities.
 - Failure to draw on member knowledge and experience to inform policy development.
- 4.2. To mitigate, tolerate or eradicate these risks, enablers for effective scrutiny include:
- Operating in an apolitical manner.
 - Clarity of vision and purpose
 - Overview and Scrutiny support availability, capability and capacity
 - Effective engagement and commitment by Members and officers at all levels, including Cabinet, Opposition Leaders, Scrutiny Chairs and Senior Officers who play a central role in setting the tone and direction
 - Robust Work programming and prioritisation of topics with clear objectives and expected impacts
 - Access to and availability of robust data and intelligence
 - Good relationship with partners and providers
- 4.3. Overview and Scrutiny Committees have remits that cover the breadth of the work of the Council, as well as looking externally including Health Services and provision through Health Overview and Scrutiny requirements.
- 4.4. Topics for Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programmes are identified based on several different considerations including an understanding of risks to the Council, employees, people who use services, to service themselves, and to communities. These may be identified through reviewing performance information and comparing with others, changes to national and local policies, budget information, feedback from communities and customers/service users, feedback from partners/providers, and reports from regulators.
- 4.5. During overview and scrutiny work evidence will be gathered that builds on this understanding to inform the development of conclusions and evidence-based recommendations.

- 4.6. The use of external peer challenge such as that offered by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny provides objective review and feedback about opportunities to develop the effectiveness and impact of overview and scrutiny.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. There are no direct financial implications associated with the annual statements of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees set out in this report.
- 5.2. Effective overview and scrutiny produce evidence-based recommendations. These can be informed by learning from best practice and an understanding of "what works" at other similar local authorities, as well as developing a robust picture of what the situation locally based on data, intelligence and insights. Where adopted recommendations can help with the efficiency and effectiveness of services that can be delivered differently, as well as informing the development of current and new policies.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. All reports to Overview and Scrutiny committees, as with all council committees, include appraisals of the impact of the report content on climate change.
- 6.2. Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programmes directly link to the Shropshire Plan priorities, including Healthy Environment which is built around climate change and carbon reduction, and the natural and historic environment.
- 6.3. Climate change and carbon reduction related issues are directly identified in the remit and therefore focus of the Place Overview Committee i.e.
- delivery of the agreed lower carbon footprint and emissions targets, including air quality, by the Council and its partners;
 - actions to protect, enhance and value Shropshire's our natural resources and respect the historic environment;
 - arrangements to safeguard and promote a clean and green environment;
 - the delivery of work to reduce landfill and waste;
 - management and development of the physical and digital infrastructure

7. Background

- 7.1. Overview and Scrutiny Committees report to Council annually as part of the organisation's governance arrangements. This includes the work that they have completed in the previous 12 months and the impact they have had through their evidence-based recommendations.
- 7.2. This report sets out the annual statement for 2021/22 for Performance Management Scrutiny Committee.

8. Annual Scrutiny Statements

8.1 Performance Management Scrutiny Committee

- **Financial Strategy task and finish group**

The committee formed a task and finish group to explore in greater depth how services were adapting to rapid changes in service demand and tighter financial constraints. It recognised how the council had responded creatively to deliver better services for less, focussing on the projects and initiatives that would redesign services to meet people's needs and deliver the Council's responsibilities. The committee agreed to forward these priority schemes for scrutiny by the respective thematic scrutiny committees.

- **Financial monitoring**

As well as scrutiny of the financial strategy through its task and finish group, the committee had regular oversight of quarterly financial monitoring, allowing it to monitor adherence to plan and to hold directors and portfolio holders to account for outcomes. The committee members tracked and monitored the impact of the Covid19 pandemic on budgets, and in doing so considered distortions in service demand and the high levels of emergency funding. It scrutinised the dispersal of emergency funding and highlighted the difficulty in setting budgets in the light of continued uncertainty about future funding or service demand.

- **Performance monitoring**

Throughout the year the committee received the regular quarterly performance monitoring report. Although this presented a useful snapshot of performance, the committee increasingly asked for more comprehensive performance information. Officers presented proposals for such information to be available online, updated in as the data became available, to allow all elected members to appraise performance and raise issues of concern. The committee continues to press the move at pace to deliver tools and access to the data vital to their delivering good oversight and scrutiny in holding decision makers to account.

- **Shropshire's Economic Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Framework**

The committee looked at the work of the Economic Task Force, and its twin role of supporting businesses during the pandemic and the orientation of its strategy to adapt to changes arising from the pandemic. The committee were appreciative of the work of the economic growth team in disbursing grant relief to businesses during the pandemic.

The committee recognised the framework identified both positive and negative impact of the pandemic, using these to inform and adapt its economic strategy.

It noted the interdependence of key infrastructure projects around Shropshire, and their salience in generating prosperity throughout the area. The

committee looked forward to seeing this work informing the development of the next version of the Economic Growth Strategy.

- **Complaints, compliments and comments**

The committee received the annual Customer Feedback report 2020/21 which sets out resident feedback to the council through complaints, compliments and comments. The committee noted the high number of complaints concerning highways matters and referred the matter to the Place Overview Committee. The Improvements to highways operations and performance, including better communications with residents became key themes for the Place Overview Committee in its work programme.

- **Climate and Ecology Bill**

In response to a request from Council, the committee convened a task and finish group to agree a response to the Climate and Ecology Bill on behalf of Shropshire Council. It agreed to endorse most of the Bill but could not support the proposal for a citizens' assembly.

- **The Shropshire Plan**

The committee endorsed the publication of The Shropshire Plan, the council's corporate plan. It approved of its thematic approach the underlying policy and service plan framework, and the ambition to track and monitor progress against the plan through rigorous, widely available performance management information. The committee stressed the vital importance of timely and comprehensive performance management information relevant to the priorities and the services and developments taking place to deliver them. They highlighted that it would be challenging to monitor and evidence progress and impact with the plan without them.

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

Performance Management Scrutiny Committee agendas, papers and minutes for May 2021 to March 2022.

Local Member:

All

Appendices

None
