



Shropshire Council  
Legal and Democratic Services  
Shirehall  
Abbey Foregate  
Shrewsbury  
SY2 6ND

Date: Tuesday, 22 March 2022

:

**Committee:**  
**People Overview Committee**

**Date: Wednesday, 30 March 2022**  
**Time: 10.00 am**  
**Venue: Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND**

You are requested to attend the above meeting.  
The Agenda is attached.

There will be some access to the meeting room for members of the press and public, but this will be limited for health and safety reasons. If you wish to attend the meeting please email [democracy@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@shropshire.gov.uk) to check that a seat will be available for you.

Members of the public will be able to access the live stream of the meeting by clicking on this link:

<https://shropshire.gov.uk/PeopleOverview30March2022>

Tim Collard  
Assistant Director – Legal and Democratic Services

**Members of the Committee**

Peggy Mullock (Chairman)  
Claire Wild (Vice Chairman)  
Roy Aldcroft  
Peter Broomhall  
David Evans

Nat Green  
Ruth Houghton  
Hilary Luff  
Kevin Pardy  
Kevin Turley

**Co-opted Members (Voting):**

Carol Morgan  
Sian Lines

Diocese of Shrewsbury (RC)  
Diocese of Hereford (CE)

**Substitute Members:**

Caroline Bagnall  
Roger Evans

Dan Thomas  
David Vasmer

Your Committee Officer is:

**Ashley Kendrick** Committee Officer

Tel: 01743 250893

Email: [ashley.kendrick@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:ashley.kendrick@shropshire.gov.uk)

# AGENDA

## 1 Apologies and Substitutions

To receive apologies for absence from Members of the Committee

## 2 Disclosable Interests

Members are reminded that they must declare their disclosable pecuniary interests and other registrable or non-registrable interests in any matter being considered at the meeting as set out in Appendix B of the Members' Code of Conduct and consider if they should leave the room prior to the item being considered. Further advice can be sought from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

## 3 Minutes (Pages 1 - 4)

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021 are attached for confirmation.

## 4 Public Question Time

To receive any public questions or petitions from the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. The deadline for this meeting is 5PM on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

## 5 Members' Question Time

To receive any questions of which Members of the Council have given notice.

Deadline for notification: 5PM on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

## 6 Stepping Stones (Pages 5 - 20)

Scrutiny of the Stepping Stones project, including:

- Rationale for project
- Objectives
- Achievements to date

Report from Sonya Miller, Assistant Director Children's Social Care & Safeguarding

Contact – 01743 254264

## **7 Youth Services**

To:

- Scrutinise implementation of recent review of youth services.
- Examine the effectiveness of the changes resulting from the implementation of the review findings.

Report from Francean Doyle – Early Help Management Team – TO FOLLOW

Contact - 01743 258558

## **8 Work Programme (Pages 21 - 38)**

Report of the Scrutiny Officer is attached

Contact: Danial Webb (Tel: 01743 258509)

## **9 Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the next meeting of the People Overview Committee will be held at 10am on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022.



## PEOPLE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2021**

**10.00 - 11.45 am in the Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND**

**Responsible Officer:** Ashley Kendrick

Email: ashley.kendrick@shropshire.gov.uk      Tel: 01743 250893

### **Present**

#### Shropshire Councillors

Councillor Peggy Mullock (Chairman)

Councillors Claire Wild (Vice Chairman), Nat Green, Ruth Houghton, Hilary Luff and Kevin Pardy

#### Co-Opted Members (Voting)

#### Co-Opted Members (Voting)

### 21 **Apologies and Substitutions**

Apologies had been received from Sian Lines, Diocese of Hereford and Councillor David Evans (who then joined remotely).

### 22 **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

### 23 **Minutes**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That subject to a vote of thanks to Karen Bradshaw for her service being added, the minutes of the meetings held on 29 September 2021 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### 24 **Public Question Time**

There were no questions from members of the public.

### 25 **Members' Question Time**

There were no questions received from members.

### 26 **Schools Rebuilding Programme**

Phil Wilson, Service Manager – Business Support – Learning and Skills, provided Members with an update on the Schools Rebuilding Programme; a ten year capital programme announced in June 2020 by the Prime Minister.

Two local schools had been identified for either significant refurbishment or replacement as part of the programme which will see 500 schools being invested in; Belvidere School in Shrewsbury and St. Andrew's CE Primary in Shifnal. Members were advised that a planning application for Belvidere was approved on 31<sup>st</sup> March and it was hoped the works would be completed within 24 months. It was hoped St. Andrew's would be completed by March 2024.

There was much to be celebrated due to the investment in local schools, including a project at Meole Brace, Featherbed Lane, Bowbrook and Sundorne.

## 27 School Exclusions

Nathan Jones, Service Manager SEND, provided members with a report on the levels of permanent exclusions in Shropshire and how this compares to the national rates of exclusions, which has been increasing steadily since 2012.

He advised members that the number of children being excluded who had special educational needs was above the national average; in 2020/2021, there were 75 permanent exclusions

Members noted:

- Exclusions are used as a last resort
- They have an impact on life chances and opportunities for gaining qualifications.
- Costs per pupil range from £2,200 - £39,200 in addition to standard educational costs
- There was now a focus on including and a review of processes to ensure access to full time education.
- A new draft exclusions policy was at consultation stage
- Collaborative working with different agencies is assisting in the understanding of factors driving behaviour in schools, providing resources to meet the needs of our children and enabling investment in their future.
- Covid has had an impact on children's social opportunities
- There was a gap in support for teachers to develop a strategy to deal with behaviours in the classroom.
- The School Improvement Team meet with schools to identify strengths and weaknesses in schools, pick up patterns and trends and look at alternatives to exclusion.
- Schools would be held to account if it is felt exclusions were not being managed properly.
- The vast majority of children who are excluded are already recipients of other services, such as social services.

Members requested that exclusion training opportunities were made available for School Governors.

Concern was raised regarding investment in the Tuition, Medical and Behaviour Support Service (TMBSS) and capacity. Members were advised that a new SEND free school in Bowbrook would alleviate pressures on organisations such as TMBSS. A defined integration plan would also allow spaces to be made available once placements had been found.

Members further requested that a progress update was brought back to a future meeting with regards to investment and capacity at TMBSS.

## 28 Corporate Parenting Panel

Sonya Miller, Assistant Director of Children's Social Care and Safeguarding gave a presentation on the role of the Council as a Corporate Parent and highlighted the Corporate Parenting principles, including acting in the best interests of children, promoting the physical and mental health and wellbeing of those children and young people and making sure they have access to services.

Members noted:

- As corporate parents, all councillors should seek to stay informed about children in the council's care, and care leavers. However, the establishment of a corporate parenting panel can provide a useful forum for regular, detailed discussion of issues, and a positive link with children in care councils and other forums.
- Members of the corporate parenting panel can also use their position to raise awareness of the role amongst colleagues, and provide support to the lead member for children's services

Members were encouraged to sign the pledge which would be coming to a future full council meeting and support the Panel as their work was hugely important and extremely rewarding. It was also suggested that the Corporate Parenting principles are circulated to members in the new year. It was felt that members should be reminded of their responsibility as a Corporate Parent and that they continue to have responsibility to care leavers.

Officers and Councillors were thanked for their support and the huge amount of work which had already taken place.

It was agreed that:

- The Corporate Parenting Board returns to Scrutiny in 6 months – May 2022
- The Chair presents a report of the performance progress and any areas of concern.
- The Corporate Parenting Board presents a report that evidences the Virtual School and Sub Group progress against Priorities

- The voice of young people is heard and demonstrate their influence on Service Development.
- The Corporate Parenting Board will provide updates in relation to the areas for development.
- The Corporate Parenting Board demonstrates activity and challenge of where the Board has held the partnership to account.
- The Corporate Parenting Board reports of the achievements of children and young people.
- The “Mind of My Own” app is shared with Members.

**29 Work Programme**

**RESOLVED:**

To agree the proposed committee work programme attached as appendix 1.

It was suggested that children as young carers be added to the work programme to see what support is available to them.

**30 Date of Next Meeting**

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the People Overview Committee will be held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 2.00pm.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date: .....



# Stepping Stones Update

March 2022

People Overview Committee



# Purpose/Scope



The Project is based on the North Yorkshire No Wrong Door Project which successfully improved the safety and stability of children and young people by a right people, right place, right time approach

The purpose of the Stepping Stones project is to:

- Reduce the number of children requiring high cost residential placements - at start this was 65
- Total saving/avoidance targets of £6.285 million
- Increase the number of children being able to safely return to live with their family or a foster family
- Provide a holistic, psychologically informed approach which provides wrap around, individualised support to children, young people and adults in families
- Reframe the view and use of residential care, where essential to a short term intervention rather than long term solution
- Address issues of placement availability and quality – National issue.

# Vision



The Stepping Stones project is based around a multi disciplinary hub with a residential setting attached to the project and with Family Group Conferencing model at its core.

Foster carers will be trained to enhance their skill-set to ensure children placed will be successful and sustainable.

The three main areas of focus will be

- Parenting support - with links to community support and an Early Help offer, stopping children becoming looked after.
- Edge of Care – multi disciplinary team will offer a whole family, systemic approach.
- Step down and out of high cost placements to foster care or home.

The project is an invest to save initiative, commenced April 2021, a year later than planned.

Investment is **£2,066 million** over 3 years plus **£150,000** capital for the therapeutic space.

# Why do children end up in high cost residential?

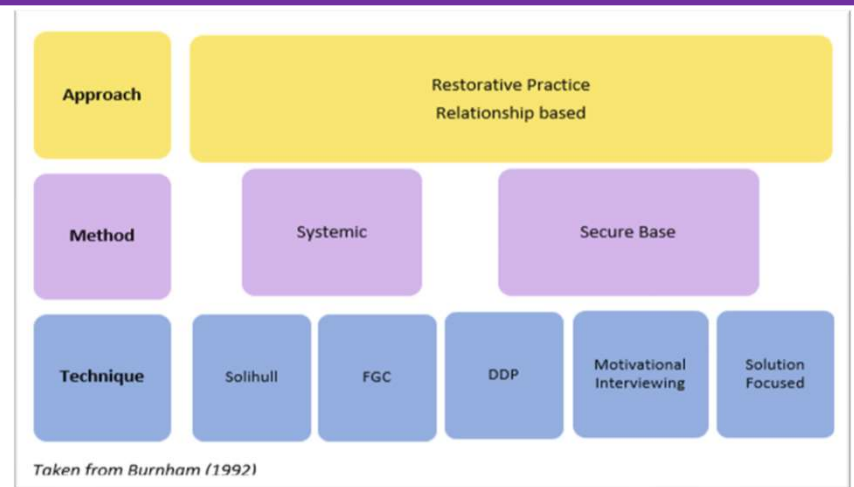


## Range of reasons:

- Complex disabilities, particularly those that result in physically and aggressive challenging behaviours, those that require very low sensory stimulation environments etc.
- Children who have experienced high levels of severe childhood trauma – who relationships are really difficult and they cannot manage the intensity of a family environment.
- Children whose needs have gone unmet over a number of years and have not had the right support at the right time to address the needs.
- Mental Health issues not identified and supported and children require high levels of support / supervision to keep them safe.

# Therapeutic Approach

The Stepping Stones model is a holistic, psychologically informed approach which provides wrap around, customised support for children, young people and adults.



Skills and experience will be disseminated across the Stepping Stones community via

training and skills sharing

The Team has so far attended training on: Restorative Practice, Systemic Training. Managing Challenging Behaviour, County Lines Awareness, Finding My Voice, Graded Care Profile 2, Motivational Interviewing, Supervision for Team Managers (Senior), SSCP Neglect, How to engage families, Team Teach Training, Solihull Approach and DDP training.

Clinical Psychologist and Speech and Language Therapists roles are yet to be recruited to.



# Phased Approach – Original Project Plan

Project is managed by a Project Manager, with a Steering Group chaired by the Project Sponsor, and reports into Residential Children's Board.



## Phase 1 – 2021-22

- Recruitment to specific key roles
- Development of pathways to access support
- Implementation of robust outreach therapeutic model, building on successful Havenbrook outreach model, including building work.
- Recruitment of therapeutic foster carers

## Phase 2- 2022-24

- Development of physical hub (including use of a Residential care home to support the project- dependencies with the Residential Growth Project)
- Progress work to step children down and out of care
- Monitor outcomes for children and cost avoidance savings for the service

# Phase 1 Milestones Achieved



Milestones - Phase 1		
Setting up the Stepping Stones Hub Team	Recruitment and employment of a range of posts to structure the team at the hub.	80% achieved
Training the Stepping Stones Hub Team	Training the recruited members of the team in a range of therapeutic approaches to facilitate an integrative model of working with children to address their traumas, needs and behaviours. And design a programme of training for new staff.	80% achieved
Facilitating pathways into the project	producing a clear process for the pathway for children at all stages of need – approaching care, on the edge of care and in care onto the project.	80% achieved
Formulating the Stepping Stones Therapeutic Approach	Designing an integrative therapeutic model which will provide wrap around support for young people, families and foster carers.	80% achieved
Conversion of buildings at Havenbrook	Conversion of buildings at Havenbrook for outreach work to be undertaken	50% achieved
Forging partnerships and collaboration working	Making links with professionals from a range of disciplines -health, education, career advice, mentoring etc. within the public, private and voluntary sector to provide a range of support and opportunities to young people on the project.	25% achieved
Monitoring the outcomes of the project	setting up a team to monitor the outcomes and success of the project and produce feedback to inform the project.	25% achieved
Recruitment of Stepping Stones Foster Carers	Marketing and recruitment of foster carers with specific skills and experience in supporting children with complex needs and challenging behaviour.	Not yet achieved
Training the Stepping Stones Foster Carers	Training foster carers in a range of therapeutic approaches to supplement their existing skillset and facilitate an integrative model of working with children to address their traumas, needs and behaviours	Not yet achieved

# Project Targets 2021-2024



The project aims to support children and families through multi-disciplinary working and outreach support, to achieve at least:

- **15** total placements being avoided (children not needing to become looked after)
- **15** step down from residential to internal foster care or reunification home

Overall aim to save/avoid **£6.3 million** spend from placements budget

## Year 1

The targets for 2021/22 were

- 3 avoidance, saving £358,100
- 3 step downs saving £340,300 (Total savings target of £698,400)

As at **28<sup>th</sup> February 2022** the team have exceeded targets:

**£1.961m avoidance/savings** reflecting the

- 26 cost avoidance cases,
- 6 successful step downs from residential or fostering placements to family and
- 2 short term, but ultimately unsuccessful step downs from residential or fostering placements to family
  
- Savings achieved in-year of **£1.961m** against a target of £0.698m means that the original savings target has been surpassed by **£1.263m**.
- The gross annual savings (full-year effect) would equal **£4.519m**.

This is against actual project revenue expenditure totalling **££608,863** (28<sup>th</sup> February 2022) with a forecast annual underspend of **£89,535** for year 1 (primarily due to delays in recruitment)



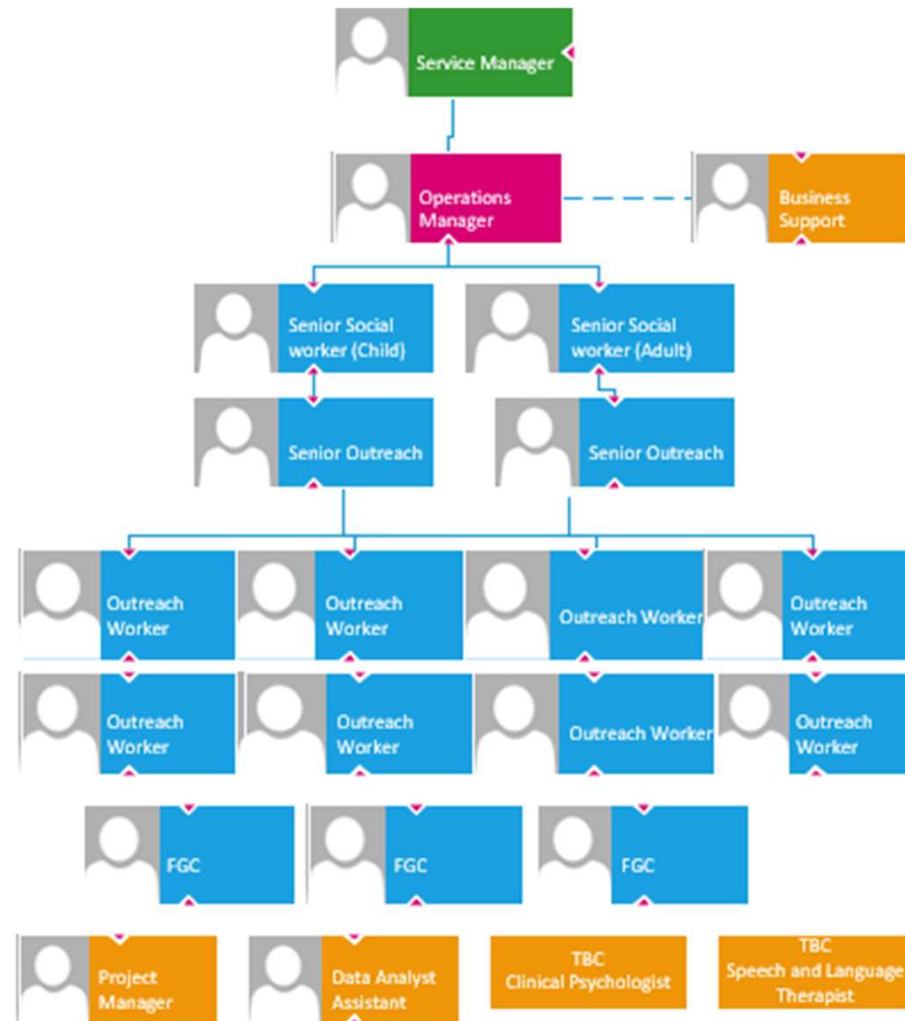
# Average Weekly placement costs used to calculate avoidance figures 2021-22



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Average Placement costs as at 31-3-21	Weekly
Average External Residential = £229,729 per annum	£4406
Average M&B External Residential = £48,852 (12 weeks assessment)	£4071
Average Internal Residential = £315,708 per annum	£6055
Average Internal Foster Care = £20,282 per annum	£389
Average External Foster Care = £42,390 per annum	£813
Average Supported Accommodation = £89,733 per annum	£1721

# Stepping Stones Team Structure



Page 14

- A Service Manager
- An Operations Manager
- 2 Senior Social Workers (adult and child focus)
- 2 Senior Outreach Workers
- 8 Outreach Workers
- 1 Data Analyst Assistant
- 1 Project Manager
- 1 Business Support

## To be recruited

- 1 x 0.8 Clinical Psychologist
- 2 x 0.5 Speech and Language Therapist

# Operations – (as at the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022)



## Achievement against Targets:

- 26 avoidance
- 6 Step down
- 220 children identified
- 220 consultations held
- 150 progressed for Stepping Stones support
- 66 children continuing to receive support
- 51 cases have closed without a cost saving
  - 14 = risk escalated
  - 17 = other 6 x CLA, 8 = CP, 1 = CIN, 2 = Assessment
  - 20 = non engagement

## Challenges:

- To recruit and have in post dedicated staff from partner agencies, delays in progress to achieve the multi-disciplinary hub.
- Ensuring 'by-in' from partners is not just participation, but financial and dedicated staff contributions.

# Multi Agency Working



- The Stepping Stones approach considers what is right for a child from a multi-agency perspective at the start of our involvement which is needs driven with the intention of removing exposure to additional trauma by having extensive placement moves through the system.
- Stepping Stones hold fortnightly hub meetings with partner agencies including, health, education, police and housing, the aim being, to share information in a timely manner about those families that have received consultations for Stepping Stones, and ensure that either via sign posting from our colleagues, or up-skilling of our outreach team we are able to access the right service and support at the right time for our families

# Future Developments



- Build on the success of the Model – significantly upscale it.
- The Upscale of the project to enable more children and Families to be reached, **targeting those currently in residential care.**
- Ensure the upscale is across the multi-agency partnership, in particular Health <sup>to</sup> ensure a Trauma Informed Practice Model that is supported by a clinical <sup>to</sup> expertise.
- Focus on prevention of escalation – a joined up approach. Use of Data Intelligence to predict and target the right children & families.
- Be a Local Authority that delivers on the vision that children are best cared for at home, where safe to do so, or within an alternative family environment.
- Reduce the number of children from High Cost Residential Placement from 64 to 15 (aspirational) 20 – 25 (achievable) over 5 years.

# Future Developments – What is needed....



- Council support for the Vision and Service Development from Members as well as Senior Officers.
- A system wide commitment to the Vision of children are best cared for in families. Requires system leaders to solution find to barriers eg: pathways for assessment and accessing services, recruitment etc
- The system to understand the financial impact of the current model in both childhood and adulthood and see the financial benefits of committing to the approach. Increased and wider breadth of financial modelling.
- A system wide commitment to the right support at the right time in a prevention culture of joined service delivery and in a Trauma Informed framework.
- Barriers of contribution of staff, skills, finance and pathways to be challenged and resolved.
- Agreement has been given to move to a Programme Management approach to develop and deliver an upscaled project.

# Overview of what we do with families:



- Intensive work with families (up to 7 days a week dependent on need)
- On the first visit we check with the family what areas they want support with, and then review after 12 weeks to support them in their view of what needs to change
- When family is in crisis we provide a timely response
- Consultations – enable us to gather a brief overview and decide if right family
- Work is based on a Consent led and meaningful engagement approach
- We will close our involvement at the right time for the child and the family
- Group supervision allows input from the team to work through hypotheses and approaches
- Collaborative approach – working with the social worker

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<b>People Overview Committee</b>	<u>Item</u>
<b>30 March 2021</b>	<u>Public</u>

## People Overview Committee Work Programme

### Responsible officer

Danial Webb, scrutiny officer  
[danial.webb@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:danial.webb@shropshire.gov.uk)  
[01743 258509](tel:01743258509)

### 1.0 Summary

1.1 This paper presents the People Overview Committee's proposed work programme for the 2021-2022 municipal year.

### 2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Committee members to:

- agree the proposed committee work programme attached as **appendix 1**
- suggest changes to the committee work programme and
- recommend other topics to consider.

### 3.0 Background

3.1 The work programme provides the opportunity for the committee to plan its work for the next twelve months. In planning its work, it should aim to produce a programme that features a combination of:

- scrutiny of council priorities, through its corporate plan (The Shropshire Plan)
- forthcoming policy proposals, as listed in the Forward Plan and from discussions with officers and administration members.
- community priorities that the public bring to the attention of elected members.
- priorities for action resulting from the council's financial and capital strategies.
- the work of our partners, for example the Marches Local Enterprise partnership or
- following up on previous recommendations from the committee.

3.2 In addition to the above, the council's financial strategy task and finish group last year considered the council's financial strategy for children's services. The group has forwarded the following topics to the People Overview Committee to consider as priorities for its work programme:

- Investment in early help programmes
- Social worker training and recruitment
- The Stepping Stones project

- Council-owned and managed residential care provision

3.3 Shropshire Council’s overarching corporate plan, The Shropshire Plan, is currently in draft stage and has yet to be approved by Council. The Plan, when approved, will contain:

- Corporate priorities which the People directorate will be responsible for delivering;
- Plans and policies which together will deliver the priorities of the corporate plan; and
- A suite of performance management information that will allow elected members to scrutinise both the delivery of plans and policies, but also to determine whether those plans and policies had resulted in the expected change in performance.

3.4 Shropshire Council’s Forward Plan of Key Decisions is attached as **Appendix 2**. The relevant section of the interim report of the Financial Strategy Task and Finish Group is attached as **Appendix 3**. There will be an opportunity for further scrutiny of the Shropshire Plan when it has been approved by Council in May this year.

#### 4.0 Next steps

4.1 Officers will present a refreshed work programme at each committee meeting. In addition, the committee will meet informally between committee meetings to discuss which topics they wish to scrutinise at future meetings.

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

None

**Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)**

All

**Local Member**

All

**Appendices**

Overview and scrutiny work programme

Extract from report of Financial Strategy Task and Finish Group – January 2022

Forward Plan of Key Decisions – March 2022

## Appendix 1

### Overview and Scrutiny work programme for municipal years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023

#### People Overview Committee

Topic	Objectives	Participants	Information required	Date
Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic	Understand how Shropshire Council is responding to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, with regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• early help</li><li>• safeguarding</li><li>• education</li></ul>	Executive Director, Children's Services  Portfolio Holder		11 Aug 2021
<b>Briefing</b> School Place Planning	Understand how the council forecasts the demand for school places, the funding available to build school capacity, and how it works with schools to increase capacity when required.	Service Manager, Business Support		21 Sep 2021
School Place Planning	Scrutinise <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the methodology for planning school places and</li><li>• the historical, current and planned capacity of primary, secondary and special school places.</li></ul>	Service Manager, Business Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Current and planned capacity in primary, secondary and special schools in Shropshire</li><li>• Comparison with neighbouring local authorities</li></ul>	29 Sep 2021

## People Overview Committee

Topic	Objectives	Participants	Information required	Date
School exclusions	Scrutinise exclusion rates by local authority.	Executive Director, Children's Services  Portfolio Holder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School exclusion policy</li> <li>• School exclusion rates by:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ year of exclusion</li> <li>○ primary/secondary</li> <li>○ mainstream/SEND</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Benchmarking with other local authorities</li> <li>• Commissioning of places in pupil referral units</li> </ul>	17 Nov 2021
Corporate Parenting Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the role and work of the corporate parenting panel.</li> <li>• Scrutinise the panel's work in achieving good outcome for looked-after children.</li> </ul>	Assistant Director, Children's Social Care and Safeguarding  Portfolio Holder		17 Nov 2021
School Rebuilding Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An update on the Government's Schools Rebuilding Programme, in relation to funding for schools in Shropshire.</li> </ul>	Service Manager, Business Support		17 Nov 2021
<b>BRIEFING</b> Stepping Stones	Overview of the Stepping Stones project, which seeks to move looked after children from residential into foster care.	Assistant Director, Children's Social		11 Jan 2022

## People Overview Committee

Topic	Objectives	Participants	Information required	Date
		Care and Safeguarding		
Stepping Stones	Scrutiny of the Stepping Stones project, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rationale for project</li> <li>Objectives</li> <li>Achievements to date</li> </ul>	Assistant Director, Children's Social Care and Safeguarding  Portfolio Holder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information required to be determined.</li> </ul>	30 March 2022
Youth services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scrutinise implementation of recent review of youth services.</li> <li>Examine the effectiveness of the changes resulting from the implementation of the review findings.</li> </ul>	Executive Director, Children's Services  Portfolio Holder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current youth work capacity and services</li> <li>Other data to be determined by the committee</li> </ul>	30 March 2022
CAMHS	Strategy Moorhouse GAP analysis	Executive Director, People  Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin CCG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	9 May 2022

## People Overview Committee

Topic	Objectives	Participants	Information required	Date
SEND written statement of action	Scrutinise progress in delivering the outcomes of the SEND written statement of action.	Executive Director, People Portfolio Holder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Written statement of action</li> <li>Ofsted inspection findings</li> </ul>	9 May 2022
Committee Planning Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify priorities for the 2022-2023 municipal year</li> <li>Outline objectives for identified priorities</li> </ul>	Executive Director, People Portfolio Holder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shropshire Plan</li> <li>Service plans</li> <li>Mid-term financial strategy</li> </ul>	Late May 2022
Ofsted inspection findings and action plan	<p>Understand the findings and recommendations for action from the recent Ofsted inspection of the council's services for children and young people.</p> <p>Scrutinise the council's proposed action plan to address any recommendations arising from the inspection.</p>	Executive Director, People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ofsted inspection findings</li> <li>Any subsequent action plan to address Ofsted's recommendations.</li> </ul>	June 2022
Virtual School Head	Overview of the work of the virtual school head for looked after children	Virtual School Head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demographic information on current virtual school cohort.</li> </ul>	June 2022
West Mercia Youth Justice Service			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information required to be determined.</li> </ul>	June 2022

## People Overview Committee

Topic	Objectives	Participants	Information required	Date
Safeguarding and community safety partnership annual report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of the objectives of the safeguarding partnership.</li> <li>• Identify potential areas of scrutiny for the committee.</li> </ul>			
Closing the gap - Pupil attainment	Scrutinise performance in Shropshire in closing the attainment gap of children from deprived backgrounds	Executive Director, Children's Services  Portfolio Holder	Pupil attainment, divided by pupil premium, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key stage 2</li> <li>• Key stage 4</li> <li>• GCSE</li> </ul>	Late 2022
Post-16 destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse the outcomes of school leavers.</li> <li>• Identify services to support school leavers not continuing into education, employment or training.</li> </ul>	Executive Director, Children's Services  Portfolio Holder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational outcomes for children aged 16 and over</li> <li>• Comparison with previous years</li> <li>• Benchmarking with other local authorities</li> </ul>	Late 2022

## Appendix 2

### Extract from interim report of financial strategy task and finish group

#### 8. **Medium-term financial strategy: children's services**

- 8.1 In September 2021 the group discussed the ongoing pressures on children's services arising from increased demand for its services. The group noted the significant increase in the number of children becoming looked after by local authority, rising from 504 in March 2021 to 571 in September 2022.
- 8.2 At this meeting the group received benchmarking data that provided a comparison of spending on children's services compared to both local authorities in the West Midlands and statistically comparable local authorities such as Wiltshire and Devon. Shropshire Council spends less per head on children's services than any other local authority in the West Midlands and has done so since at least the 2014-2015 financial year. In the latest year for which there is data available, the 2019-2020 financial year, Shropshire Council spent £719 per head of population aged 0-17, compared to a mean spend of £952 and a spend of £1,464 in Stoke on Trent. This suggested that there was limited, if any, capacity to cut costs further, although the group noted the high cost of agency social workers discussed in paragraph 8.6 below. Instead, to avoid increased costs through increased demand on high-cost services such as residential care, Shropshire Council would have to look to new ways of working.
- 8.5 The group discussed key strands of the council's work to bring down immediate costs and to redesign services that produced better outcomes at a lower cost.
- 8.6 ***Social worker recruitment***  
The group noted an almost £1 million expenditure on agency social workers, asking why Shropshire Council spent so much on agency staff. It heard that there was a national shortage of social workers. This shortage was a chronic issue, with the demand for qualified social workers rising despite the number of newly qualified workers remaining static nationally. As a result of this shortage, many social workers were instead choosing to work for staff agencies, affording them greater flexibility and often better pay. This had in part created a chicken-and-egg situation, with increasing shortages of qualified staff creating a growing market for agency staff.

The council has recognised that as a rural area with a low-wage economy, it is unable to compete with urban local authorities to recruit social workers. Although the council conducted a round-the-year recruitment campaign, it tended to attract social workers in their first year of practice, meaning that they both required ongoing additional support and could only take on limited caseloads.



The council had therefore embarked on a programme of training and developing its own workforce through apprenticeships. This was a long-term project that would take years before it produced a consistent supply of trained workers. In 2020 the council had recruited eight people to its apprenticeship programme, with a further six recruited in 2021.

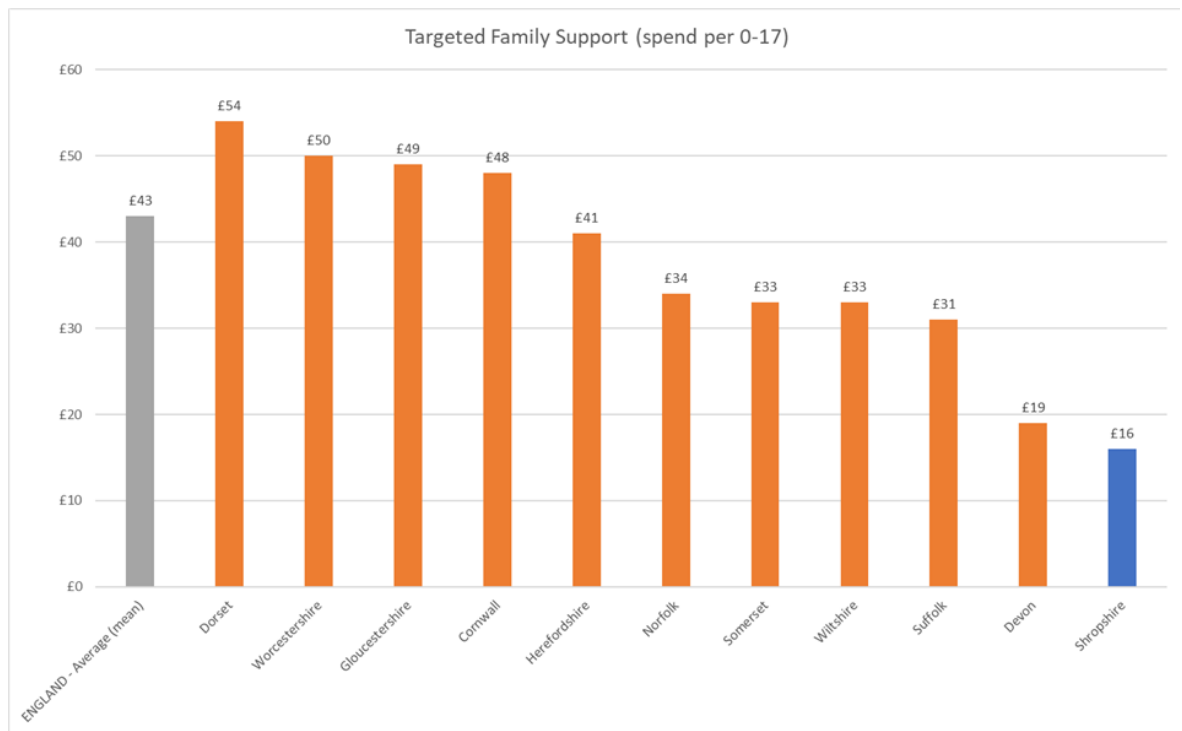
The group supported this approach. It recognised that longer-term investment in staff not only had the potential to reduce agency costs, but to also create a committed workforce with strong local knowledge.

The group therefore recommended that the People Overview Committee continue its ongoing scrutiny of the recruitment and development of social workers.

#### **8.7 Investment in early help**

The group heard from officers that reductions in funding for early help for troubled families had resulted in cases of neglect and other disfunction worsening to the point where more resource intensive support was required. This could be seen in increasing numbers of children becoming looked after, as well as an increase in the number of children being excluded from mainstream education. The reduction in funding was across the public sector, with cuts in funding for police community work and educational support in schools.

Benchmarking with other local authorities shows that in the 2018-2019 financial year, expenditure on early help in Shropshire was significantly lower than the England average spend of £43 per child aged 0-17 compared to a spend of £16 in Shropshire. This spend was half of that in similar local authorities, as can be seen in the chart below.



The group heard that spending had been allocated in the medium-term financial strategy to fund early help, with investment of just over £500,000 in the next financial year (2022-23) and £400,000 for the following year to create a preventative demand management model. The expectation in the strategy is that the increased investment would result in lower costs after 2024-2025

### 8.8 Stepping Stones

Perhaps the most significant invest to save project within Children’s Services was the Stepping Stones project. This project used restorative family therapy to keep children at risk of family breakdown out of residential care and in the family home. The project also sought to work with children to allow them to move from more intensive residential care into more mainstream residential care, or from residential care back into the family home.

The council has budgeted just over £2 million from invest to save funding to Stepping Stones, of which almost £500,000 had been spent in the year to date as at 31 December 2021. The project so far has resulted in 20 children avoiding residential care and 6 children stepping down from more intensive support or leaving residential care altogether, reducing care costs by £1.68 million in the year to date. The project has an overall savings target of £6.4 million.

The group noted that the project had a target of reducing the number of children needing high-cost residential care from 60 to 20. The group agreed that this would be a significant challenge for the local authority, with the resultant financial

risk to the council of investing in Stepping Stones project while also paying for greater numbers of residential care than planned for.

### 8.9 **Local authority residential care**

A 2018 report from the People Overview Committee had highlighted the high and fast-rising cost of private residential care. As Shropshire Council had few children's residential home placements, it was almost entirely reliant on the private sector market for residential care. This was a significant cost to the local authority, with packages of care costing up to £400,000 per year being increasingly commonplace. Following the People Overview Committee's report, the council embarked on an invest-to-save to increase its residential care capacity.

The increase in the number of children becoming looked after was a national issue, although the rise in Shropshire since the pandemic had been higher than in other local authorities. In addition, the children the council looked after had increasingly complex issues, resulting in a greater reliance on specialist residential care. This was again a national issue, which had resulted in increased demand for specialist residential care, which in turn had resulted in years of rising costs. It was now commonplace for residential care for the most complex children to cost £8,000 per week.

To date the local authority has set up two new two-bedroom children's homes for some of the council's most complex looked-after children. Although these homes cost the local authority £805 per child per week, they still provide an annual cost saving to the council of £44,000 per child in addition to being able to keep children within the local area.

The council is also currently building a further 4-bedroom children's home for children aged 16 and older, to provide supported but increasingly independent living for children as they transition into adulthood. If successful, this should have the additional benefit of reducing adult social care costs in future years.

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## THE CABINET FORWARD PLAN

This Notice, known as the Cabinet Forward Plan, sets out the Decisions, including Key Decisions, which are likely to be taken during the period covered by the Plan by either Cabinet as a whole or by individual members of the Executive. The Plan is updated each month and at least 28 clear days before a key decision is to be taken and is available from Council Offices, libraries and on the Council's Internet site ([www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk)). This edition supersedes all previous editions.

### Further Information

Cabinet is comprised of the following members: Councillors L Picton (Leader); S Charmley (Deputy Leader); G Butler, D Carroll, R Gittins, K Hurst-Knight, C Motley, I Nellins and E Potter

To view more details, please click on the following link :

<http://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=130>

A Key Decision is one which is likely to result in income, expenditure or savings of £500,000 or greater, or to have a significant effect, on, two or more Electoral Divisions. In two-Member divisions i.e. Oswestry and Market Drayton, these are to be treated for the purpose of a key decision as two divisions.

Members of the public are welcome to attend Cabinet meetings and ask a question in accordance with the Council's Procedure Rules. If you would like further details please email [amanda.holyoak@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:amanda.holyoak@shropshire.gov.uk) or telephone 01743 257714

All Executive decisions (except in extreme urgency) are subject to call-in and Scrutiny.

Documents submitted for decision will be a formal report, which if public, will be available on this website at least 5 clear working days before the date the decision can be made. If you would like to request such a document, please email [amanda.holyoak@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:amanda.holyoak@shropshire.gov.uk) or telephone 01743 257714

Documents shown are listed at Shropshire Council, The Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND.

## CABINET FORWARD PLAN FOR 1 MARCH 2022 ONWARDS

**DECISION MAKER - 9 March 2022 - Cancelled**

Date of Meeting	Purpose and Report title	Key Decision	Portfolio Holder	Report Exempt / confidential	Contact for further information re documents / report to be submitted to decision maker	Date Uploaded onto Plan
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**DECISION MAKER - 23 March 2022**

Date of Meeting	Purpose and Report title	Key Decision	Portfolio Holder	Report Exempt / confidential	Contact for further information re documents / report to be submitted to decision maker	Date Uploaded onto Plan
23 March 2022	<b>Shropshire Library Strategy</b>	Yes	Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture, Leisure & Tourism, Transport		Mark Barrow, Director of Place mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk	22 September 2021
23 March 2022	<b>Crowmeole Lane Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) controlled Bus Gate</b>	Yes	Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Natural Assets & The Green Economy		Mark Barrow, Director of Place mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk	17 January 2022
23 March 2022	<b>Update to Private Rented Sector Housing Enforcement Policy</b>	Yes	Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Public Health		Mark Barrow, Director of Place mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk	17 January 2022
23 March 2022	<b>National Bus Strategy - Shropshire Enhanced Bus Partnership Scheme</b>	Yes	Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture, Leisure & Tourism, Transport		Mark Barrow, Director of Place mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk	10 November 2021

**DECISION MAKER - 6 April 2022**

Date of Meeting	Purpose and Report title	Key Decision	Portfolio Holder	Report Exempt / confidential	Contact for further information re documents / report to be submitted to decision maker	Date Uploaded onto Plan
6 April 2022	<b>Gypsy &amp; Traveller Transit Site</b>	Yes	Portfolio Holder for Physical Infrastructure		Mark Barrow, Director of Place mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk	18 January 2022
6 April 2022	<b>Consultation on a Draft Policy for the Enforcement and Determination of Financial Penalties for Breaches of Relevant Letting Agency Requirements</b>	Yes	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Planning		Mark Barrow, Director of Place mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk	23 February 2022
6 April 2022	<b>Ofsted Inspection of Shropshire Council Children's Services</b>	Yes	Portfolio Holder for Children and Education		Tanya Miles, Executive Director of People tanya.miles@shropshire.gov.uk	1 March 2022
6 April 2022	<b>Application by Tasley Parish Council for Tasley Parish to be considered as a Neighbourhood Area</b>	Yes	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Planning		Mark Barrow, Director of Place mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk	17 January 2022
6 April 2022	<b>Land at Shrewsbury Flaxmill (Road Frontage) Compulsory Purchase Order</b>	Yes	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Planning		Mark Barrow, Director of Place mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk	10 March 2022

6 April 2022	<b>Project Gigabit</b>	Yes	Portfolio Holder for Digital/Technology/Data and Insight	Exempt	Mark Barrow, Director of Place mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk	6 September 2021
6 April 2022	<b>Chief Officers Pay Award</b>	Yes	Leader and Portfolio Holder for Policy and Strategy, Improvement and Communications	Exempt	James Walton, Executive Director Resources Tel: 01743 258915 james.walton@shropshire.gov.uk	3 March 2022

**DECISION MAKER - 27 April 2022**

Date of Meeting	Purpose and Report title	Key Decision	Portfolio Holder	Report Exempt / confidential	Contact for further information re documents / report to be submitted to decision maker	Date Uploaded onto Plan
27 April 2022	<b>Whitchurch Swimming Centre Feasibility Survey</b>	Yes	Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture, Leisure & Tourism, Transport		Mark Barrow, Director of Place mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk	10 November 2021
27 April 2022	<b>Swimming in Shrewsbury</b>	Yes	Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture, Leisure & Tourism, Transport		Mark Barrow, Director of Place mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk	10 November 2021
27 April 2022	<b>LTP 4 - Approval of Draft Plan and Public Engagement</b>	Yes	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Planning		Mark Barrow, Director of Place mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk	6 September 2021



27 April 2022	<b>Copthorne and Porthill 20mph Speed Limit Zone</b>	Yes	Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Natural Assets & The Green Economy		Mark Barrow, Director of Place mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk	17 January 2022
27 April 2022	<b>Draft Housing Allocations Policy for Consultation</b>	Yes	Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Public Health		Mark Barrow, Director of Place mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk	1 March 2022

Date of Publication - <Date>

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