



Communities
Overview Committee

15th March 2021

2.00 pm

Item

Public

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25
JANUARY 2021
2.00 - 4.55 PM**

Responsible Officer: Emily Marshall
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Present

Councillor Cecilia Motley (Chair)
Councillors Nick Hignett (Vice Chairman), Ted Clarke, Nigel Hartin, Roger Hughes,
Vivienne Parry, Keith Roberts, Leslie Winwood and Tina Woodward

9 Apologies for absence and substitutions

There were no apologies for absence.

10 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

11 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

12 Public Question Time

There were none.

13 Member Question Time

There were none.

14 Climate Change Draft Action Plan and Quantified Carbon Budget

The Chairman introduced Adrian Cooper, Climate Change Task Force Manager who had been invited to attend to present his report, which provided an overview of the Corporate Climate Change Action Plan and Project Pipeline 2020.

The Climate Change Task Force Manager responded to questions and confirmed the following:

- With regards to procurement, of the 51.5,000 tonnes of carbon produced by Shropshire Council, 46,000 tonnes was being generated by the goods and services that were brought in. The majority from the main council services, social care services, highway and building maintenance services. These were all areas where the Council could work with suppliers and amend procurement policies to flag up what will be an important part of the procurement process. Potential service providers will be asked to confirm their carbon footprint, what steps they could take to reduce it and informed that ultimately, they would not be employed if those factors could not be demonstrated. The climate change team were actively working with colleagues in the council's procurement service in order to ensure that climate change is captured as part of that agenda.
- The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Services and Climate Change assured the Committee that steps were already being taken, including increasing the energy efficiency of all Council buildings including libraries and leisure centres and also by generating renewable energy. Future plans and current projects were outlined.
- Future working arrangements - Carbon reduction and climate change were integral parts of all the council's future work, embedded in all of the Council's operations and although decisions were yet to be made on the future of the Shirehall, climate change would be at the forefront of decision making. Work had been undertaken to assess the impact of remote working on the Council's carbon footprint and it was noted that whilst travel to work had been reduced, the heating of homes, which the Council was responsible for whilst being used as a work place, had increased. Overall the indications were that remote working had created a saving for the Council's carbon footprint.
- Heat pump networks were more suited to dense, urban networks. Shropshire Council was working on a scheme to use heat from Battlefield Energy Recovery Plant in this way and government funding had been applied for. In terms of power, one of the issues was the cost of achieving a connection to the national grid. Potential ground, air and water heat pumps opportunities were also outlined.
- Climate Action Partnerships would be engaging and helping small businesses.

The Chairman and the Committee thanked the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Climate Change and the Climate Change Task Force Manager for their informative update.

RESOLVED:

That the Communities Overview Committee supports the Corporate Climate Action Plan and Project Pipeline 2020 (Appendix 1) as a 'live' document which will be updated frequently to reflect rapid changes in technology and resources which are expected to influence this work;

15 Public Rights of Way Update

The Chairman introduced Pete Banford, Interim Outdoor Partnerships Manager and Shona Butter, Rights of Way, Mapping and Enforcement Manager, who had been invited to attend to present a report which provided an update on Public Rights of Way. The Interim Outdoor Partnerships Manager explaining that Shropshire Council had a statutory duty to maintain and keep open, the third largest network of public rights of way in the United Kingdom. The challenges faced by the team were outlined and it was explained that these had been intensified by the Covid-19 pandemic. Challenges including IT issues arising from working from home, additional maintenance, due to increased use and additional restrictions around lone working and the steps taken to try to address the issues experienced.

In response to questions and comments, the Interim Outdoor Partnerships Manager and the Rights of Way, Mapping and Enforcement Manager confirmed that:

- Staff hadn't been officially redeployed, it was just an additional add on to the work load, the team still do the occasional delivery of PPE.
- In terms of boats, it was explained that the definition of stay local was open to interpretation and the team were not responsible for enforcement, the team work closely with the police, but they have limited resources.
- In 2019 - 729 maintenance issues recorded, this year so far that figure was 956 issues logged with two months of the year remaining. In terms of general issues coming in, in 2019 – there were 1673 recorded issues, this year there was a total of 2161, with two months of the reporting period remaining.

The Committee expressed their concern at the inability to reinvest income generated, back into the Service. It was therefore proposed and seconded that the income generated by rights of way be kept within their service

The Chairman and the Committee thanked the officers for their informative update and also the whole rights of way team.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Cabinet be asked to explore the possibility of public rights of way keeping the income they generate within their service.
2. That the update be noted.

16 Update On Provision Of Burial Space, Cemetery Extension And Service Related Developments.

The Chairman introduced Mark Foxall, Bereavement Services Manager, who had been invited to attend to present his report which provided an update on the provision of burial space, cemetery extension and other service related developments.

In response to questions, from Members of the Committee the Bereavement Services Manager explained that:

- Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC) had been a useful tool to reach Parish Council but there were issues where some parish councils may not have a grasp on service demand.
- CIL was a likely source for funding to extend cemeteries and that this was being explored in some of the parish and town councils.
- Shropshire Council owns the Crematorium and the entirety of the Emstrey Cemetery but it is currently leased to Dignity. The lease runs to 2041.

The Chairman and the Committee thanked the Bereavement Services Manager for his update and were particularly pleased to note the provision of burial space for the Muslim community. The point was raised that whilst it was reassuring to hear that additional burial space had been found on Longden Road, a new cemetery for Shrewsbury should be progressed urgently, particularly given the amount of development within the town and surrounding area and the Committee agreed that Cabinet should be asked to progress this as a matter of urgency.

RESOLVED:

1. That Overview Committee note the report on progress made and current position and identify any future course of action or work programme required.
2. That the Communities Overview Committee recommend that a new cemetery for Shrewsbury be investigated and progressed as a priority.

17 Shropshire Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme - suggested revisions

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer introduced the report.

The Chairman commented that when the finished allocations policy was drafted it should go to Cabinet, as it affected a large proportion of people and the fact that it has been revised should mean it goes to Cabinet for approval.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Communities Overview Committee agrees to forward the suggested changes to the Shropshire Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme to Shropshire Council's Housing Services Manager.
2. That the Communities Overview Committee review the draft revised Shropshire Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme before it is considered by Cabinet or Council.
3. That the Communities Overview Committee scrutinises Shropshire Council's Armed Forces Covenant, to ensure that it supports members of the armed forces fully, with particular regard to housing allocation.

18 Work Programme

The Scrutiny Officer confirmed that there were two recommendations to go to Cabinet arising from the meeting. The first recommendation was that Cabinet explore Public Rights of Way keeping the income they generate within their service and the second, urgent recommendation to consider the expansion of burial space in Shrewsbury, along with the Affordable Housing Allocation Policy.

The Scrutiny Officer suggested that this could be done by preparing a brief report utilising the standing Cabinet agenda item with a report back to the March Communities Overview Committee. Members agreed with this suggestion.

RESOLVED:

Members agreed the future work programme of the Committee, including a report to Cabinet picking up the additional recommendations agreed at this meeting.

19 Date/Time of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Communities Overview Committee would take place on Monday, 15th March 2021 at 2.00 p.m.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: