



Committee and Date

Cabinet

14 December 2022

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2022

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

Responsible Officer: Ashley Kendrick

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Present

Councillor Lezley Picton (Chairman)

Councillors Gwilym Butler, Dean Carroll, Rob Gittins, Kirstie Hurst-Knight, Richard Marshall, Cecilia Motley and Ian Nellins

82 Apologies for Absence

Prior to the meeting, the Leader encouraged Members and those listening online to sign the White Ribbon Pledge, a campaign to end violence against women and girls. Further information would be circulated after the meeting.

The Leader also advised that due to the late publication of reports, item 10, Shropshire Library Strategy, and item 12, Acton Scott Historic Working Farm, would be deferred to a future meeting. Therefore, item 11, Exclusion of Press and Public would no longer be required.

Apologies had been received from Councillor Simon Jones and Tanya Miles, Executive Director of People.

83 Disclosable Interests

There were no disclosable interests.

84 Minutes

Members noted that following the matters raised during the last Cabinet Meeting regarding Health Visitors in the North of the County and a matter concerning TMBSS in Bridgnorth, to clarify both situations a response from the service areas has been posted to both Sharepoint and to the public webpage for the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

85 Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

86 Member Question Time

Member questions were received from the following:

Councillor Heather Kidd in relation to South Shropshire Furniture Scheme. By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Kidd requested further information about the support which may be available to those living in South Shropshire in accessing furniture and white goods. It was agreed that the Portfolio Holder for Growth, Regeneration and Housing would speak with Councillor Kidd outside the meeting and have further conversations with the Housing team to look at options.

Councillor Peggy Mullock in relation to the cost of living.

The full text of the questions and written answers provided are available from the web page for the meeting: [Member Questions Responses Cab 30 Nov 22.pdf \(shropshire.gov.uk\)](#)

87 Scrutiny Items

There were no scrutiny items.

88 Financial Monitoring 2022/23 Quarter 2

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Resources presented the report which provided an estimate of the Council's year end position based on information over the period 1st April 2022 to 30th September 2022. Members noted that the projected financial position at Quarter 2 is still demonstrating a challenging position with ongoing cost pressures in Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care alongside the impact of inflation.

Concerns were raised regarding the level of reserves and that savings previously identified were not being achieved in the Place Directorate. A request was made for further information to be provided on overspends and unachieved savings in the Place Directorate and it was confirmed the request would be passed to the Executive Director of Place.

Further concerns were raised that overspend may not be entirely linked to inflation as it was felt a large amount of the overspend related to adult and children's care where savings had been reported due to a reduction in staffing.

Queries on reserves, where they were held and how they were used to balance service areas were received. The Executive Director of Resources gave an update on the level of reserves and how they can be used. He advised members that the team were seeking longer term solutions to address pressures being faced.

Members were also concerned regarding the number of vacancies including apprentices. Members were advised that, on speaking with businesses, this was a national issue; however WM Employers were looking at ways to make apprenticeships more appealing.

RESOLVED:

That Members:

- A. Noted that at the end of Quarter 2 (30th September 2022), the full year revenue forecast is a potential overspend of between £4.138m and £17.506m, with best estimates indicating an overall overspend of £10.998m;
- B. Considered the detrimental impact of this on the Council's General Fund balance and mitigating actions urgently required to avoid this.

89 Draft Empty Homes Strategy

The Portfolio Holder for Growth, Regeneration and Housing presented the report which provided an overview of the numbers of empty homes in Shropshire, why homes can become empty and how, especially long-term, empty homes are a wasted resource, the importance of them being brought back into use and how this can be achieved. Members noted that the draft Strategy has been subject to public consultation. Feedback has been considered, resulting in amendments set out in paragraph 7.5 of the report and included in the final draft brought to Cabinet.

Members welcomed the report, however requested further financial information to understand the economic benefit to the council. They noted that a pilot project had been carried out in Wem to bring a cluster of properties back into use. This had been successful, but it was noted that it was resource intensive.

It was suggested that Communities Overview Committee look into the matter of homes which are no longer on the council tax register due to their condition. This would then be brought back to a future Cabinet meeting as an update report.

RESOLVED:

To approve and adopt the draft Empty Homes Strategy, set out in Appendix I.

90 Review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2023 - 2027

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Regulatory Services introduced the report which set out the proposed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2023 to 2027, which has been updated taking into account the Council's priorities, representations made by the hackney carriage and private hire trade and changes in legislation and national guidance.

Members noted that there had been issues with private hire vehicles picking up passengers when they are not licenced to do so; however this could be acted upon once the policy had been adopted.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet approved, with any necessary modifications, the proposed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2023 to 2027, as set out in Appendix 1, and agreed that it is adopted by the Council and implemented with effect from the 1 April 2023.

91 Shropshire Library Strategy

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

92 Exclusion of Press and Public

93 Acton Scott Historic Working Farm

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: