

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Finance & General Purpose Committee Held at Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury At 6.00pm on Monday 30 September 2019

PRESENT

Councillors A Mosley (Chairman), P Adams, Mrs G Burgess, Mrs H Fraser, Mrs P Moseley, K Pardy, A Phillips & D Vasmer.

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Gary Farmer (Operations Manager), Andy Watkin (Responsible Financial Officer) and Carol Pullen (Acting Committee Clerk).

APOLOGIES

Councillor Ms J Mackenzie

31/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Twin-Hatters	All twin-hatted Councillors declared a personal interest in all matters relating to Shropshire Council.
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32/19 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 15 July 2019 were submitted and circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 15 July 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record.

33/19 MATTERS ARISING

(i) Ref: Min 21.19 (b) Councillor Grant Fund

The Responsible Finance Officer was still working on the figures and these would be reported back to Councillors in due course.

(ii) Ref: Min 23.19 Jeux Sans Frontier Charity & Account

The Mayor's Secretary had been tasked with contacting several Outdoor Activities Centres to see what was available in order for suitable young persons to be

identified through Young Shrewsbury and progress would be reported back to a future meeting.

(iii) Ref: Min 24.19 Shrewsbury Twinning Committee Accounts

The Town Clerk reported that the accounts had now been closed and the funds received.

(iv) Ref: Min 28.19 (i) Town Ambassadors

Following the success of the Town Ambassadors, this was to be continued next year.

(v) Ref: Min 28.19 (ii) Town Crier

Contributions had been pledged but the robes had yet to be ordered.

34/19 MOTION – WHITEHALL MEDICAL PRACTICE

A motion put forward by Councillor David Vasmer regarding the closure of Whitehall Medical Practice was discussed.

It was confirmed that the practice had now closed. Members discussed their dismay at the way the closure had been handled and the consequences on many of their constituents. Despite being allocated an alternative practice, many patients had not been able to register at other Medical Practices, due to neighbouring practices restricting the number of registrations to twenty per day. One resident had reported that having applied six weeks previously, they had still not heard anything. Others had been left having to queue to try and register.

It was felt that the consultation process had been poor and the CCG dismissive. Councillor Vasmer had written to them some time ago and as yet had received no reply. With the additional housing provision in the Preston Street and Oteley Road areas, members considered it short-sighted and appeared to leave many patients without care.

Concern was also expressed that the Walk-In Centre Contract was due for renewal soon and members were concerned over the future delivery of the Contract.

Members requested that the Town Clerk write to the CCG to register the Council's concerns and invite a representative from the CCG to attend a future meeting to discuss their medium and long term plans, given the rising population and additional housing developments.

RESOLVED:

- (i) Shrewsbury Town Council notes with great sadness the decision of the Shropshire CCG to close the Whitehall Medical Practice, resulting in many local residents struggling to find suitable and accessible GP facilities. This Council wishes to seek the assurances of the CCG that the medical welfare of those residents has not been unduly compromised as a result of this decision and that they all have a continuity of GP care that they are able to easily and affordably access.**

- (ii) That the Town Clerk write to the Shropshire CCG expressing Members' concerns.
- (iii) That the CCG be asked to attend a future meeting of Council to give an overview of their medium and long term plans.

35/19 PAYMENTS

Prior to the meeting, the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) circulated the Schedule of Payments for the period 1 July 2019 – 31 August 2019. No comments or concerns were raised.

RECOMMENDED:

That the schedule of payments passed for payment for the period 1 July 2019 – 31 August 2019 be approved.

36/19 PUBLICATION OF THE END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS

The Responsible Finance Officer reported that the 2018/19 End of Year accounts had now been completed and signed off by the External Auditor and were ready for publishing on the Council website.

RECOMMENDED:

That the 2018/19 End of Year accounts be approved and published on the Council website.

37/19 INTERNAL AUDIT

Following a visit by the Internal Auditor, members received the report and noted there were no areas of concern. At the Auditor's next visit, during December he would be looking at procurement and tendering processes.

RESOLVED:

That the Internal Auditor's Interim Report for the 2019/20 financial year be noted.

38/19 CLIMATE EMERGENCY

The Town Clerk presented an update on developing a Climate Emergency Action Plan. To achieve carbon neutrality will require consideration in many areas aside from energy efficiency.

A draft Action Plan was presented to the Committee including the following:

- Tender documents – request tenderers to provide their climate emergency processes & carbon footprint
- Explore solar/wind measures on Council buildings

- Planting vessels with self-watering reservoirs to reduce watering
- Encourage community tree planting
- Peat free compost – currently being investigated
- Editorial narrative – Admag etc
- Think Tank – Extinction Rebellion
- Planning & building regulations – consideration being given to all environmental aspects
- Reducing travel mileage for staff – pool/electric vehicle
- Fleet infrastructure
- Influence Britain in Bloom towards environmentally friendly themes

Councillor Mosley felt that alongside working towards the Council becoming carbon neutral, it should be an exemplar for the town. He asked that a column be included in the Action Plan for emissions breakdown.

The Responsible Finance Officer was able to confirm which of the Council buildings had high energy consumption. Currently energy is purchased from West Mercia Energy. Enquiries would be made about likely costs of purchasing 100% renewable energy.

Members were keen to explore the option of solar panels on Council buildings. The Town clerk pointed out that the only potential building would be Weeping Cross.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Climate Emergency Action Plan as presented be adopted.

39/19 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Capital Programme Report had been circulated prior to the meeting and the Town Clerk gave an update on current projects.

(i) Capital Programme List

Street Lights – completion was expected by the time the clocks alter at the end of October and have been well received. The Town Clerk confirmed they dim to 50% at mid-night representing an energy reduction.

Toilets – no further progress as awaiting Shropshire Council future plans for the redevelopment of the swimming complex.

Defibrillators – The defibrillator for Weeping Cross had now been ordered.

Castlefields Community Centre – still awaiting quotes for the kitchen.

Meet Place – Housing Plus are willing to contribute £20k subject to ratification of tenant benefit. There is some LJC money remaining which could possibly go towards a consultation to establish tenant mix.

Interpretation Boards – the Countryside Officer is currently working with the Marketing Officer to look at content.

Abbey Gardens – The Town Clerk was waiting to meet with the Ward Member to discuss options.

River Bed – ERD money has not yet been received.

Roundhill Green – work due to start on 16 November.

Dana Footpath – no further progress, awaiting SHS consent.

Castle Walk – site needs levelling and soil needs to be moved in phases.

Monkmoor – work due to start on 21 October, weather dependent will need around twelve weeks, replacing all weather pitch, installing new lighting, replacing fencing. Users have been offered alternative locations.

As a number of capital projects are progressing well, Councillor Mosley asked that the Council be more pro-active in publicising achievements by producing more Press Releases and including the Mayor and Ward Member in photo opportunities when opening facilities.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

(ii) BMX Tendering

A report from the Operations Manager was considered on the recent tendering exercise for BMX track refurbishment to include prioritising the resurfacing programme for 2019/20 and the future funding of Upton Lane BMX track which requires major modification. A budgetary line of £18,000 revenue, £22,000 BMX reserves and £7,122 other, had been included in 2019/20 Capital Projects for the refurbishment of the Council's existing BMX facilities.

Upton Lane facilities had been excluded from this tender process with any outstanding budgetary balances being considered to assist with future funding of a major refurbishment of this facility.

The following locations had been included in the tender document:

- Greenfield Recreation Ground
- Little Harlescott Lane
- Meole Brace Mary Webb Road
- Springfield Recreation Ground
- Shorncliffe Recreation Ground

The refurbishment tender had been advertised both locally by contacting surface specialists and electronically on contractfinder.gov.uk – the closing date being 30 August 2019. Two tenders were received.

Location	Tender 1	Tender 2
Little Harlescott Lane	£10,050	£19,530

(extra macadam coating)	£3,500	
Meole Mary Webb Road	£24,550	£20,623
Springfield Recreation Ground	£8,050	£14,120
Shorncliffe Drive Recreation Ground	£10,150	£13,591
Greenfields Recreation Ground (extra macadam coating)	£9,250 £3,500	£15,404

Members were asked to agree a priority order and agreed the following:

Little Harlescott Lane – to be refurbished as a priority, which has been part funded via external contribution with Contract awarded to Tender 1 at £10,050, excluding the macadam, which will be discussed at the next Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting.

Mary Webb Road – Contract be awarded to Tender 2 at £20,623.

Shorncliffe Drive – to be refurbished and track modified with Contract awarded to Tender 1 at £10,150.

Springfield & Greenfields – Town Council staff to undertake surface repairs.

RESOLVED:

- (i) **Little Harlescott Lane – Tender 1 at £10,050 be awarded the Contract.**
- (ii) **Meole Mary Webb Road – Tender 2 at £20,623 be awarded the Contract.**
- (iii) **Shorncliffe Drive Recreation Ground – Tender 1 at £10,150 be awarded the Contract.**
- (iv) **Springfield & Greenfields – Council Staff undertake surface repairs.**
- (v) **That a specific budget be established for the Upton Lane BMX in the 2020/21 Capital Programme.**

(iii) Footpaths

Members considered a report prepared by the Countryside & Greenspace Team Leader with a view to upgrading the footpath network. The footpath network in Shrewsbury is large and complicated, with a wide range of owners, designations, maintenance levels and usage. £100,000 has been allocated to improve footpaths around Shrewsbury in the Council's 2019/2020 Capital Programme. The Countryside & Greenspace Team Leader had been tasked with drawing up a plan for potential improvements, starting with areas on Countryside Sites. An appraisal of existing paths on countryside sites had been carried out using GIS systems to identify conditions.

Members reviewed the list of locations, supporting the following improvements:

Springfield
Rea Brook, Column Meadows South

Rea Brook, Column Meadows South, holly path
Rea Brook, Summit Close narrow section
Mousecroft, vehicle gate to Steepside kissing gate
Old River Bed Path

Monkmoor CW – allocated separate funding
Rea Brook, (wheelchair access) – further mapping required
Hillside Drive – still in developer ownership, Section 106 money not received
Old Shrewsbury Canal – further mapping and possible match funding from Shropshire Council
Rea Brook, Blue bridge to Gold course path – further mapping as this is Shropshire Council land.

Further work would be undertaken to develop tender specifications for these sites.

For easier understanding of locations the Countryside & Greenspace Team Leader will be asked to plot footpath works.

The Operations Manager was asked to contact all Councillors to establish any further sites for consideration.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and a further report be presented to the Committee once the tender process has been completed.

(iv) County Ground Pavilion

The Town Clerk updated members on the Pavilion on the County Ground. £400,000 has been budgeted to upgrade the Pavilion but the work is expected to cost in the region of £550,000 to include disability changing facilities and changing facilities for girls. English Cricket Board are keen to be involved but would require security of tenure before committing to any funding. The Town Clerk is looking at developing a Management Agreement and has sought advice from Energize.

Councillor Pardy expressed concern about the exclusive use of the land and the danger of the public being excluded. Councillor Mosley stressed the need to ensure ongoing public use as well as attracting funding and the need to maintain this land as a sporting facility.

Members did however acknowledge the need for some management agreement to give outside funders comfort in future usage.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) That the Council supports the development of a multifunctional facility with independent management agreement.**
- (ii) That the Town Clerk continue discussions with external funders.**

40/19 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS TENDERING

The Town Clerk presented Christmas Lights tendering proposals for the provision of Christmas lights from 2020-2022. Tenders must be received by the end of January 2020. Shortlisted tenderers will be invited to give a presentation to Officers mid-Feb with Contract approval at Full Council on 16 March. The budget for the last nine years had been £45k. Members were asked to consider a budget of up to £60k in line with inflationary costs of 27.9% over the same period.

In line with the Council's commitment to climate change, Members were mindful that in making the decision Officers give consideration to local provision for installation and maintenance.

The Town Clerk confirmed that all the lights will be LED.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That a budget of up to £60,000 be allocated for the provision of Christmas Lights in the revenue budget from 2020/21 financial year.**
- (ii) That the tender proposal be approved for publication.**

41/19 CCTV

It had been recognised that CCTV in the town was vital and Shropshire Council will now continue to fund its provision for the next three years. During this period they will be looking at more efficient ways of monitoring and running the service. The Council has made a one off contribution of £16,000 on this basis.

Councillor Vasmer queried whether mobile CCTV could be installed on Castle Walk.

The Town Clerk reported that there are problems with the power source but the Team Shrewsbury Partnership were looking into this and whether new ducts could be funded through the PCC.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

42/19 ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE

The following changes to the Assets of Community Value were noted:

- (i) Meole Memorial Hall – Added to the Register**
- (ii) Grange Youth Centre – Added to the Register**
- (iii) Quarry Pool – Removed from Register (5 year period of listing has expired)**

Members discussed the need to continue the Quarry Pool as an Asset of Community Value particularly in light of there being no future plans available.

Members also discussed the need to register the Sports Village also, particularly in light of current concerns about loss of sporting facilities for a school.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) That an application to register the Quarry Pool as an Asset of Community Value be submitted.**

- (ii) That an application to register Sundorne Sports Village & sporting facilities as an Asset of Community Value be submitted.**