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1. Introduction

As Chairman of the Scrutiny Assembly and Scrutiny Management Board, I am pleased to present the Scrutiny Annual Report for 2010-11.

Last year saw the establishment of seven new Scrutiny Committees linked to the Council's priority areas, and this report provides a snap shot of the hard work and successes of those involved. A key issue for the people of Telford and Wrekin is the planned reconfiguration of the acute hospital services by the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust. The Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee conducted robust scrutiny of the proposals, raising concerns on behalf of the public, to conclude that the proposals were in the best interest of the people of Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire. I would like to commend the elected members and co-optees involved in this work.

Looking ahead, in common with other local authorities, Telford & Wrekin is having to make huge reductions in spending in order to balance its budget and arguably there has never been a more important time for elected members who are not part of the 'executive' to engage in scrutiny of the decision making process.

As Telford & Wrekin progresses towards becoming a Co-operative Council, Scrutiny's commitment this year is to engage openly with local people, to involve our partners and residents in our work and to challenge which, and how, services will be funded and delivered by the Council and its partners. We have made a commitment that Scrutiny Committee meetings will be held in public to make the process open and transparent.

We have made changes to the Scrutiny structures so that we have five service themed Scrutiny Committees which will look at services within their area, overseen by the Scrutiny Management Board which will monitor the delivery of the work programme and review issues which are of strategic importance such as the Co-operative Commission.

Key challenges will be scrutiny of the budget priorities leading up to, and following, the publication of the draft budget, scrutiny of health and adult care and support in the light of the NHS reforms and continued monitoring of the development of the Full Business Case for the hospital reconfiguration.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the work that Scrutiny has undertaken and I commend this Scrutiny Annual Report to you.

*Cllr. Derek White
Lead Scrutiny Member*

2. Purpose of Scrutiny

The concept of scrutiny in local authorities was formally introduced by the Local Government Act 2000. There are 54 elected members on Telford & Wrekin Council, but just nine of these make up a Cabinet which is the main decision making body of the Council. This places a lot of responsibility with a small number of elected members.

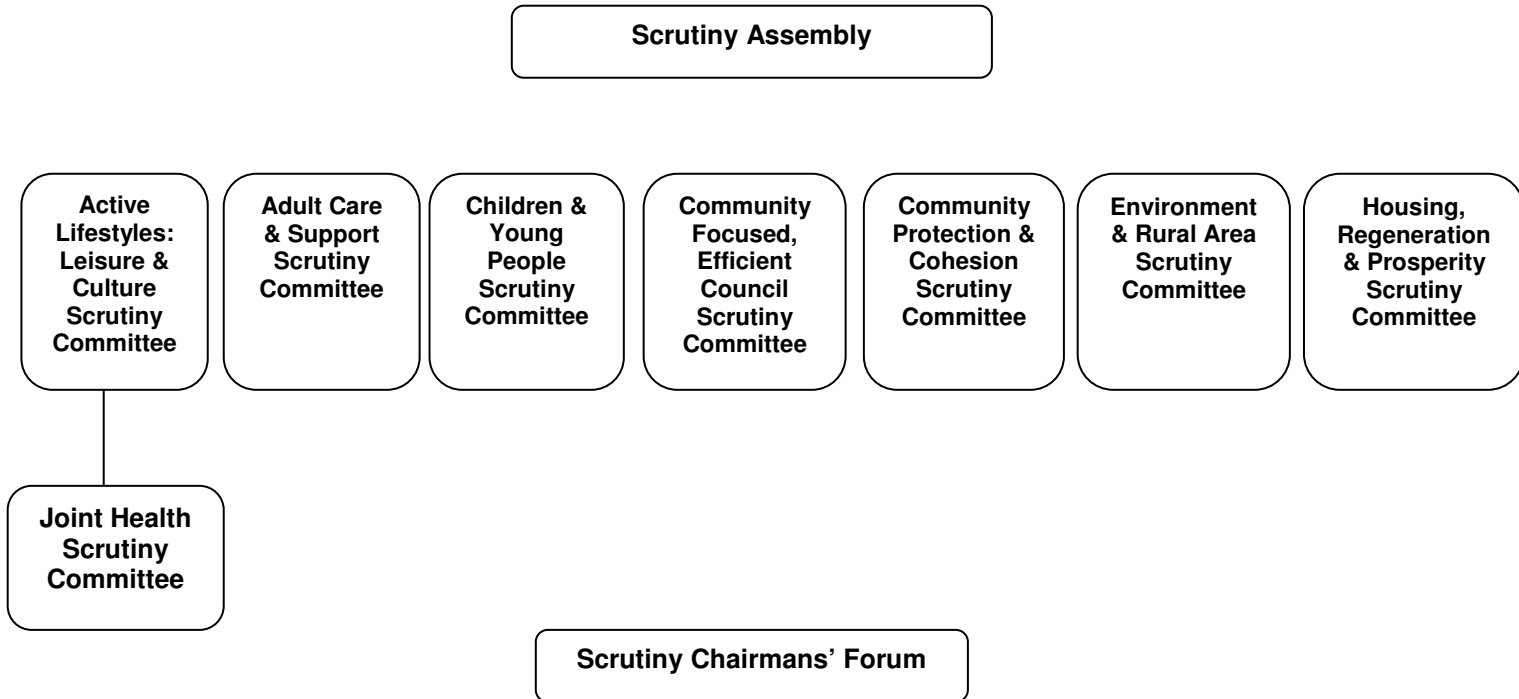
Scrutiny is a way for other members of the Council who are not Cabinet Members to monitor, review and, where necessary, challenge the decisions and policies of the Cabinet and the services the Council provides to make sure that people in Telford and Wrekin are getting the best services possible within the resources available to the Council. Scrutiny can look at any Council service, and can also look at services provided by organisations other than the Council, where they impact on local people.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny has identified four key principles that underpin effective scrutiny:

- Effective scrutiny should be a “critical friend” to Council executives, external authorities and agencies. It should challenge policy development and decision making in a robust, constructive and purposeful way, while developing partnerships with external agencies and authorities
- Effective scrutiny should reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities. It should ensure an ongoing dialogue with the public and diverse communities where the public voice is heard and responded to. It should have open and transparent processes with public access to information.
- Effective scrutiny should take the lead and own the scrutiny process on behalf of the public. It should be independent from the executive, legitimised by the Council and should have adequate public representation and political balance that is representative of the current political groups involved.
- Effective scrutiny should make an impact on the delivery of public services. It should promote community well-being and improve the quality of life, providing co-ordinated and strategic reviews of policy and service performance in line with strategic objectives.

3. Scrutiny at Telford & Wrekin Council

The diagram below shows the scrutiny structure that was in operation during 2010/11 and which undertook the scrutiny work described in the next section of this report.



The **Scrutiny Assembly** is made up of all elected Members of the Council except Cabinet Members, Cabinet Assistants and the Mayor. There are twelve members of the public co-opted onto the Scrutiny Committees who are also members of the Scrutiny Assembly. Four are statutory co-opted members with voting rights on educational issues – a primary parent governor, a secondary parent governor, a Church of England representative and a Roman Catholic representative. The remainder are non-statutory co-opted members representing a variety of experience and knowledge, three of whom were granted voting rights by Council on matters relating to scrutiny of the reconfiguration of acute hospital services in the county.

The Scrutiny Assembly is a forum for all scrutiny members to be involved in pieces of work that cut across all of the Council's priorities. 3 meetings are scheduled each year:

- A work programme workshop to discuss the potential issues for scrutiny
- Question Time with the Leader and Chief Executive to question and hold to account for any area of Council services and activity
- Priority Planning session with the Cabinet to discuss the draft Priority Plans – this is done by the Scrutiny Assembly rather than the individual Committees to enable scrutiny members to participate in discussions for more than one priority area.

Each **Scrutiny Committee** is responsible for scrutiny of their priority area. Where there are cross-cutting issues for scrutiny, two or more Committees may be involved in the scrutiny work. The Committees are politically balanced and are made up of 6 elected members of the Council, as well as some co-opted members of the public who supplement the knowledge and experience represented by the elected members of the Committees.

Each Committee had two formal meetings during the year; one to discuss and agree the work programme, and a second to scrutinise the budget proposals for their priority area. Additional formal meetings may be called to carry out elements of the work programme, or the Committees may decide to use a different method of scrutiny, such as agenda items at informal meetings, Special Interest Meetings (a one-off meeting with one agenda item), Spotlight Reviews (a compressed review with 3 meetings) or written briefings and reports. Each method of scrutiny can lead to recommendations being made, either to the Cabinet or to individual service areas, for service improvements. In 2010/11, the majority of the work was carried out by the Committees at informal meetings. Where issues cut across more than one Committee, all relevant Committee members were invited to the meetings.

The Chairman of each Scrutiny Committee sits on the **Scrutiny Chairmans' Forum**. The main role of this group is to oversee the Scrutiny Work Programme to ensure that it makes the best use of the available resources. The Chairmans' Forum may also recommend changes to the Council's scrutiny arrangements. Scrutiny Assembly Members will be informed of any changes that the Chairmans' Forum proposes. The Chairmans' Forum is not a formal Council Committee therefore does not meet in public, but the meetings are open to other Scrutiny Assembly members to attend to hear the discussions.

Comprehensive information on how scrutiny operates is available in the Scrutiny Handbook.

4. What happened in 2010/11?

Scrutiny Assembly

The Scrutiny Assembly met twice during the year.

- **Work Programme Selection Workshop, July 2010.** This meeting enabled scrutiny members to put forward and review suggestions that had been put forward for scrutiny by members of the public, partner organisations, Executive and Scrutiny Members and officers. A total of 71 suggestions were made. Members of each Committee discussed the suggestions made for their priority area and prioritised them for inclusion in the work programme.
- **“Question Time”, February 2011.** The Leader and Chief Executive attended to answer scrutiny members’ questions on any areas of Council services.

It was agreed that a Scrutiny Assembly meeting to feed into the Priority Plans would not be held as there were no significant revisions planned during the year.

Scrutiny Committees

The Scrutiny Chairmans’ Forum selected three topics from the Scrutiny Assembly for In-depth review. The Scrutiny Committees selected the topics for their work programme from the suggestions relevant to their priority area. Important or urgent issues that arose during the year were added to the work programmes at the agreement of the Committee members. The section below describes the work programmes and some of the key achievements of each Scrutiny Committee.

➤ **Active Lifestyles Scrutiny Committee**

This Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutiny of policy and services within the Active Lifestyles priority area and has statutory responsibility for scrutiny of health issues. A number of issues were scrutinised jointly with the Adult Care & Support Scrutiny Committee.

Work programme

The following topics were scrutinised as part of the work programme:

- Transforming Community Services
- Response to the NHS White Paper Consultation
- Developing Health and Healthcare
- Proposal for the Implementation of Gynaecological Improving Outcome Guidance
- Mental Health Care in Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin
- West Midlands’ Ambulance Trust Foundation Trust Application
- NHS Telford and Wrekin Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment
- Prostate Cancer
- Paediatric Cardiac Services
- Proposal for a new NHS Trust to provide Community Health Services for Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire

- NHS Consultation Framework
- The Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme consultation framework
- West Midlands' Ambulance Service "Make Ready" system
- Scrutiny of the Active Lifestyle Budget proposals
- Response to the Public Health Consultation

Recommendations

In December 2010, the Committee met to consider the Council's role in raising awareness of prostate cancer. Prostate cancer is the number one cause of death in men (out of 36,000 diagnoses, 10,000 will die), but less funding goes into its research than for breast cancer, there is no national screening programme and the symptoms are difficult to recognise. The Members recognised the importance of raising awareness with men, and their families, to encourage them to come forward for testing. The Shropshire Prostate Cancer Support Group works locally to provide information and raise awareness, with limited resources. The Committee therefore made a recommendation to Cabinet that leaflets on prostate cancer should be displayed in all public areas and toilets in Council buildings, and that any further work undertaken by the Council could be linked to prostate cancer awareness month in March 2011. The recommendation was endorsed by Cabinet in March 2011, by which time the work recommended had already been completed with posters displayed and a charity dress-down day held.

Other key achievements

In accordance with the Committee's statutory health scrutiny role, the Committee played a significant role in responding to health consultations.

- The Committee's response to NHS White Paper influenced the Executive response to ensure that scrutiny of the Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board is independent.
- The Executive response to the PCT's consultation on the new Community Trust was based on / informed by the comments from the Active Lifestyle and Adult Care and Support Scrutiny Committees.
- Submission of a scrutiny response to the Department of Health on the Public Health Consultation, in conjunction with the Adult Care & Support and Children & Young People Scrutiny Committees.

➤ **Adult Care & Support Scrutiny Committee**

This Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutiny of policy and services within the Adult Care & Support priority area. Due to the close links between adult social care and health, a number of issues were scrutinised jointly with the Active Lifestyles Scrutiny Committee which has statutory responsibility for scrutiny of health issues.

Work programme

The following topics were scrutinised as part of the work programme:

- Transforming Community Services

- Response to NHS Health White Paper Consultation
- Implications of an aging population and reassessment of care needs on service provision
- Department of Health Consultation on Transparency Outcomes: a framework for Adult Social Care
- Scrutiny of the Adult Care and Support Budget proposals
- Monitoring the implementation of recommendations from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection report on:
 - Safeguarding Adults
 - Increased choice and control for older people
- Scrutiny of the Adult Care and Support Budget proposals

Recommendations

In November 2010, the Committee met to look at the implications of the aging population on care provision. The number of people in the borough aged 65+ is projected to rise from 22,000 in 2006 to 30,200 by 2016, with a higher proportion with long-term life-limiting illnesses and disabilities. Extracare housing is one element of the Council's strategy to manage the increasing needs of older people, providing for mixed levels of need so that more active tenants support those who are more frail. Case studies show that Extracare accommodation reduces the level of support needed by individuals, reduces isolation and improves physical and mental wellbeing. There are currently 170 Extracare homes, and the Council and PCT vision is to develop 500 additional homes by 2021. Members recognised that the development of further schemes would have capital and revenue budget implications, and would depend on what resources are available.

The identification of this issue by the Adult Care and Support Scrutiny Committee instigated work between Adult Social Care and Housing Services to identify options for further Extracare places and to assess if and how the vision could be delivered. In support of this, the Committee made a recommendation to Cabinet that this work is continued as a part of a range of provision options, and that the importance of providing appropriate support for older people from Black and Ethnic Minority Communities should be recognised. The recommendation was agreed by Cabinet in March 2011. An Extracare task and finish group has been set up with RSLs, and the new Extracare Strategy involves work to map the needs of the older population, including those from BME communities. Action plans for the development of housing with care and support will reflect these findings, ensuring that unmet needs of older people from BME communities are responded to.

Other key achievements

- Submission of a joint Executive/Scrutiny response to the "Transparency in Outcomes – A framework for Adult Social Care" Consultation to the Department of Health.

- The Executive response to the PCT's consultation on the new Community Trust was based on / informed by the comments from the Active Lifestyle and Adult Care and Support Scrutiny Committees.
- Submission of a scrutiny response to the Department of Health on the Public Health Consultation, in conjunction with the Active Lifestyles and Children & Young People Scrutiny Committees.

➤ **Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee**

This Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutiny of policy and services within the Children & Young People priority area. A key area of this Committee's work is to monitor the services the Council provides to children who are in the care of the Council, leaving care or at risk. The Council, and all Councillors, are the "corporate parent" for these children and young people, therefore the question members kept in mind when reviewing services was "Would this be good enough for my child?".

Work programme

The following topics were scrutinised as part of the work programme:

- Joint Adoption Service Annual Report and Ofsted report on the service
- Social workers and agency social workers
- The recruitment and retention of foster carers
- Children in care in out of borough placements
- Placement stability of children in care
- Education attainment of children in care
- Childcare – a survey of parents and carers
- Short breaks for children with disabilities
- Voluntary youth provision and sport and leisure opportunities for children and young people
- Bereavement support in schools
- Scrutiny of Children & Young People budget proposals
- Meeting with children in care about contact with friends and family
- Participation in the UK Youth Parliament elections
- Response to the Public Health Consultation

Recommendations

Following a suggestion at the Scrutiny Assembly, the Committee decided to look at how bereaved children and young people are supported in school. Members were concerned that there was an inconsistent approach and inequality of support provided by schools across the borough.

The Committee surveyed all the schools in the borough to find out how they support bereaved children and young people. The results showed that whereas there were some excellent examples of good practice in some schools, others were less well prepared with some schools expressing a need for support. The Committee therefore made a number of recommendations to Cabinet aimed at addressing these inequalities and ensuring there is a consistent minimum level of support provided by all schools to children and young people facing this kind of trauma. The recommendations were agreed by Cabinet in March 2011, and a specimen bereavement policy and procedures, along with further information and

contacts, is being developed by the Council to be made available to all schools.

Other key achievements

- The Committee instigated:
 - A review of the Council holding birth certificates for children in care
 - A review of the transition arrangements for social workers for children in care so that the young people get to know them
 - A review of how children in care can choose the venue for contact meetings
 - A review of how children in care are supported in review meetings
 - A review how “family” is defined for children in care so that they have contact with people who are important to them
 - The Head of Safeguarding looked at how other parts of the council could support foster carers as part of the service review
 - Letters sent to schools to promote the Council’s work in developing a bereavement support specimen policy and associated documents, developed as a result of scrutiny recommendations
 - Corporate Parenting training was rated as “essential” for the induction of new members, included in the “Welcome” induction and continued lobbying of the Member Development Steering Group for the training to be made mandatory
 - A recommendation to the Head of Family & Community Services to consider the extension of voluntary youth services as part of the service review.
 - Undertook a sample face-to-face survey with parents and carers about childcare issues. The results were presented to Cabinet members at a meeting to help inform further work.
 - With the Head of Safeguarding, developed a set of PIs for on-going monitoring of the use of agency social workers, foster carers and the retention of foster carers, placement stability of children in care, education attainment of children in care and out of borough placements.
 - Submission of a scrutiny response to the Department of Health on the Public Health Consultation, in conjunction with the Active Lifestyles and Adult Care & Support Scrutiny Committees.
- **Community Focused Efficient Council Scrutiny Committee**
This Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutiny of policy and services provided within the Community Focused Efficient Council priority area. A key element of the Committee’s work is scrutiny of the Council’s budget strategy, and value of money and performance issues.

Work programme

The following topics were scrutinised as part of the work programme:

- Service and Financial Planning Report (October 2011)
- Budget position and actions to reduce SEN costs
- Budget position and actions to reduce B&B costs
- The impact of the market on the value of capital receipts

- Children in Care costs
- Adult Social Care costs
- The budget consultation process and public engagement strategy
- Single Status, and the decision to delay implementation
- Service Review process
- Employee Suggestion Scheme
- The impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review on partner contributions to Council services
- Scrutiny of the Service and Financial Planning (Budget) proposals
- Financial Monitoring report (February 2011)

Recommendations

Given the scale of reduction in the grant settlement to the Authority in December 2010, and the level of savings required, close scrutiny of the budget was more imperative this year than ever before. The Committee held meetings to review the overall budget position and the proposed financial strategy, and to formulate the scrutiny response to the proposals for 2011/12-2013/14. The Committee also considered the views and comments of each of the other Scrutiny Committees.

Seven key areas of concern were set out in the scrutiny response, along with other areas of concern raised by each Scrutiny Committee, and these were presented to Cabinet on 22nd February 2011. The key concerns included:

- The impact of the market on realising the projected value of capital receipts, and the potential exposure this would open up for the Council
- The risk of not making up the budget deficit in 2012/13 once the one-off balances have been used
- The continued need to consult with, and inform, the public about proposed changes to services as early as possible.

The Cabinet was requested to provide a written response to address scrutiny's concerns, and this was presented at the Cabinet meeting.

Other key achievements

A key success of scrutiny in 2010/11 was scrutiny of the budget proposals.

- More Scrutiny Members took part in scrutiny of the budget than ever before, with each of the Committee scrutinising the proposals for their priority area and reporting their findings to the Community Focused Efficient Council Scrutiny Committee
- The Committee engaged in robust scrutiny of the proposals, and demonstrated its independence by reaching a consensus view on some potentially politically contentious issues
- The Committee required a written Cabinet response to address the concerns raised by scrutiny, strengthening the Committee's role in holding the Cabinet to account

- Following a suggestion made at a Committee meeting, budget consultation was carried out with individual users of the Twister bus service, and traders in Ironbridge.

➤ **Community Protection & Cohesion Scrutiny Committee**

This Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutiny of policy and services within the Community Protection & Cohesion priority area, and has statutory responsibility for scrutiny of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, which in Telford & Wrekin is the Safer Stronger Communities Partnership.

Work programme

The following topics were scrutinised as part of the work programme:

- Safer Stronger Communities Partnership performance reports
- ASB Hotline performance report
- The potential impact of funding reductions on support services for victims of domestic violence
- Scrutiny of the budget for Community Protection & Cohesion
- Taxi licensing
- Service review proposals for adult and children's services relating to community protection and cohesion
- Community Payback scheme
- Street Pastor pilot scheme
- Update on the Footpath Gating Strategy

Recommendations

The Committee did not make any recommendations to Cabinet during 2010/11. However, as part of the work programme, the Committee took part in the consultation of the Adult Care Services and Children & Young People's Service Review in relation to Community Protection & Cohesion.

The Committee commended the work that had been done on the service review and agreed with the principles of early intervention and integrated services which underpin the proposals. The Committee also made some recommendations about how the proposals should be developed, including undergoing consultation with service users, predominantly parents, that the proposed referral pathways and processes should be rigorously tested against real-life cases, and that the ICT infrastructure must be developed as a critical element of efficient service delivery. The Committee's comments and recommendations were submitted as part of the consultation process.

Other key achievements

- Fulfilling the statutory duty of scrutiny of the Safer Stronger Communities Partnership, the Committee reviewed the revised structure of the Partnership and received on a regular basis the Safer Stronger Communities Partnership performance reports.

➤ **Environment & Rural Area Scrutiny Committee**

This Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutiny of policy and services within the Environment & Rural Area priority area, and from April 2011 has statutory responsibility for scrutiny of Flood and Water Management.

Work programme

The following topics were scrutinised as part of the work programme:

- Consultation on the draft Local Transport Plan 3
- Flood and Water Management
- Traffic calming measures
- Update on recommendations from the Bus Services scrutiny review
- Scrutiny of the budget proposals for Environment & Rural Area, including the impact of funding reductions on rural transport

Recommendations

The Committee did not make any recommendations directly to Cabinet, but played a key role in the consultation on the Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) to influence the final draft which was presented to Cabinet.

The Committee held meetings to review the draft LTP3, to discuss and agree the scrutiny response to the Plan and to monitor how the Committee's comments (and other comments put forward during the consultation) had been taken into account in the final draft.

The Committee made 15 comments and recommendations on the content of the draft LTP3, and a further 9 comments on the format and presentation of information. The Committee recognised that delivery of the priorities would be constrained by funding reductions, but nonetheless felt it important that the LTP3 should clearly set out the strategic vision for transport to support the long-term development of the borough. The Committee supported plans to improve strategic road and rail routes to market, and the possible development of Cosford as a sub-regional business airport. Sections on access to the World Heritage Site, transport for rural areas, traffic calming measures and rights of way for non-motorised transport were all strengthened following suggestions by scrutiny.

Other key achievements

- Scrutiny of the new structures set up to enable the Council to fulfil its statutory duty as a Lead Local Flood Authority introduced by the Flood & Water Act 2010, and agreement with Executive members on the process for future scrutiny of the arrangements as a statutory scrutiny function.
- A scrutiny suggestion about the maintenance of the Lilleshall Monument led to proposals for an audit of all Council owned monuments and a regime of periodic inspections.
- A scrutiny suggestion about how the Council communicates with town and parish councils regarding roads, signage, rights of way and footpaths was referred to the Parish Charter Monitoring Group to review.

➤ **Housing Regeneration & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee**

This Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutiny of policy and services within the Housing, Regeneration & Prosperity priority area. A key element of the Committee's work is scrutiny of the Civic Office and Southwater developments.

Work Programme

The following topics were scrutinised as part of the work programme:

- Civic Office and Southwater development:
 - Evaluation criteria and procurement process for the new Civic Office contractor
 - Public realm concept drawings
 - The Council's capacity to deliver regeneration projects
 - Public access areas and the options for a council chamber
 - Ground stability inspection report
 - ICT risks
 - Financial risks and contingencies
 - Car parking
 - Progress against the project timetable and actions to mitigate risks
- Consultation on the New Homes Bonus Scheme
- Scrutiny of the budget for Housing, Regeneration and Prosperity
- Tourism in Telford & Wrekin
- Bringing vacant private property back into occupancy
- Update on the scrutiny recommendation about helping local businesses to access contracts with the Council

Recommendations

The Committee brought two reports to Cabinet during the year.

• **The Council's Capacity to Deliver Regeneration Projects**

In November 2010, the Committee held a Special Interest Meeting to look at the Council's capacity to deliver regeneration projects. Members were concerned about the risks of delivering an ambitious capital programme with reduced funding and resources. Members received assurances that funding for Phase 1 projects had been secured and budgeted, although there may be delays to Phase 2 projects due to reductions in funding allocations. Members also received assurances that the service review would take account of the skills required to manage and deliver the programme, and that there would be sufficient capacity. Delivery of the Dawley regeneration project on time and under budget gave the members some assurance of the Council's ability to manage and deliver projects.

However, the Committee sought further reassurance by bringing a number of recommendations to Cabinet aimed at improving the process and minimising risk on future schemes. The recommendations related to the involvement of elected members, timing of projects, equity of investment, planning of resources and management of risks. The

recommendations were presented to Cabinet on 22nd March and all but one of the recommendations were agreed.

- **Improvements to Telford Central Station and Associated Walkways**
The Committee met in October to review the Tourism strategy. Members felt that improvements to Telford Central Station, and the walkways, would significantly improve the visitor experience and would support the Town Centre development and wider expansion plans for the borough. Members felt that a One Council approach should be taken to join-up and maximise planning and resourcing opportunities. A recommendation was made to Cabinet in March 2011, and was fully agreed.

Other key achievements

- In October the Committee heard a Call-in request of a Cabinet decision about Telford Town Centre relating to the new Civic Office. The Call-in was upheld, and the Committee made recommendations back to Cabinet that scrutiny is involved in the key stages of the development and that all members are informed as early as possible about decisions relating to Civic Office. The recommendations were agreed by Cabinet. The process was an excellent example of scrutiny working in a non-political way. The issues raised by the Call-in continued to be monitored by the Committee at meetings attended by the Cabinet member, and members requesting the Call-in are invited to attend these meetings.
- A joint Executive / Scrutiny response to the government consultation on the New Homes Bonus Scheme was developed with the Committee making a significant contribution to the response.
- The assurance process for the procurement of the new Civic Office contractor was reviewed by the project team, legal, procurement and audit to ensure the robustness of the process against challenge following concerns raised by the committee.
- Consideration is being given to the Wrekin as part of the Tourism strategy following a recommendation from the committee.

Other Scrutiny Work

➤ **In-depth Reviews**

The Scrutiny Chairmans' Forum selected three topics from the Scrutiny Assembly work shop for In-depth review during 2010/11. The In-depth reviews were Chaired by the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee relevant to the topic, and were open to all Scrutiny Assembly Members to take part so that the review groups were not politically balanced.

• **Budget Formulation**

The scoping meeting identified specific services for members to ask whether they offered the best possible value for money or whether there were more cost-effective solutions. Members looked at two services as part of the review:

- The Use of Consultants
Members wanted to find out why the Council spends money on external consultants, whether they bring added value, and whether work commissioned could be done in-house to save money and safeguard jobs. Members were pleased that a new corporate approval process for consultants over £500 had been introduced in September 2010 to control usage and costs. However, members made a number of recommendations to further enhance the process. These included extending the process to include extensions to existing contracts, to publish details of contracts on the Council's website in a way that would enable the public to understand why consultants are being used, that the implementation of wider procurement arrangements must include a system to measure their effectiveness and that any new procurement arrangements are reported back to scrutiny. The recommendations were presented to Cabinet on 22nd March 2011 and were all approved.
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) Provision
The issue identified by members was whether out of borough SEN placements represented value for money or whether there were more cost effective local solutions. Members were concerned that the Service and Financial Planning update report to Cabinet in August 2010 had shown a significant projected overspend on SEN placements. Most spend was on out of borough placements, and there continued to be an upward trend in the number of SEN assessments and statements.

Members undertook the review by scrutinising the Adult Care and Children & Young People's Service Review which included proposals about SEN provision, and reducing the number of children with statements through early intervention and integrated support. Members fully supported the proposed approach, but made a number of suggestions about the further development of the proposals. These related to the involvement of GPs and schools, the long-term impact of decisions about School Improvement services and the role of parents. Scrutiny would continue to monitor the development and impact of the proposals.

- **Working with Communities to Improve the Environment**
Members decided to focus this review on the "Green Deal" and the opportunities this presents for communities and businesses in Telford and Wrekin. Under proposals in the Energy Bill, the government is looking at establishing a framework to enable private firms to offer energy consumers efficiency improvements at no upfront cost, with the company recouping costs through a charge on energy bills. The benefits of the Green Deal would be reduced energy bills for consumers, the creation of job opportunities through local supply chains and a reduction in carbon emissions. The scheme would depend on private finance, but a task and finish group had been set up with the Marches Local

Enterprise Partnership to explore opportunities for raising private sector investment, reducing capital costs through joint Council procurement, creating a trustworthy brand to promote uptake, advise and recommend accredited assessors, and supporting the growth of local supply chains. Members supported the initiative, and made a number of recommendations to support the further development of the Council's role in the Green Deal which were agreed by Cabinet on 22nd March 2011.

- **Available, Affordable, Flexible Childcare**

On advice from officers and Cabinet members, the Scrutiny Chairmans' Forum decided not to go ahead with this In-depth review due to impending government legislation about Childcare regulations. The issue was incorporated into the work programme of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee. Members undertook a face-to-face survey of parents and carers attending a Sure Start session at Jungleland to identify issues with the availability, affordability and flexibility of childcare. The results of the survey were discussed with the Cabinet member at a Committee meeting.

- **Call-in**

There was one Call-in during 2010/11. A Call-in request was made in September following a Cabinet decision about Telford Town Centre relating to the new Civic Office. The Call-in request was heard by the Housing, Regeneration & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee as the relevant committee. The Call-in request was upheld, and the Committee made recommendations back to Cabinet that scrutiny is involved in the key stages of the development and that all members are informed as early as possible about decisions relating to the new Civic Office. The recommendations were agreed by Cabinet. The process was an excellent example of scrutiny working in a non-political way. The issues raised by the Call-in continued to be monitored by the Committee at meetings attended by the Cabinet member, and members requesting the Call-in are invited to attend these meetings.

- **Joint Health Scrutiny Committee**

Under government legislation, changes to NHS services which constitute a "substantial variation" to residents of more than one local authority area must be scrutinised by a Joint Health & Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) made up of members from the affected authorities. If a Joint HOSC decides that a decision about the service is not in the best interest of local people, they are able to refer matter to the Secretary of State to decide. There is a Joint HOSC for Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire to fulfil this role. A key piece of work for the Joint HOSC in 2010/11 was scrutiny of the NHS proposals for the reconfiguration of acute hospital services in Telford and Shrewsbury "Keeping it in the County".

There had been a history of heated debate and controversy over a number of years about the reconfiguration, and previous proposals from the PCTs and The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust had not resolved the

issue of delivering sustainable acute services across two sites in the different local authority areas.

Against this backdrop, the Joint HOSC undertook rigorous scrutiny of the proposals. Whilst maintaining its independence, the Joint HOSC worked constructively with NHS partners and Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) in both areas to address local concerns. The Joint HOSC was a key stakeholder in the process which involved many stages:

- Engagement of the Joint HOSC as part of the pre-consultation of the options developed at a clinical workshop
- Involvement of the Joint HOSC representatives and officers as observers at the Assurance Panel established by the PCTs to assess the proposal against the Lansley Tests and clinical / financial sustainability.
- At the beginning of the formal consultation process the Joint HOSC made an interim response which confirmed the Committees duty to consider the best outcomes across the whole county area and provide rigorous and independent scrutiny of the reconfiguration proposals
- Site visits for Joint HOSC Members to facilities and meeting with staff at both hospital sites
- Access to the full report from the Assurance Panel meeting prior to the Joint HOSC meeting and presented to the Joint HOSC by 2 clinical members (Director of Public Health and PEC Chair / GP Commissioner)
- The Joint HOSC was identified as a key stakeholder by patients and members of the public who raised their concerns with the Joint HOSC Chairmen – these issues were followed up by the Committee
- Research to support the work of the Joint HOSC which included reports from the Independent Reconfiguration Panel to identify issues and outcomes from reconfiguration of similar services in other areas
- A written report from the Acute Trust and PCTs which provided a summary and addressed in detail all the issues raised by the Joint HOSC
- Public engagement by the Ambulance Service during the Joint HOSC process
- Co-chairmanship of the Joint HOSC and the commitment from the Chairmen to plan and prepare for the Joint HOSC meetings

The Joint HOSC supported the option agreed by the PCT and SaTH Boards for the reconfiguration of the acute services, but made a number of key recommendations regarding the detailed development of the proposals which were fully accepted by the NHS. The role of the Joint Committee in monitoring the implementation phase has been recognised and the Acute Trust has undertaken to present both the Outline Business Case and the Full Business Case to the Joint HOSC prior to approval by the Trust Board.

Testimonials for the work of the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

“The work of HOSC has provided challenge and support in equal measure. The committee has taken great care to investigate for themselves both in breadth and depth whilst not interfering in the processes of idea generation or consultation...it is the way that the committee has balanced their need to get involved in the detail with the need to provide an unbiased view that stands out. This has made the recommendation of HOSC to be insightful, reassuring and enabling. This piece work stands as a great testimony to the power of scrutiny.”

Dr. Mike Innes, NHS Telford and Wrekin PEC Chair, Member of the Local Assurance Panel and Telford and Wrekin GP Consortium Chair

“The Joint HOSC has devoted an exceptional commitment of time and energy to getting to grips with the details of the proposals. Their willingness to work alongside us, sharing and observing the testing of proposals while also carrying out their own independent scrutiny, has added huge value to the robustness of the whole process, in a way that has been unique in my NHS experience. As a joint HOSC across both local authorities, the Committee provided an extra reassurance, when public opinion was split geographically.

Through their public scrutiny they have been able to highlight concerns from the local community and have sought reassurances on behalf of the communities they represent on actions to mitigate identified risks. That in turn has helped the PCTs to shape their agreement with the Hospital Trust about the basis on which the next stage of work will be done.”

Dr. Leigh Griffin, Chief Executive NHS Telford and Wrekin and Acting Chief Executive Shropshire County Primary Care Trust

“There has been a long history of debate without resolution on the shape of hospital services in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. This has prevented the local NHS from investing time and resources in a long-term sustainable future for our hospitals, creating real risks that services will decline or leave the county.

During summer 2010 we began to shape a new debate on hospital configuration. The scrutiny committees quickly recognised that this new debate needed a fresh approach to scrutiny that would bring vision and challenge on behalf of local communities. This would be particularly vital given that previous consultations have foundered as such proposals inevitably fuel rivalry and division between the two major towns, which are in different local authority areas.

Committee members have taken a robust yet flexible approach to oversight and scrutiny. This has provided vigorous challenge to me and my senior clinicians and managers, clearly embedded in the issues and concerns being raised by local members of the public. It has been refreshing to see such as plural approach to scrutiny.”

Adam Cairns, Chief Executive, The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust

➤ **Recommendations database**

The Scrutiny Chairmans' Forum undertook a comprehensive review of the database of previous scrutiny recommendations which had, over years, become very large and time consuming to update. For each recommendation, the Chairmen decided one of three options:

1. To archive recommendations which had already been implemented, or which were no longer relevant
2. To request one further update from officers to help the Chairmen decide whether to archive or continue to monitor implementation of the recommendation
3. To continue to monitor progress on implementation.

Around 60% of the recommendations were archived, so that database is now up to date and relevant.

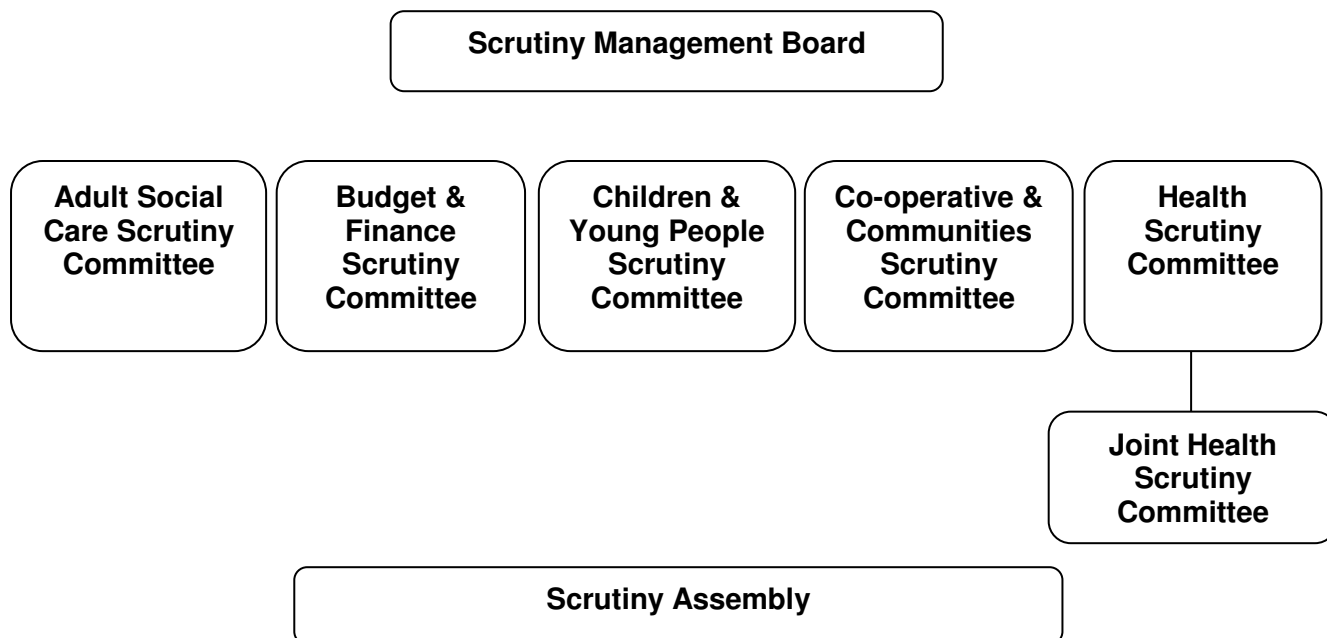
➤ **New Ways of Working**

As with all parts of the Council, Scrutiny has been part of a service review looking at new ways of working to make processes more effective and efficient within the allocated resources. Some of the changes that have been made include:

- A streamlined process to take reports and recommendations to Cabinet to reduce the requirement for lengthy reports
- Streamlining of scrutiny procedures e.g. scoping topics, holding informal meetings, holding joint Committee meetings, flexible format for officers presenting information at scrutiny meetings

5. Looking forward to 2011/12

Following the elections in May 2011, changes were made to the scrutiny structures as shown below.



The Scrutiny Management Board and Scrutiny Committees met during July and August to select and prioritise topics for the work programme.

The Scrutiny Management Board will have overall responsibility for co-ordinating the work programme and overseeing its delivery, as well as having its own programme of reviews of strategic matters and other items not included within the remit of the other Scrutiny Committees.

Some of the items identified as a priority include:

Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee

- Rehabilitation and reablement services
- Phase 2 service review for Adult Services
- The impact of the withdrawal of Continuing Health Care Funding
- Adult Safeguarding Annual Inspection Report

Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee

- Scrutiny of the 100-Day budget proposals
- Service & Financial Planning Strategy 2012/13 and the budget consultation process
- Savings proposals for service areas identified by the Committee
- Procurement

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

- Corporate Parenting performance issues including meetings with children and young people in care
- Child Poverty
- Short Break for disabled children
- Phase 2 of the service review for children's services
- Youth services

Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee

- Developing a single point of contact for businesses to Council Services
- Concessions policy in leisure and culture
- Management of Community Centres
- Social deprivation

Health Scrutiny Committee

- PCT clusters and commissioning arrangements
- Emerging health structures including the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Health and Wellbeing Board
- Community Trust
- Modernisation of mental health services
- West Midlands Ambulance Service Make Ready system

Joint Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- Continued monitoring the development of the Full Business Case for the reconfiguration of hospital services in Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin
- Community Trust

Contacts

To find out more about scrutiny, take a look at our web pages:

www.telford.gov.uk/scrutiny

You can find meeting dates and agendas for Scrutiny Committee meetings on the Council website or you can call the **Scrutiny Team** on **01952 383118** or **Democratic Services** on **01952 383211**.

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Your suggestions

If to have any ideas about areas of Council services that we could look at please let us know. You can do this by contacting a member of the Scrutiny Team, or by filling in the on-line Scrutiny Suggestion Form on the website. Any suggestions received will be considered by members for possible inclusion in the Scrutiny work programme.