

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD – 5th DECEMBER 2011

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

REPORT OF SCRUTINY GROUP SPECIALIST

PURPOSE

The purpose of the report is to provide the Scrutiny Management Board with a summary of scrutiny activity to date and to report progress on the delivery of the Scrutiny Work Programme.

BACKGROUND

The Scrutiny Management Board and Scrutiny Committees were appointed at Annual Council on 26th May 2011 and formally constituted on 23rd June 2011. Members were appointed to five service- themed Scrutiny Committees (Adult Social Care, Budget & Finance, Children & Young People, Co-operative & Communities and Health), the Scrutiny Management Board and the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a sub-group of the Health Scrutiny Committee joint with Shropshire Council.

The service themed Scrutiny Committees are responsible for scrutiny of issues relating to their service area and the Scrutiny Management Board is responsible for the overall management and co-ordination of scrutiny work, monitoring the delivery of the scrutiny work programme, and carrying out reviews as part of its own work programme.

KEY ACTIVITIES TO DATE

- **Setting the Scrutiny Work Programme**

A total of 57 suggestions were received from Scrutiny Assembly members, Cabinet members, officers, Town & Parish Councils and members of the public. (This compares to 51 suggestions in 2010 and 49 in 2009). The Scrutiny Management Board met on 7th July to consider each suggestion, to agree which items would not be included in the work programme, to select items for the Scrutiny Management Board work programme and to allocate the other suggestions to the relevant Scrutiny Committee/s for further consideration. Each Scrutiny Committee then met during July and August to consider the allocated suggestions to agree their own work programme.

A further 11 suggestions have been received to date. 8 were considered by the Scrutiny Management Board on 13th September and 3 will be considered on 5th December.

Appendix 1 shows the topics currently selected for the work programme by each Committee. Additions and changes to the work programme may be

made during the year according to the process described in the Scrutiny Handbook.

- **Changes to the Council's Constitution**

Changes to the Council's Constitution to reflect the new scrutiny arrangements were agreed by Council on 23rd June. The changes introduced a more streamlined approach by setting out the key principles, statutory scrutiny responsibilities and powers and a generic scrutiny structure in the Constitution, while operational details and processes were set out in the Scrutiny Handbook. The aim was to provide greater flexibility to change and improve the scrutiny arrangements within the parameters of the Constitution, while eliminating the work required to update the Constitution each time a change is made.

- **Scrutiny Handbook**

The Scrutiny Handbook has been updated to reflect the current structure and working arrangements. This sets out in detail all scrutiny processes including the designation of statutory functions to the Scrutiny Committees, the Call-in process, the selection of topics for the work programme, making changes to the work programme, the methods of review, the roles and responsibilities of those involved with scrutiny (members, co-optees and officers) and the media protocol. The role and responsibilities of the lead Scrutiny Member and Scrutiny Chairmen are included as well Terms of Reference for all Scrutiny Committees and the Protocol for Co-opting Scrutiny Members. The changes to the Scrutiny Handbook have been approved following discussion with the Scrutiny Management Board and consultation with Scrutiny Assembly members.

- **Scrutiny Annual Report**

The lead Scrutiny Member is responsible for reporting scrutiny activity to full Council each year. The 2010/11 Scrutiny Annual Report sets out what scrutiny achieved during 2010/11 and some of the priorities for 2011/12. The Annual Report was presented to full Council on 24th November.

- **Scrutiny Meetings**

In the interests of openness and transparency, all scrutiny meetings this year have been held as formal public meetings with agendas, minutes and papers published in Council offices and on the website. The Committees may form informal sub-groups to carry out investigations as part of a review, and this work will be reported back at a formal Committee meeting.

From 23rd June when the Scrutiny Committees were formally constituted to 5th December, the number of scrutiny meetings held is as follows:

Scrutiny Management Board	4	(including 5 th December)
Adult Social Care	3.5	(0.5 = joint meeting)
Budget & Finance	3	
Children & Young People	3	
Co-operative & Communities	3	
Health	2.5	(0.5 = joint meeting)

Joint Health Scrutiny Committee	2	(including 16 th June)
Total	21	

Other meetings:

Regional Health Scrutiny Chairs	2
Regional Scrutiny Chairs	1

Briefing meetings, planning meetings and keep in touch meetings with Cabinet members are not counted as scrutiny meetings.

- **Scrutiny Team**

The Governance structure was confirmed in May 2011 with the following scrutiny posts:

Scrutiny Group Specialist	0.8FTE	(Fiona Bottrill)
Scrutiny Officer	0.8FTE	(Stephanie Jones)
Scrutiny Officer	0.5FTE	(Sarah Morris)
Total FTE	2.1FTE	

Additional support in collating and distributing meeting papers is provided by Democratic Services.

Due to maternity leave and career break arrangements, current resource in place is:

Scrutiny Group Specialist	Full time	(Stephanie Jones)
Scrutiny Officer	0.8FTE	(Tracy Clarke)
Scrutiny Officer	0.5FTE	(Unfilled)
Total FTE resource in place	1.8FTE	

There has been a period of adjustment in the scrutiny team with staff developing into new roles. As part of the re-structure, scrutiny reports into Democratic Services and the teams have recently co-located to improve the efficiency of working arrangements.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES

Below is a summary of the key work undertaken by the Scrutiny Committees:

Scrutiny Management Board

Topic	Purpose and outcome
Scrutiny Work Programme	Topics selected for the Scrutiny Management Board work programme. Topics allocated to a Scrutiny Committee Designation of statutory functions to the Scrutiny Committees.
Scrutiny Handbook	Agreed changes to processes for the Scrutiny Handbook for further consultation with Scrutiny Assembly.
Policy for Co-opting Scrutiny Members	A revision to the Policy was agreed to lift the four year restriction on people who have served as elected members of the Council to apply to become co-optees.
Co-operative Council and	All Scrutiny Assembly members were

Commission	invited to question the Cabinet member for Co-operative Council & Partnership and the Interim Chief Executive.
Highways issues: winter maintenance, pothole repairs, condition of footpaths for wheelchair users.	8 recommendations have been made to the Cabinet member for Co-operative Council & Partnership and senior officers in the service area.

Adult Social Care

Topic	Purpose and outcome
Rehabilitation and Re-ablement Strategy	Review of the Strategy and to question the Cabinet member for Adult & Social Care and senior officers. This will be monitored again in 6 months.
Phase 2 Care & Support structure proposals	The Committee held 2 meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review the proposals and question the Cabinet member for Adult & Social Care and senior officers. To review feedback received during the consultation and to agree the Committee's response to be submitted for consideration as part of the consultation.
Caring for Our Future	The Committee agreed a response to submit to this national government consultation.
Southern Cross Homes	To question the Cabinet member for Adult & Social Care and senior officers about arrangements for the Southern Cross homes in Telford & Wrekin to be assured that arrangements were in place to ensure continued care for the residents.

Budget & Finance

Topic	Purpose and outcome
100-day review of 2011/12 service and financial strategy (100 Day budget)	The Committee held 2 meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review the proposals and question the Cabinet member for Resources & Service Delivery and senior officers. The Committee also considered the process for consultation with the public. To review the results of the feedback from public consultation and to agree the Committee's response to the proposals. The Chairman presented the response to Cabinet on 10th November.
2011/12 Financial Monitoring Report	Noted the current financial position.
Telford Town Centre Report	To review the report and question the

	Cabinet member and senior officers. Agreed that capital receipts would continue to be monitored.
Service & Financial Planning 2012/13 -2013/14	Noted the report and the projected scale of the deficit for 2012/13 and following years.
Phase 2 budget engagement	Consideration of the report on the non-staff savings proposals which had been selected for equality impact assessments. Members wanted to be assured that the right assessments were being carried out so that the impact of service changes could be mitigated as far as possible and that consultation was robust to mitigate the risk of challenge.
Procurement	To question the Cabinet member and senior officer on how savings can be driven out from procurement. This will be monitored on a regular basis.

Children & Young People

Topic	Purpose and outcome
Corporate Parenting Strategy	To review of the strategy and question the Cabinet member for CYP and senior officers. Recommended the development of a new performance indicator for children in care to measure participation and achievement in activities outside the national curriculum. An offer from a co-optee to broker events for children in care with the education sector if being explored.
Abraham Darby canopy collapse	To review of the Council's potential liability for costs of the canopy collapse. Report requested to come back to come back to a future meeting. (1 st December)
Short Breaks for disabled children	To review the service and question Cabinet member and senior officer. Requested profile of service users and how this is used to inform future service provision to come back to a future meeting. (1 st December)
Child Poverty	Members took part in a work shop to identify the causes and potential solutions to child & family poverty. The outcome of the work shop will be used to inform work being done with wider partners to look at strengthening families. Agreed a sub-group of the Committee would visit the family group project in Sutton Hill for members to gather

	information which will be provided to the service area to help identify future ways of working for community enterprises.
Phase 2 children's services structure proposals.	Review of the proposals for the School Improvement and Family & Community Services and Safeguarding structures. The Committee is meeting on 13 th December to agree a response.

Co-operative & Communities

Topic	Purpose and outcome
Co-operative council & Co-operative Commission	To question the Cabinet member for Co-operative Council & Partnership and Interim Chief Executive on the Co-operative Council. In response to members' questions, further information was provided to the Committee on the Co-operative model in other authorities, the communications strategy for the public and the model for the Small Business Loans Fund.
First Point for businesses – Special Interest meeting	The Committee held a Special Interest meeting to review the need for a single point of contact for businesses to Council services. The Cabinet member for Housing, Regeneration and Economic Development and senior officers attended the meeting. The Committee agreed a report and recommendations to establish a First Point for businesses. The report will be presented to Cabinet on 8 th December.
Concessions policy in leisure	The Committee reviewed options for making savings to leisure concessions. Detailed modelling on the options for concessions for 60+ was requested for further consideration. Suggested that the Arthog remissions policy should remain unchanged, but requested further information on the number of complaints over previous years.

Health

Topic	Purpose and outcome
NHS reforms (jointly with the Adult Social Care Committee)	To receive a report on the implications of the proposed NHS reforms for the local authority. This was to update members on the proposed changes, and to help them identify areas for scrutiny which were included in the work programme. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for

	Adult & Social Care joined the discussion.
Mental Health Services	To review of the implementation of the modernisation programme and wider mental health issues. A further report from the Carers Partnership Board on the training and support for carers will be provided to the Committee. This will be monitored by the Committee on an on-going basis.
West Midlands Ambulance Service	To review the Make Ready system and NHS Pathways. A regular report on ambulance performance in Telford & Wrekin will be provided for on-going monitoring. Further information on ambulance wait times at PRH and RSH has been requested, in particular comparative data with other areas to review the impact on waiting times of the Hospital Ambulance Liaison Officers which are no longer being funded in Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire. A sub-group of the Committee will visit the control room to review the operation of the NHS Pathways. Information about the pathways has been requested so this can be promoted to the public.

Joint Health & Overview Scrutiny Committee

Topic	Purpose and outcome
Future configuration of hospital services	To review progress on the development of the Outline Business Case and the update on how the concerns raised by the Committee on the proposals were being addressed. Progress was noted and the Committee supported the work going forward.
Future configuration of hospital services – Outline Business Case	To review of the OBC prior to its submission to the Trust Board, PCT Board and SHA. Continued monitoring of actions to address areas of concern identified.
Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust	Members received a presentation and asked questions about the Community Trust. Issues relating to Telford & Wrekin will be brought back to the Health Scrutiny Committee.

The Forward Plans of the Committees are attached as Appendix 2. These are working documents which are updated with decisions following each meeting.

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