

## **SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

### **Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> July 2013 at 10.30am in Meeting Room 3, Darby House, Telford**

**PRESENT:** Councillors D. White (Chair), V. Fletcher, A. McClements, S. Reynolds, C. Turley.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Cllr. H. Rhodes, Cabinet Member Customer Services, Libraries & Transport; Steve Watkins, KIP; Alan Olver, Maninplace; F. Bottrill, Scrutiny Group Specialist; S. Jones, Scrutiny Officer.

#### **SMB-1      MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meetings of the Scrutiny Management Board held on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **SMB-2      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllrs. S. Bentley, M. Ion

#### **SMB-3      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

#### **SMB-4      HOLDING THE EXECUTIVE TO ACCOUNT**

Before starting this item, the Chair said he was pleased to welcome three work placement students as observers to the meeting. He then welcomed Cllr. Hilda Rhodes, Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Libraries & Transport and invited her to set out some of her key challenges as Cabinet member.

Cllr. Rhodes reminded members that she had taken on some new Cabinet responsibilities in May. The key issues that she had worked on and continued to work on were taxis and the Community Safety Partnership which involved working with different agencies to make Telford and Wrekin a safe place to live and work. She also had responsibility for flood and water management. The first issue she had had to deal with when she became Cabinet member was taxi licensing and enforcement. Her approach had been to get the taxi drivers around the table, without any officers, so she could listen to their views and to collect evidence for herself about what was happening so issues could be addressed. She had worked with the Chair of the Taxi Forum and other drivers and had visited depots and had a good relationship with the taxi companies who remained licensed in Telford. Many companies had moved to

register in Shropshire because the fees were lower and Cllr. Rhodes said another area of work was to try to get them to move back to Telford.

Members then asked a number of questions.

Questions about taxi licensing and enforcement:

- Cllr. White said there were issues with the safety of taxis and wanted to know what powers of enforcement the Council has. Cllr. Rhodes said there were night time safety issues and they had applied to the Community Safety Partnership who had funded Marshalls to work on Friday and Saturday nights and they were working well. She had met Cabinet members and officers from Shropshire to discuss the issues and they had wanted to work together with Telford & Wrekin but she has said we would negotiate but not work together.
- Cllr. Fletcher asked whether and how often vehicle safety inspections were carried out on taxis and private hire cars. Cllr. Rhodes explained that for the companies licensed in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin had no powers of inspection even though the taxis were working in Telford and Wrekin. This was one of the issues discussed with Shropshire and a team from Shropshire now came to Telford to do vehicle inspections. Cllr. McClements wanted to know how we get feedback from these inspections and Cllr. Rhodes said that teams from both Councils do the inspections together. Cllr. Rhodes said it was a concern if our residents were at risk and although Telford & Wrekin's licensing conditions were very rigorous, we had to rely on Shropshire to do the inspections on taxis licensed in Shropshire.
- Cllr. Fletcher asked what could be done about inappropriate taxi waiting and whether Shropshire could help with this. Cllr. Rhodes said it was beyond Telford & Wrekin's control. Many taxi companies had registered in Shropshire because of lower fees, but Telford & Wrekin's conditions were much more rigorous. This is why she had met members and officers in Shropshire to discuss control over the taxis in Telford and they had agreed to do spot inspections.

Questions about policing and the Community Safety Partnership:

- Cllr. McClements wanted to know more about the Police & Crime Commissioner. She said that he controls the purse strings and she was concerned to make sure that Telford & Wrekin has its fair share of funding. Bill Longmore, the PCC, had attended a meeting at Wellington Town Council and had discussed issues with cut-backs to the police and Cllr. McClements said that some residents related this to a Council issue. Cllr. Rhodes agreed it was very important issue. The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) had started to put the priorities together for Telford and Wrekin in 2012 in advance of the election of the PCC and had held several meetings with Bill Longmore after he was elected to put the issues in front of him with a timetable for work. Mr. Longmore had attended a CSP meeting and said that the partnership was going in the right direction. Cllr. Rhodes

had attended a presentation which Mr. Longmore had given at The Place in Oakengates which was good although there would be cuts to the police.

- Cllr. McClements asked for more detail about this. Cllr. Rhodes did not have exact figures with her but said that all the budget that the CSP had asked for had been granted so the work that had been planned for the next 12 months could be done. She said the CSP did fantastic work including the way they had handled operation chalice. She was very pleased with this side of her portfolio which was working very well.
- Cllr. White asked what the main challenges for the future were and Cllr. Rhodes said obviously resources were an issue and the partnership would need to continue to work together and keep up the good work with the PCC to keep resources coming in.
- Cllr. Fletcher asked about the increase in the number of night clubs and how the CSP were involved in the night time economy and large events to keep young people safe and protected. Cllr. Rhodes said the partnership was trying to get teams in these areas. Patterns of activity and incidents were analysed so that teams could be distributed in the right way and could target hot spots. The Street Pastors were also doing a good job. Cllr. Fletcher declared an interest as a trustee of the Board for the Street Pastors but said that they did not provide coverage in Wellington. Cllr. Rhodes said this had been brought to her attention.
- Mr. Olver who was present at the meeting for the next agenda item said that Maninplace had received a one-off grant from the CSP for provision for rough sleepers, homeless people and people who had been released from prison. The need for more emergency accommodation for young people had been identified by the "Bleak Mid-Winter" project and the CSP had funded a pilot for 5 emergency beds for young people presenting as emergencies between 8.30pm and 2.30am with the option to increase by a further 3 beds. Cllr. Rhodes said this was a good example of how the partnership was working.

Questions about the welfare benefit reforms:

- Cllr. McClements asked Cllr. Rhodes about her approach to the welfare benefit reforms, but the Chair reminded members that this was a new area of responsibility for Cllr. Rhodes and she was not expected to answer questions when she had not had time to get up to speed. Cllr. White explained that scrutiny had done some work on the welfare benefit reforms and he suggested the Cabinet member could sit down with the scrutiny chairs to be briefed. Mr. Olver said that the welfare benefit changes were new and people had shied away from them but people affected were now starting to show themselves and it was important to be ready for the impact and to find resources for it. Cllr. McClements explained that one of the areas the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee was interested in was how the Council is working with partners to support people through the changes. Mr. Olver said there needed to be a net in place – he and Maninplace were willing and prepared to do what they could, but when it

came down to resources they seemed to be treated as a “Cinderella” service because they provided services for the non-statutory homeless. He said that KIP had been inaugurated in 2005 and since then homelessness for the over 25s had proved to be a bigger problem than anticipated. The true scale of the problem was unknown because the number of rough sleepers was still not known. The Chair said that there were pockets of deprivation in the borough and the cuts in welfare benefits were likely to impact more.

Questions about car parking charges and enforcement:

- Cllr. White asked whether the Council would ever consider charging for car parking in the town centre and if not how parking enforcement services could be maintained. Cllr. Rhodes replied there were no plans to introduce parking charges in the borough towns and she hoped there never would be because of the likely impact on local economies and she would do her best to keep this promise. The service was managing to cope at present.
- Cllr. White said that a previous scrutiny review had looked at on-street parking and had found a lot of issues with the lines and signs on roads which made enforcement impossible. He wanted to know how much it would cost to rectify this and whether it would be done. Cllr. Rhodes said they had been trying to get the lines and signs right so that enforcement was possible and a suggestion had been made to refer this as an issue for scrutiny. Cllr. Rhodes had asked the PCC to increase the Community Safety Officers’ (CSOs) powers of enforcement and this was being considered and she was awaiting a response from the PCC.
- Cllr. Fletcher said there was an issue for residents living around schools with parents parking on the road outside their houses and said that a strict enforcement policy was needed. It had been reported to the police. She thought there was a lot of inappropriate parking around the borough. Cllr. Rhodes replied that parents need to be educated about this. She was hoping that powers would be given to the CSOs so if parked cars were causing an obstruction they could enforce the rules.
- Cllr. Fletcher wanted to know what was being done about drivers who break speeding restrictions and are a danger. Cllr. Rhodes said they could apply to the CSP for funding for traffic calming measures but this was limited and there was a need to address this with drivers by educating them, especially getting young people ready to be behind the wheel. Cllr. Fletcher said it was not only young people and that older people were speeding.
- Cllr. Turley asked whether, if the CSOs were given enforcement powers, they would enforce restrictions in “residents only” parking zones where people working in the town centre parked during the day. Cllr. Rhodes said she would hope so and would take this comment back but there could be a time issue. Cllr. Turley said one school had applied for a 20mph speed restriction outside the school but it had not been agreed because it could not be policed. Cllr. Rhodes said the big issue with CSO enforcement would be having enough resources and time to enforce everywhere and the CSOs

may focus on enforcement on yellow lines. The presentation she had attended by the PCC had said that the number of CSOs would be increased.

- Cllr. McClements asked about the policy to increase CSOs and Cllr. Rhodes said the plan was to increase CSO capacity in targeted areas. Cllr. Turley asked whether there were any Special Constables (“specials”) in the area as they have the same powers as the police, and if not, was it because there was a funding issue because they cost more than CSOs and he asked if Cllr. Rhodes could talk to the PCC about giving the CSOs more power. Cllr. Rhodes said she had already asked the PCC to give enforcement powers to the CSOs. Cllr. Reynolds said she had heard from a local special that there had been a reorganisation in West Mercia and the specials had been given reduced duties so they could only foot patrol in designated areas and would not be allowed to do response work. Cllr. Rhodes said this had been covered in the PCC’s presentation and she would provide a copy to circulate to members, and this was something the CSP would keep an eye on. The Chair asked Cllr. Reynolds if she could report back and she replied she could invite one of the active specials to a future meeting if the Board wished.

#### Questions about ICT:

- Cllr. Turley asked whether there were any plans to bring ICT for members into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Cllr. Rhodes said it was hoped there would be a move from Blackberries to a more user-friendly ICT. The Chair said that electronic notepads would save money and paper and that it was wasteful to continue as we were. He had been told that there was an issue with security on notepads, but other authorities were using them. Cllr. Reynolds said members could not access social media on their Blackberries and when so many young people use Twitter, Facebook and other social media, members risked being out of touch. Cllr. Fletcher said Cllr. Ian Fletcher had bought his own notepad but had been told by ICT that security was an issue and she said it was vital to consider this. Cllr. Rhodes agreed it was important to keep in touch with younger people and assured members that ICT was on the agenda to look at.

#### Questions about transport and blue badges:

- Cllr. White said he had heard about inconsistencies with the allocation of blue badges - there were people with disabilities or mobility problems who had not been able to get a blue badge and people who were not disabled who had been given one. He wanted to know whether the criteria needed to be reviewed. Cllr. Rhodes said she had not heard about any complaints, but she would take this back to look at. Cllr. Turley asked whether people apply by filling out a form or if they were visited and Cllr. Fletcher explained that people are assessed at hospital against certain criteria and a report is sent to the Council and Council officers did not make judgements on eligibility.
- Cllr. White raised an issue with public transport. There were major changes happening to hospital services and there would need to be good

transport links to/from and between the hospital sites. The Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Joint HOSC) had reviewed the hospital Trust's Travel & Transport Plan but had rejected it because the Trust had not spoken to Council transport officers. The Trust was now talking to Council officers and the Joint HOSC would continue to monitor this but the Chair said the Cabinet member should be aware of this and to take any necessary action. Cllr. Rhodes said she had a meeting coming up and would take this up.

- Cllr. Turley said he had noticed integrated transport buses used by Age Concern waiting around between dropping off and picking up and he thought this was not a good use of time and money when the vehicles could be redeployed during these times. Cllr. Rhodes said there had been teething problems with the service when it was introduced but the wrinkles had been ironed out and the service was now working smoothly. The main concern was that elderly people were picked up and dropped off and she had not heard about buses waiting around.
- Cllr. Rhodes informed Members about the new Marches Local Transport Body which had been set up to oversee the allocation of funding flowing through the LEP for major transport schemes. Cllr. Turley informed Members that scrutiny of the Transport Body by the Housing, Economy & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee and other LEP authority scrutiny committees had been built into the Assurance Framework and would be built into the Committee's work programme.
- Cllr. White asked about a direct rail link to London and Cllr. Rhodes said that lobbying would continue.

#### Other questions and remarks:

- The Chair remarked that Cllr. Rhodes had a very wide-ranging portfolio and asked what she had changed since becoming Cabinet member and what she wanted to change in the future and whether there were any issues with staff. Cllr. Rhodes there were no problems with staff and that she respected officers and worked well with them – this was how she worked, by listening to people so that issues could be thrashed out.
- Cllr. White asked if there was anything particularly challenging and Cllr. Rhodes said nothing was too difficult if you worked hard and worked together and she dealt with things as they came up. She said she was here to serve and work for the people of Telford and Wrekin and she wanted to make sure that she gave them value for money.
- Cllr. Turley said he was aware that Cllr. Rhodes was due to re-open Jiggers Bank which was good news for the borough and Cllr. Rhodes agreed. It had been a challenge re-routing buses but it had been managed and the Park & Ride service was good. Cllr. Turley said he was concerned about the risk of accidents at Jiggers Bank. Cllr. Rhodes said that the issue of land instability in the Gorge was in the Deputy Leader's portfolio.

There were no further questions. The Chair thanked Cllr. Rhodes for attending and she left the meeting.

## **SMB-5 HOMELESSNESS PROVIDERS**

The Chair reminded members that the Scrutiny Management Board had been due to have an update on the Homelessness Strategy and previous scrutiny recommendations at this meeting, but the item had been deferred until September when the Strategy would be out for consultation. However, Alan Olver from Maninplace and Steve Watkins from KIP had been invited to attend this meeting to discuss issues with the Board prior to scrutiny of the Homelessness Strategy in September. The Chair welcomed the visitors to the meeting and invited them to give a short overview of their organisations.

Mr. Olver started by giving some history and context to the organisations. During the 1980/90s the need for provision for homeless young people led to the development of the STAY project to provide supported accommodation for young people aged 18-25 including at Wesley House. This left a gap in provision for the 26-65 age group and KIP had been set up in 2005 as a pilot to measure the scale of the homeless problem for older people – the number of rough/street/car sleepers, sofa surfers etc. In that first year, 2005, KIP's annual target for supporting people was exceeded within 3 months and the need for emergency or temporary accommodation for the non-statutory homeless (i.e. aged 26-65) was clearly identified. There were no providers who could develop this kind of provision – the Salvation Army (which supports KIP) could not take it on - so Mr. Olver had handed over the running of KIP to Steve Watkins and set up Maninplace Estates as a community enterprise to fill the gap, providing emergency accommodation for the 25-65s. From 2003, Wesley House (STAY) had been funded by Supporting People money and the provision became supported housing, helping people to move into and maintain permanent tenancies. Supporting People became unable to continue to fund Wesley House and it had closed. This created a sudden gap in emergency accommodation for the 18-25s. KIP had extended its client group age range (26-65) to offer help to younger people aged 18-25 and at the start of 2013, Mainplace had been awarded grant funding for 5 emergency beds for 18-25s presenting as homeless emergencies. Capacity had already been exceeded and the option of adding another 3 beds was being looked at.

Mr. Watkins said he had taken over the KIP project three years ago and he had seen a steady growing need. KIP's original remit was to help people aged 25-65 although a number of under-25s turned up looking for help who were referred back to the Council and the STAY project. As the number of younger people presenting increased - they were seeing an enormous problem with the under 18-25s especially as word got around - KIP felt they were discriminating on age and the client group age range had been extended. The number of 18-25 referrals had gone up from about 2 to about 20 per quarter. Mr. Watkins tabled a report on referral statistics for April-June 2013 and trend data showing monthly registrations for 2011-2013. From April-June 2013 there were 70 referrals – people registered, and needing help. The trend data showed a massive increase year-on-year. There were seasonal fluctuations depending

on the weather – there were lower numbers in the warm months - and a huge spike in autumn 2012. In terms of resources, all the non-statutory homeless people in Telford and Wrekin come to, or are referred to, KIP. Mr. Watkins was the only full time member of staff. There was also a floating support worker who worked between KIP and Maninplace and a volunteer support worker for 1-2 mornings per week. They had managed to work successfully and worked very closely with Maninplace.

Mr. Watkins gave the members a flavour of what KIP does. When someone arrives, the first thing they do is listen to them. Sometimes problems are straightforward and can be sorted out quite quickly, but others have complex needs and can take several days. They go out onto the streets to find rough sleepers to connect with them and try to get them to engage which can be difficult. There can be alcohol or other complicating factors and it can take a long time to engage some people. People are referred to Maninplace and Alan Olver will then work with them. For example there were 2 or 3 people at Maninplace now, but it had taken a sustained effort over a long period to engage them. Some people have periods when they lapse back to rough sleeping. They had helped to keep some people out of prison.

There is a drop-in centre at KIP where people can have a wash or bath and get food or bedding. People can be referred to Maninplace or signposted to other support agencies. The relationship with the Council was getting better. There was a feeling that KIP had been “dumped on” in the past but things were now improving. If KIP was made into a “business model” it would not work. Referrals come in from all kinds of places – doctors, hospitals, the Council etc. – and KIP has to deal with them all. Maninplace had expanded from 32 beds to 78. The floating support worker continued to be funded by Supporting People but with 78 people in temporary accommodation, they do not get all the support they need.

There had been an increase in the number of under-age people (under 18s) looking for help and a shift in the number of referrals of young women – the number had doubled in the last year from 10% to 15 out of 70 (21%) in the last quarter. Women on the street face different problems to men on the street. There are also different issues with housing women – landlords don't want to keep houses open for women. Mr Watkins said they feel the weight of responsibility for women and will not let them sleep on the street but the problem was, where do they go?

Members then asked a number of questions.

- Cllr. White said scrutiny had made a recommendation in the Housing & Homelessness report about continued support for KIP and that there should be a service level agreement because there had been problems with lags in funding. He asked if they could elaborate on the relationship with the Council. Mr. Watkins said the biggest problem was the lack of resources. Things were improving. In the past, Mr. Watkins had had people turning up at 4 o'clock, when he was preparing to finish work, who had been sent by the Council without any notice and this put a massive strain on resources and was difficult to plan for. Now things were much better, possibly

because they were building a better relationship with the officers in post and there was a better understanding and rapport. Previously, people had been referred in a constant stream. They were talking to the Housing Options team and there were now on-going discussions about how the Council could work with KIP to support people presenting at the Council offices. Mr. Olver said as part of this process a Rough Sleepers protocol had been developed which set out how the Council would engage with KIP and Maninplace. A draft protocol had been written and he hoped this would be signed-off this month and he could provide a copy for the members. He could also show members information about the difficulties of people turning up at 4 o'clock or after when Mr. Watkins was finishing work. He said they were working with the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) which had part-funded emergency accommodation for people presenting after 2.30pm or into the evening who needed temporary accommodation from a one-night stop to a maximum of 10 days so there was somewhere for them to go if there was nowhere else. Mr. Olver and Mr. Watkins had worked together to achieve this. People presenting are risk assessed so that appropriate staffing can be arranged at night for people to talk to.

- Cllr. McClements said she was pleased to hear the relationship with the Council was improving and this needed to continue as this was an issue which had been flagged up by the scrutiny review. She said there seemed to more joined-up working and wanted to know if the welfare benefit reforms had been a catalyst for this. Mr. Olver said there had been a shift in the way the Council thinks about homelessness. There had been limited understanding and interpretation of homelessness both locally and nationally, and part of the change was that Council officers were now looking at the issue in a wider sense and beyond the statutory duties so that the non-statutory homeless were referred to local support organisations. He was pleased to see this shift in acknowledging the extent of the problem and the wider issues around homelessness.

Mr. Olver continued that the difficulty was only having 2 workers at KIP, only one of whom provided a first response which was totally inadequate. KIP/Maninplace had wanted to re-bid for Supporting People funding, but the tenders had been issued in a way they had not expected – the Council was looking at contractual arrangements with 2 organisations who would then sub-contract out. Maninplace was too small to bid so they could only hope that the contractor appointed would sub-contract to KIP and Maninplace. They had been approached by 2 of the bidders about potential collaboration, but there were other organisation bidding who had not been in touch with them and this was a concern because Maninplace could not bid for funding in its own right and they would just have to wait for the outcome of the procurement. It did not bode well if they could not access resources with the increased pressure.

Maninplace provided various types of accommodation including emergency, temporary and supported accommodation for people who could not live elsewhere because their chaotic lifestyles meant they were unable to maintain a tenancy. These people had day-to-day support to move them

towards being able to maintain a tenancy independently so they could move on to permanent accommodation. Mr. Olver said there was a growing need for more longer term accommodation to help people affected by the “bedroom tax”. In the last six weeks, Maininplace had set up a subsidiary called “Live In Rooms” as a social lettings service to provide subsidised rooms let out on a longer-term basis. This was really important because people need a sense of belonging and community and they can not get this unless they are in a secure home.

- Cllr. White asked how they help people overcome problems with affording deposits and rent in advance. Maininplace was not a registered social landlord and was therefore exempt under Universal Credit rules whereby housing benefit is paid directly to the tenant, so rent could be paid directly to them as a provider. There was a risk that if housing benefit is paid directly to tenants under Universal Credit that the tenants would not pay their rent and this would threaten the future of the provision. They were liaising with the Benefits Manager to look at this. Maininplace had moved to charitable trust status and the trust underwrites deposits and up-front rent and does not use the same degree of checks that other lettings agencies go through. They charge one week rent up-front which is around £90 and if the person does not have the money they work with them to help them save it.
- Cllr. McClements asked why there had been an increase in the number of women referrals. Mr. Watkins said they look for the reasons for homelessness and they have to delve down deep. For example, the reason for being homeless could be attributed to “family breakdown” or “relationship breakdown” but this doesn’t get to the contributory causes and can skew the figures. For example there could be alcohol, drug or mental health problems or a combination of problems and they then need to understand the reasons for the problems, so they take the person back to the last default position. Mr. Watkins is trained in counselling skills but is not a qualified counsellor so people who wish to go into their problems are signposted to other services – but not all people want to go into their problems.
- Cllr. McClements asked what support their clients get from social services. Mr. Olver said it was poor. Relationship breakdown was still the primary reason given for homelessness but over time they start to find out the real reasons which could be quite different. In the last quarter 4 people had accessed alcohol support, but when you delve into the reasons for homelessness the number of people with alcohol problems is much higher but only a very small proportion access services because the others don’t fit the criteria for help. As money reduces, the criteria for help tightens and people are left wanting.
- Cllr. White asked whether they had links with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) which commissions health services including mental health provision. Mr. Olver said they didn’t have any links and Cllr. White suggested this needed to be developed. Mr. Olver said their bread and butter business is homelessness and they are an intensive housing organisation. To offer support, they need people to help them and the 10

hours of the floating support worker doesn't touch what they need. For people to be able to access services, the support organisations need to understand the connection with homelessness. They had started talking to Portico House in Wellington about setting up a dry house. They linked into the CSP because there were a high number of homeless people with convictions or engaged in criminal activity. They need to piece together what is there and link in. Cllr. White said this was why it was important to link in with the CCG. Mr Watkins said alcohol misuse had reached epidemic proportions and support often breaks down because of alcohol – people miss meetings and the floating support worker does a very good job but it is a challenge. Mr. Olver said talking to people with alcohol problems can be like talking to two different people – one day they seem rational and responsive but drink changes them and takes over their thinking process and how they behave. Mr. Watkins said their behaviour can change before they drink, then they get drunk, then they become depressed, so there can be a three day period when they just can't engage with the person.

- Cllr. Fletcher asked whether alcohol issues were worse than drug issues. Mr. Watkins said the risk reduction strategy is better for drugs – people can function when they are on drug therapy like methodone, but there is nothing equivalent for alcohol.
- Cllr. Fletcher asked whether people with alcohol or drug problems can also have mental health issues like depression and Mr. Watkins said often they do. He said they speak to mental health services, but if alcohol or drugs are involved, there is a dual diagnosis and mental health services will not engage. Mr. Olver said it was a revolving problem - at least at Maninplace people have a roof over their heads and they can start to work with them. There were examples of people they had helped who were now living back in the community, but it had taken five years or more of working alongside them and it was a long, hard slog.
- Cllr. White wanted to know what else they thought the Council needed to be doing. Mr. Olver said that the main issues were resourcing, and being able to access services because they felt they were coming up against a brick wall sometimes. They work tirelessly to give people a better quality of life – when no one else does. Their success is built around this mantra - they put themselves where no one else does and they make a difference.
- The Scrutiny Group Specialist picked up the point about the Supporting People procurement and asked Members whether the Board would like to consider making a recommendation about the process including an evaluation of how the primary providers will work with local providers. Mr. Olver said there had been an 18 month consultation and they had taken an active part all the way through, so they had been surprised and disappointed with the way the tender had come out. He said things may have happened at the last minute that he was not aware of that had changed things, but if they ended up being disadvantaged they would want to challenge and he would like to see included in the contract documentation that local providers have to be involved. The Chair said he would write on behalf of the Board to recommend that this happens and that he would not abandon KIP and

Maninplace. Mr. Olver said that he had helped to get the Supporting People money into the Council at the start, but he had started to feel that the funding was not being used as it was intended and was being used to help make sure a “good” tenant was in a property and Supporting People was about so much more. For this reason he felt it was good timing to go back out to tender but he wanted to see clients benefit.

- Cllr. Fletcher said she had been appalled when Wesley House had closed and wanted to know how they worked with STAY. Mr. Olver said there was an extremely good long-standing relationship with STAY. STAY gets referrals through the Single Allocation Panel (SAP) process. People fill in an application form and the Panel meets fortnightly to allocate single units to people from the list. However, if young people present as an emergency, they cannot wait for the panel to meet and there was nowhere for them to go and this was a gap in provision. Cllr. Fletcher said she was horrified that this had not been resolved. Mr. Olver said the 8 bed places had become 16 bed places when Wesley House closed because the cost of overhead at Wesley House had been saved, but it did not enable them to pick up young people in emergencies so Maninplace now picks up them up with the 5 bed places mentioned.
- The Chair asked how they had been involved in the development of the Homelessness Strategy. Mr. Olver said they had had a lot of involvement and had made a contribution. He felt it was very positive that the intention was for the strategy to be a live document so that it could keep pace with what is happening and the priorities could be changed as we go along. There was no point writing a 3 or 5 year strategy that then sat on a shelf. Cllr. McClements said it had been evident from the scrutiny review and that things moved on quickly which was why the review had taken so long. Mr. Olver said that things were also moving on with the choice based lettings system Choose Your Home – there were about 20,000 people on the waiting list but only about 20 properties advertised. Mr. Watkins said there had been serious consultation on the Homelessness Strategy and the picture that KIP had provided had been taken on board so the figures were accurate - KIP did a lot of work on the annual count. Mr. Olver applauded the Council for not adopting the nationally prescribed method of calculation but for using its own local calculation.
- Cllr. Fletcher thanked Mr. Olver and Mr. Watkins for the help they provide. Mr. Olver said they help a lot of people who need short-term help but they also help people with longer term problems including end of life support. Mr. Watkins said the Telford people were good volunteers.

When there were no further comments or questions, the Chair thanked Mr. Watkins and Mr. Olver for attending and for their work, and invited them to contact him with any further issues. The visitors then left the meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Chair send a letter on behalf of the Scrutiny Management Board to the relevant officers recommending that the Supporting People tender evaluation takes account of arrangements with local providers.**

## **SMB-6      CHAIR'S UPDATE ON SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Scrutiny Chairs provided an update on the work of their Committees as follows:

- Cllr. Reynolds reported that the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee had scrutinised progress on the Safeguarding and Early Help Cost Improvement Plan in June, and a further update would be brought later in the year. The Managing Director had attended the last meeting to present his response to the Committee's comments on the budget with a focus on financial planning, commercial income generation and shared services/outsourcing. A briefing note on Single Status had been provided. The Chair wanted to know when this would come back to the Committee and Cllr. Reynolds said this was still to be decided but possibly at the next meeting. The next meeting would be joint with the Co-operative & Communities committee to monitor the impact of the welfare benefit reform policies.
- Cllr. McClements reported that the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee's review of the Co-operative Values/Employee Commission had almost finished. Members had spoken to staff from across the Council and the only remaining interviews were with staff without computers. It had been interesting and the employees seemed to value the face-to-face contact with members. The feedback had been mainly positive. The Scrutiny Officer was starting to draft the report. Cllr. McClements and Cllr. Reynolds had attended the Good Scrutiny Awards ceremony in London for the work on the welfare benefit reforms. The Committee would be moving onto look at other welfare related issues and there were suggestions about the Crisis Network, debt advice and the impact of the reforms on partners which needed to be scoped.
- Cllr. Turley reported that the Housing, Economy & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee continued to monitor the waste procurement process and the next briefing was in July. The Committee was moving onto reviewing empty properties and private landlords and would start this in August. The next item in the work programme was the Business Improvement Districts, but there were new suggestions to look at Car Parking Enforcement and the Marches Local Transport Body which had been mentioned earlier on in the meeting.
- Cllr. White reported that the Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee had finished the report on Continuing Healthcare. The Clinical Commissioning Group had not wholeheartedly accepted the recommendations but he hoped that changes would be made to the process as a result of the recommendations. A key issue were hospital services, and Cllr. White and the co-chair of the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) had met the Chief Executive of the Hospital Trust to express their concern about the uncertainty about services and the need for an open consultation without delay. The Chief Executive, Peter Herring, had welcomed the interest of the JHOSC. Cllr. White said it was very important to have a discussion in public, for example there was pressure from Shrewsbury about the location of the hot and cold stroke services. Telford & Wrekin

had hosted the regional scrutiny network meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> July. Around 40 people had attended and it had been very well received. The network had agreed to work cohesively and to look at ways of feeding into national policy through the Select Committees.

Cllr. Ion was not in attendance but had provided a written report on the work of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee which had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting and was noted.

The Scrutiny Group Specialist informed members that a report on the voting rights of the co-optees on the JHOSC would go to the Council Constitution Committee in July.

The meeting ended at 1.00pm.

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....