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## Annual Scrutiny Report 2017/18

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## Foreword



The challenge for scrutiny is always to focus on the important issues! In local government there are many competing priorities to deal with and so this year has been about prioritising our work to ensure that Scrutiny is looking at decision-making in the areas which matter most to the priorities of the Council and the Cabinet, and which are also of greatest concern to the Borough's residents.

Like many Local Authorities, Telford & Wrekin continues to face major financial challenges and as the Council continues to look for innovative ways to work with our partners and the Community to meet these challenges head on, Scrutiny must keep pace to ensure residents are still getting the services they need and that service providers remain accountable for their delivery.

This report sets out the varied work that Scrutiny has undertaken this year looking at wide range of issues including NHS transformation, Fire and Rescue Authority governance, grounds cleansing and maintenance, civil parking enforcement and some key issues which affect our young residents: school organisation and Child Sexual Exploitation.

I think it is important to note that this work has taken place against a backdrop of changed resources for Scrutiny and whilst this remains a challenge for 2018/19 we will continue to seek to deliver effective, focused and relevant scrutiny that adds value to the council's decisions and properly reflects the concerns of the local community.

In closing, I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge and thank everyone who has participated in the Scrutiny process this year including officers, Members, the community and our partners.

**Councillor Nathan England**  
**Lead Scrutiny Member 2017/18**

## What is Scrutiny?

Scrutiny acts as a check and balance to ensure decision making in local government is democratic, effective and transparent. Local authorities with a Cabinet system – where a relatively small number of elected members are responsible for day-to-day decision making – must have a scrutiny function. Scrutiny is a way for elected members who are not on the Cabinet to have a greater influence in policy decisions and the work of the Council.

There are four nationally accepted principles set out by the Centre for Public Scrutiny:

- Providing "critical friend" challenge
- Reflecting the voice and concerns of the public
- Taking the lead and owning the scrutiny process
- Making an impact on the delivery of public services

### Who carries out scrutiny work?

Scrutiny is carried out by elected members who are not on the Council's Cabinet and members of the public co-opted for expertise in a particular area or to represent certain groups. They sit on Scrutiny Committees which carry out scrutiny work. The committees reflect the overall political balance of the Council.

In 2017/18 Telford & Wrekin had five scrutiny committees:

- Scrutiny Management Board
- Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee
- Customer, Community & Partnership Scrutiny Committee
- Finance & Enterprise Scrutiny Committee
- Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee – certain members of this committee also sit on the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

### How is scrutiny work carried out?

Scrutiny is can be carried out in many different ways.

The Scrutiny Management Board takes the role of 'holding the Executive to account' and holds regular sessions to question Cabinet members in public.

The Scrutiny Committees carry out the majority of other scrutiny work. This usually involves reviewing services or policies at Scrutiny Committee meetings. A review can be a one-off item discussed at a meeting or may be considered in detail over a series of meetings. Reviews may involve discussions with Cabinet members, officers at the Council, managers and officers from other organisations, organisations providing a service, service users or members of the public – whoever may be relevant to the topic being discussed.

At the end of a review the committee may make recommendations where they think things could be improved. Where possible the Scrutiny Committees meet in public but scrutiny members can also hold working group meetings to gather evidence for a review.

## **How do we monitor the effectiveness of scrutiny?**

The priority for any piece of scrutiny work is that it has an impact and makes a difference for local people. There are many ways that scrutiny can make a difference – some are easier to measure than others. Some of the commonly used measures of effective scrutiny work are listed below but sometimes scrutiny can make a difference simply by raising an issue for public debate.

- **Holding the Executive to account** - questioning Cabinet members in public about their policies and actions helps ensure decision making is open and transparent. Many people argue this is an end in itself.
- **Recommendations to Cabinet** – a common measure of the impact of scrutiny work is the number of recommendations made to and accepted by Cabinet. The majority of scrutiny recommendations in the past have been accepted.
- **Recommendations to external organisations** – there are certain organisations with a statutory duty to respond to scrutiny but they do not have to accept scrutiny recommendations. Our approach is to engage partners positively in a scrutiny review so that recommendations are relevant, realistic and more likely to be acted on.
- **Policy development** – examples include examining draft policies to consider the implications for local people and suggesting improvements, or giving feedback as part of a consultation on a proposed new policy or policy change.
- **Holding health service commissioners and providers to account**
- **Monitoring performance of health services**

The number of meetings provides an indication of how resources were committed to scrutiny over the year.

## Scrutiny Management Board

Members: Councillors Nathan England (Chair), Stephen Bentley, Andy Burford, Kevin Guy, Gilly Reynolds, Peter Scott and Jacqui Seymour



The Scrutiny Management Board has overall responsibility for co-ordinating and monitoring the delivery of the Scrutiny Work Programme and for allocating resources between the Scrutiny Committees so that the workload is managed effectively.

This year, the Scrutiny Management Board decided to take a different approach to the way in which we hold the executive to account by only calling Cabinet Members to attend a meeting for a question and answer session if we felt there were specific issues to be addressed. The Board met with the Leader and Managing Director at the end of the year for a vigorous discussion during which the Leader reflected on the last 12 months and Board Members provided challenge on a number of issues including civil parking enforcement, work towards improving the Council's Ofsted rating to 'good', child sexual exploitation, the procurement of a new grounds cleansing and maintenance contract and what that means for the continuance of Parish Environmental Teams, plans for Telford@50, and local development. It was a very informative discussion and I would urge all Scrutiny Assembly Members to attend any future holding to account sessions.

### Call-In

Call-in is a way for scrutiny members to examine a decision taken by Cabinet, or by officers under delegated authority, before the decision is implemented. The rules for calling in decisions are set out in the Council's Constitution and in the Scrutiny Handbook. There were no call-in requests to the Scrutiny Management Board during 2017/18.

## **Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee**

Members: Councillors Kevin Guy (Chair), Steve Barnes, Liz Clare, Joy Francis, Jayne Greenaway, Janice Jones, Jane Pinter, Hilda Rhodes and Karen Tomlinson

Co-Optees: Mrs C Healy, Mrs S Fikeis, Mrs L Fowler, Mrs C Morgan, and Mrs M Ward



The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee's role is to scrutinise and monitor the planning and performance of the Council's services to children and young people and the Council's Corporate Parenting role.

In 2017/18 the Committee held four formal meetings and some of the highlights of our work are set out below.

### **School Organisation Plan 2017-2022**

The Committee engaged in a met with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to receive the Plan and a detailed update on the process involved in school planning, including funding and early years provision. We engaged in robust challenge of the Plan. question and answer session.

### **Multi-Agency Working Against Child Sexual Exploitation**

The Committee received an annual progress report from the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) on the Committee's review of multi-agency working against CSE 2015/16 and considered the progress made against the recommendations in the review. We were pleased to note the positive progress made against the recommendations, including the success of a CSE Raising Awareness Day in which misconceptions had been challenged and some of the perceived gaps in knowledge and understanding on CSE, addressed. There was a focus on building cohesive communities, accurate statistical data, education and licensing. We welcome the continued efforts of the LSCB to drive, monitor and challenge progress and the strengthened ability of multi-agencies to deal with CSE and the awareness raising which continued as part of the strategy to tackle CSE.

The Committee plans to continue to monitor the impact of the actions which have been taken to address our recommendations after a further 12 months.

## **Customer, Community & Partnership Scrutiny Committee**

Members: Councillors Gilly Reynolds (Chair), John Ashford, Kevin Guy, Clive Mason, Leon Murray, Jacqui Seymour and Barry Tillotson  
Co-optee: Mr D Johnson



The role of the Customer, Community & Partnership Scrutiny Committee is wide ranging, covering a number of key areas relating to the development of Telford & Wrekin as a Co-operative Council, the planning, delivery and performance of services provided to local communities, issues relating to how the Council works with partner organisations, housing, homelessness, transport and highways, regeneration, waste and recycling, customer services, community engagement, welfare reform, enforcement. The Committee is also the designated body for scrutiny of the Safer, Stronger Communities Partnership and of Flood and Water

Management.

In 2017/18 the Committee held two formal meetings and some of the highlights of our work are set out below. The Committee has also engaged with the Finance & Enterprise Scrutiny Committee to conduct a review of Civil Parking Enforcement.

### **West Mercia Fire & Rescue Governance Proposals**

Following the launch of the West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner's proposals on governance arrangements for local fire services, the Council Leader suggested that Scrutiny undertake a review and provide our recommendation to Cabinet on whether or not the proposals should be supported. The Committee met with the PCC and representatives from Shropshire & Wrekin FRA.

After considering the PCC's proposals and also the independent report commissioned by the two FRAs, the Committee found no merit in the PCC's proposals, especially within the context of a well-performing FRA, and recommended that Cabinet do not support the PCC's proposals for reasons of financial considerations, service resilience, and replacement of the existing Fire and Rescue Authorities. The Committee was pleased to note efforts at collaboration and encouraged this to be continued.

Cabinet positively received the recommendations and did not support the PCC's proposals. However, the Committee was disappointed to note that following consideration of all feedback from the public consultation, the PCC decided to move forward with submitting a full business case to the Home Office which was approved by the Home Secretary in March 2018.

### **Grounds Cleansing & Maintenance Contract**

As the existing Grounds Cleansing and Maintenance Contract draws to an end, the Committee has sought to oversee the procurement of a new contract through an OJEU competitive bid procedure. In order to be able to influence the process at key stages in the procurement, the Committee, decided to monitor the contract at specific intervals. Following an initial meeting when we received an overview of the process, we subsequently received an update which included a copy of the specification. Our next update is expected early in the next municipal year when the bidder companies have been confirmed and towards the end of 2018 prior to the finalisation of the contract by Cabinet.

### **Third Party Engagement**

The Committee Chair has been working with key officers to begin scoping this cross-service Review. An in depth review on this topic is planned to commence in July 2018.

### **Selective Licensing**

Following previous consultation on this topic, the Committee had planned to monitor the operation of the proposed Selective Licensing scheme once it had been introduced but, following a robust consultation with the community, Cabinet decided not to implement the scheme.

## **Finance & Enterprise Scrutiny Committee**

Members: Councillors Nathan England (Chair), Stephen Bentley, Nigel Dugmore, Raj Mehta, Rob Sloan, Charles Smith and Dave Wright.  
Co-optees: Mrs C Mason-Morris and Mr R Williams



The main role of the Finance and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee is as a consultee for the Cabinet's budget proposals. However, our remit also covers oversight of the service and financial performance of Council services, income generation and how the Council is promoting economic growth in the local economy.

In 2017/18 we held three meetings and some of the highlights of our work are set out below.

### **Service & Financial Planning 2017/18 to 2019/20**

A two year strategy had been scrutinised thoroughly in 2016/17 and the Committee's recommendation at the time, that the Adult Social Care precept should be implemented at a rate of 2% a year for three years (2017/18-2019/20) had been accepted and implemented. For that reason, scrutiny of the Service and Financial Planning strategy this year was minimal and the main opposition group did not submit an alternative budget proposal. A meeting was held with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Commercial Services and Economic Development and the Chief Finance Officer. Overall, we welcomed the budget proposals and in particular the proposal to invest in Adult Social Care and safeguarding.

### **Civil Parking Enforcement**

Our in-depth review of Civil Parking Enforcement began in 2016/17 following a suggestion by Cabinet and subsequently a Motion referred by Council. The Committee worked with the Customer, Community & Partnership Scrutiny Committee to undertake investigations which included receiving financial modelling data from Council Officers, receiving the views of a number of parties. However, the Committee had lingering concerns regarding financial viability. Negotiations between the Leader and the Police and Crime Commissioner subsequently led to an increase in financial support available to support the implementation of CPE and the Committee now looks forward to working with Officers and the Cabinet to develop the Council's Business Case for submission to the Government.

## Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee

Members: Councillors Andy Burford (Chair), Mark Boylan, Stephen Burrell, Liz Clare, Nigel Dugmore, Raj Mehta, Leon Murray, Tim Nelson and Hilda Rhodes

Co-optees: Mrs J Gulliver, Mrs C Henniker, Mrs H Knight and Mr D Saunders



The Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee scrutinises and monitors the planning and performance of the Council's adult social care services and health service matters. Some Members of the Committee are also appointed to work jointly with colleagues from Shropshire Council to scrutinise health issues that impact on the wider health economy in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin.

In 2017/18 we held four Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee meetings and some of the highlights of our work are set out below.

### **Stability and Sustainability of the Residential and Domiciliary Care Market; Adult Social Care Commissioning**

The Committee welcomed the Council's approach but were very concerned about the longer-term viability of the sector given local government's declining ability to resource and a related shortage of key staff. We will, therefore, continue to monitor closely Under ASC Performance. Looking forward, we intend to undertake an in-depth investigation into the customer experience and the extent of unmet need in the community.

### **Adult Social Care Performance, Budget and Savings; Older People and Adults with Learning Disabilities Strategies**

The Committee focussed on specific areas of adult social care budget and performance including adults with learning disabilities and older people, one of the biggest areas within adult social care. The Committee welcomed the positive progress made in reducing the number of people in residential care, increasing client choice and support to stay at home. New assistive technology being used by social workers and occupational therapists as part of care assessments and reviews was demonstrated for the Committee as this had been identified as a key feature of future plans in adult social care, supporting the strength based approach.

### **STP Neighbourhood Working**

The Committee has a keen interest in neighbourhood working under the umbrella of the STP, looking forward, we will be seeking more indications of the extent to which this will reduce demand on the health acute services. We also intend to obtain engage with local GPs to obtain further feedback on this issue.

## Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Members: Councillors Andy Burford (Co-Chair), Stephen Burrell and Hilda Rhodes

Co-Optees: Mrs C Henniker, Mrs H Knight and Mr D Saunders



The Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee is appointed where a relevant NHS body consults more than one local authority about substantial reconfiguration proposals. In respect of the Future Fit Programme for reconfiguration of Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust's (SATH's) provision of "safe and sustainable patient services specifically in emergency and critical care", this Council has delegated its health scrutiny function to a mandatory joint health scrutiny committee in conjunction with Shropshire Council (the JHOSC).

The Committee met six times in 2017/18, and some of the highlights of the work we have carried out with colleagues at Shropshire Council are set out below.

### Future Fit Programme

The Committee has continued to oversee and respond to the various stages of development of the Future Fit Programme, such as short listing, non-financial appraisal, and has received various presentations from officers of the Programme. To date the Future Fit intention has been to identify a preferred option upon which the CCG's will consult. This decision was made on 10 August 2017 where the Joint CCG Committee agreed unanimously to support moving towards public consultation on all clinically and financially viable options with a preferred option of the emergency care site at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and a Planned Care Site at the Princess Royal Hospital, Telford. With the announcement in March that the funding needed to deliver Future Fit had been secured, the Committee began the process of responding to consultation plans and engagement activity to ensure the consultation is fair and accessible to all residents in Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire.

The Committee have continued to seek assurances about the viability of Future Fit particularly about how the transfer of activity to community and primary care and away from hospitals is to be resourced - there are still a number of key questions to which the Committee have not had answers.

### Midwife Led Unit Service Review

The Committee considered the new service model that proposes to improve clinical and financial sustainability of midwifery led care as well as improving access to services and outcomes for women and their families. Improvements to rural access and equity of access are the Committee's main concerns and we will continue to feed into the consultation process for the remodelling of the service.



## Looking Ahead

Early in each calendar year the Scrutiny Management Board makes contact with Councillors and the Council's key partners to seek suggestions for the topics that Scrutiny should consider over the next municipal year.

During June 2018 the Scrutiny Management Board received the suggestions that had been put forward and agreed which issues met the Scrutiny criteria and should be prioritised for the 2018/19 work programme and recommended to the Scrutiny Committees for consideration.

A list of the prioritised suggestions and issues can be found at:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20237/scrutiny/371/scrutiny\\_work\\_programme](http://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20237/scrutiny/371/scrutiny_work_programme)

## Contacts

To find out more about Scrutiny visit: [www.telford.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.telford.gov.uk/scrutiny)

To find meeting dates and agendas for scrutiny meetings visit: [www.telford.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.telford.gov.uk/meetings) or call the Democratic & Scrutiny Services Team on 01952 383215.

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