



Telford & Wrekin  
COUNCIL

Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT

# SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

**Friday 27th March 2015**

**11.00 am**

**Meeting Room 3 - Ground Floor, Darby  
House, Coach Central, Telford TF3 4JA**

**Lead Officer:**

**Fiona Bottrill**

**Scrutiny Group Specialist**

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# SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

## AGENDA

**Meeting to be held on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015  
at 11.00am in Meeting Room 3, Ground Floor, Darby  
House, Telford**

1. **Minutes** Appendix A  
To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014
2. **Apologies**
3. **Declarations of Interest**
4. **End of Year Report on Scrutiny Work Programme 2012-2015** Appendix B  
To enable the Board to reflect on this work programme, and make any recommendations for the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2015/16.
5. **Scrutiny Management Board Report – Access to Affordable Housing** Appendix C  
To receive this report for information.
6. **LGA Consultation on Sector Led Improvement** Appendix D  
To receive the response to the LGA consultation on “Taking Stock: where Next with Sector Led Improvement” for information.
7. **Chairs’ updates**  
To receive verbal updates from the Scrutiny Chairs on progress since the previous meeting and any issues arising.

### **Membership of Board**

Cllr V Fletcher      Cllr C Mollett      Cllr D White (Chair)  
Cllr K Guy            Cllr S Reynolds  
Cllr A McClements   Cllr C Turley



## **SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at 10.30 pm in Meeting Room 7, Darby House, Telford**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs. D. White (Chair), A. McClements, C. Turley, K. Guy, S. Reynolds

**ALSO ATTENDING:** Cllrs. J. Seymour, E. Carter, J. Greenaway.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Cllr. C Smith, K. Callis; Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, T. Keever; Home Improvement Team Leader; J. Bax; Bromford Housing Association; L. Heath; Sanctuary Housing, J. Griffiths; Bournville Village Trust, D. Wells; Wrekin Housing Trust A. Johnson; Wrekin Housing Trust, S. Hosking; Locality Manager Wrekin Hub, P. Taylor; Director of Health, Wellbeing and Care; J. McGillivray; Adult Social Care Service Delivery Manager; D. Moseley; Democratic Services Officer; F. Bottrill; Scrutiny Group Specialist.

### **SMB-8 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meetings of the Scrutiny Management Board held on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

### **SMB-9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None

### **SMB-10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

### **SMB-11 UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TELFORD HOUSING OPTIONS AND ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the representatives of the Housing Associations for attending. He set out that the Committee had invited them to take part in the discussion at the meeting, but he noted that the Committee did not have the power to scrutinise the work of Registered Social Landlords. He provided some back ground to the Council's approach to housing when he had been Chair of the Housing Committee and that the Council had been ahead of its time. For a number of years scrutiny had been interested in housing issues and following the closure of Choose Your Home

there are now a number of different ways that people can register for housing. The Committee wanted to know how these systems are working.

T. Keever updated Members on the implementation of Telford Housing Options following the closure of the Choose Your Home system in the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014. The Telford Housing Options system is an interactive 24/7 system where people can log on to get advice e.g. about landlord problems and to find accommodation. Telford Home Finder which started at the same time and enables people to find accommodation with approved landlords. A briefing had been held for Elected Members on the new systems.

Members were also informed that prior to the transition to Telford Housing Options all the people who had registered with the Choose Your Home System as were in most need of accommodation were informed of the changes – this was supported by an in-house call team. People were also informed that if they registered with homes direct before 19<sup>th</sup> July that the date they had registered their housing need with Choose Your Home would be taken forward.

T. Keever also updated Members on the Land Lord Accreditation Scheme. There were 41 accredited land lords and letting agencies. There were about 5 new properties a week being registered on this scheme and the scheme also involved the work of a Tenancy Relations Officer.

There had been 16,000 people on the Choose Your Home waiting list. Not all of these were homeless and there was evidence that not all the people registered were in housing need but rather people wanted to move house. People who currently use the Telford Housing Options tool will still be put through to the Homeless Service if this is appropriate. An important part of the transition to Telford Housing Options had had been managing expectations.

D. Wells and A. Johnson supported the transition from the previous Choose Your Home Scheme. There had been 16,000 people on the list but there had been around 1000 lettings per year so many people had been waiting on the list indefinitely. Many of the people registered were 'wanting' not 'needing'. The Wrekin Housing Trust spoke to everyone who was in the 'urgent' housing band before the system changed to let them know how to register on the new systems. The Committee were informed that the Wrekin Housing Trust currently had a small waiting list, 372 people on the date of the meeting had had checks done. Under the previous system there had been a significant failure rate for new tenancies. The current checks are cover tenancy responsibility and financial capacity which means that people are getting housing and staying there longer.

L. Heath explained that Sanctuary Housing Association does not hold a waiting list, this is managed through Homes Direct. The experience of the Trust under the current system was that there is a lack of demand for properties. She gave examples of accommodation that had become available but there were few or no bids from people from the Telford and Wrekin area. Half of the homes were going to private tenants as the bids were not coming through Homes Direct.

The Chair expressed serious concern at this as he was aware that there are

large number of people who need housing.

It was reported that on the Homes Direct System there 363 houses had been let to people who were registered as Band A, the number of properties let to B and C tenants were 200 and 391 and the number of properties let to band D was 356.

J. Griffiths confirmed that the Bournville Village Trust also struggled to let properties. They had been informed that one and two bedroom properties had been in short supply.

L. Heath added that the Sanctuary Housing Trust currently had 3 properties vacant but were not able to let them.

S. Hosking said that his team look weekly at Homes Direct and encourage people to make bids and will support them to do this. He also informed Members that some prospective tenants can find it difficult to register, but that once they are on the system then it works. Not everyone has access to a computer. Under the Choose Your Home system the homelessness team could make proxy bids for houses but that this was no longer possible. The Team is continuing to support people to register their housing need. He also informed the Committee that up to September 2014 there had been 1247 calls to Telford Housing Options of which 847 had been handled. This highlighted the capacity of the team to respond to the number of calls and in the last few weeks 2 agency staff have been appointed and the process has started to recruit 2 new posts. It was reported that there were 141 people in temporary accommodation. While the capacity of the team had been low it was difficult for the staff to support people to get permanent accommodation as they were taking calls.

The Chair said that there is huge demand for housing which was demonstrated by the number of people in temporary accommodation. He said that if the system makes it difficult to register this may explain why the people in need are not bidding for the houses that become available.

Cllr. McClements commented that it appeared that some people had not registered by the 19th July and she was concerned that the staffing levels were low and that people were not able to get the professional advice they needed.

J. Bax explained that the Homes Direct system was a 16 page application but that the Trust was not getting inundated with calls about how to complete it.

Cllr. McClements said that there was obviously an issue and it is important to take a step back and understand why this situation was occurring.

The Chair said that a lot of people who tried to use an online system would give up if they did not understand how the system worked and what they needed to do.

Cllr. Seymour said that the figure of 16,000 people registered on the Choose Your Home system was not an accurate reflection of the number of people needing housing in Telford and Wrekin. If people are in real housing need they will come to the Council. The links between the organisations are failing as it

does not make sense that the RSLs have to go outside of the Borough to find residents.

The Chair said that in Sutton Hill there are houses of multiple occupation of a low quality and people need to be able to register for the housing in the new high quality development.

Cllr. Reynolds asked if it would be possible for the RSLs to contact the Council if there is a property that they are having difficulty to let before it goes to tenants outside the Borough. She commented that a 16 page online form can be daunting and that through her work with students she was aware that there are people who do not have access to a computer at home.

L. Health explained that when the Sanctuary Housing found it difficult to let a property all the customers were contacted and it was still available on the Homes direct Website.

Cllr. Reynolds said that if people use the computers at a library the staff there may not have the time or the knowledge of the online systems to support people to complete the online forms. She concluded that the Council and the housing associations need to talk to each other.

J. Griffiths said that through the Homes Direct Scheme none of the properties had been allocated to a homeless applicant supported by the Council. If properties have been available staff at the Council have been emailed.

The Chair said that the Council have details of the people who need homes, but it is also important to involve voluntary organisations. There is a paperless online system – but it is essential that people have access to this.

D. Wells said that he did not agree that people are not able to access the service as Choose Your Home was an online system, the mail shots uses were less than 2%. The issue is that people do not know how to access the new systems. Of the 4,000 visitors to the Wrekin Housing Trust website 2,000 were not eligible or the Trust do not have housing that they want. It seems that these people are not finding their way to Homes Direct. The Wrekin Housing Trust have details that can be shared. He also highlighted that there is a demand issue as a result of the Welfare Reforms and so the Trust is struggling to let 2 bedroom properties in some areas. Another consequence is that to fully occupy a four bed room house it may be necessary to have 8 people to occupy it. The Wrekin Housing Trust has previously had low demand for 3 bedroom properties. He gave the example of a three bedroom property in Brookside that had received 6-10 bids and the Trust was still struggling to find a suitable tenant.

Cllr. Carter said that when older people down size, they do not want to move to a flat but want a bungalow. People can blame the Government and the housing providers for the shortage of bungalows but the underlying reason that more bungalows are not built is that they are more expensive.

A. Johnson said that the Wrekin Housing Trust is building bungalows where it

can – the Trust is responding but not in the numbers that are needed.

T. Keever said that there is a lot of preventative work to help people maintain tenancies and also that some people are going to the private rented sector and so are not coming through the system. If the Registered Social Landlords are finding it difficult to let properties they can be advertised on Telford Home Finders. It can be difficult to place some tenants, as there are some areas people do not want to go to and so they will decline a suitable property in the area. It is valid to decline a property for a medical reason. There can be a perception that if someone is homeless they will automatically get a 'council house'

Cllr. Greenaway asked if the Council could notify people who are registered homeless if the RSLs have a property that cannot let.

J. Bax added that it is not in the interest of the Housing Associations to have a property that is vacant.

S. Hosking said that he had only recently been aware that the people that the Council supports were not getting through the system.

Cllr. Greenaway said that the Council had taken the option not to be a full partner in the Homes Direct system. If there Council were a full partner this would enable council staff to make proxy bids.

The Chair said that it was clear that something was not working as there is always more demand than supply. He said his view was that people in real housing need would not turn down a property because of the area it is in.

Cllr. Guy commented that he understood that the Council would have been charged £2,000 to have access to Homes Direct.

Cllr. Greenaway added that there was an initial charge of £2,000 and then £250 to advertise a property to let,

The Committee recognised that the Council was not a housing provider and therefore would not need to let properties through Homes Direct but it would be beneficial to be able to make proxy bids for people who are registered as homeless.

The Chair said that £2,000 is a small price to pay to ensure that people have access to the housing they need.

T. Keever confirmed that the Council would not be uploading properties but would be uploading demand. However this could be problematic if the council bids for a suitable property that the prospective tenant does not want to take.

Cllr. A McClements asked if the Local Authority Officers and staff from the RSLs have previously met to discuss these issues?

T. Keever responded that she works closely with S. Hosking and his team and

the Council is currently working on the Housing Allocations Policy. The reason a meeting has not been held with colleagues from the RSLs is lack of time.

Cllr. McClements said that it seemed that communication was an issue. It was explained that there had been a forum through the Wrekin Housing Partnership, this was not a formal meeting but an opportunity to discuss demand and supply.

Cllr. Carter said that when he had been a Member of the Council's Cabinet there had been a Housing Regeneration Forum where developers and providers met.

Cllr. McClements said that she would recommend that a forum to resolve the issues identified at the meeting should be set up as a matter of urgency.

A.Johnson said that there is a Homeless Partnership but that this has a specific focus on homelessness.

The Chair summarised the issues identified at the meeting. He said that everyone who worked in this area is caring and wants to provide decent housing for the people of Telford and Wrekin. There are a lot of people in unsuitable accommodation, many of them in Houses of Multiple Occupation. It is important to ensure that people in need of housing are able to access the systems to get access to decent affordable housing. The providers have to accept people on to their list even though it may be difficult to house them. The recommendation from this Committee must be that the Council and RSLs must find a solution that means that they can work together to better meet the need of people who need housing.

Cllr. Seymour asked about the role of the Wrekin Landlords Association,

T. Keever responded that there were discussions taking place about bloc association. The Association does not vet landlords and some may have operated for many years but not updated the way that they work.

The Chair said that the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee was carrying out a review of Drug and Alcohol services. Accommodation had come up as one of the issues during this work – particularly the need to enforce the accreditation criteria.

T. Keever explained that the Landlord Accreditation Scheme is a voluntary scheme which promotes good landlords. The staffing for this service was increased under the last restructure.

The Chair said he was also concerned about the ability to handle the number of calls to Telford Housing Options. He asked if agency staff would have the training to be able to provide the necessary advice?

T. Keever said that it has only been possible under the new system to quantify the number of housing calls but that the demand would have been there previously. Now that the service has been established there will be a focus on providing a better customer service.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The Committee agreed to defer the discussion to agree the recommendations until the end of the meeting to enable to officers attending for the next item to make their presentation. The Chair said that everyone who attended the meeting would be send a copy of the recommendations.

Cllrs. Smith and Carter and K. Callis, T. Keever, S. Hosking, J. Bax, L. Heath, J. Griffiths, D. Wells and A Johnson left the meeting.

## **SMB-12      SAFEGUARDING ADULTS IN TELFORD AND WREKIN**

The Chair welcomed the officers and asked them to introduce themselves.

P. Talyor, Director of Health, Wellbeing and Care introduced J. McGillivray who had been appointed as the Adult Social Care Service Delivery Manager who had taken over the role previously held by D. Robson who had retired.

P. Taylor said that Members had received a copy of the Adult Safeguarding Annual Report and that this was at a time of great change in Adult Social Care. The report also updated Members on the implications of the Care Act. Previously it was good practice to have an Adult Safeguarding Board but this was not statutory as it is for Children's Services. However, under the Care Act from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 the Adult Safeguarding Board would be on a statutory footing. The requirements on the Board is to work with partners, including health and the police to understand the context for adult safeguarding, to develop a strategy, to develop an action plan and produce an Annual Report that details outcomes. He explained that the current Adult Safeguarding Board is pan-Shropshire and that the chair of the Board has rotated between officers in the two authorities. From the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 Telford and Wrekin will have its own Safeguarding Adults Board and this has been agreed with Shropshire. There is a strength in this approach and the Board will have an independent Chair.

J. McGillivray highlighted that the chair's role will be similar to the independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

P. Taylor said that it was recognised that there will be a synergy between the Boards for example with regard to domestic abuse.

J. McGillivray presented the 2013/14 Annual Report. She explained that the report is retrospective and as such some of the data is out of date and it a collection of reports from separate organisations rather than a document that sets out clear priorities. She said that the key areas worth noticing are that there is close working with the Regional Group so that 12 of the 14 authorities have the same policies and procedures in place. This provides economies of scale . There is an additional chapter on large scale investigations. This may relate to an organisation or an individual and sets out how the different organisation

would work together to respond to this. JM highlighted page 6 which set out the activity and performance. This showed a high number of referrals as people are now more aware of abuse – both public and professionals. This is a national trend.

It was explained to the Committee that an audit of the safeguarding service found that the service was struggling with the number of issues. In managing this it is important to respond in a proportionate way and to manage risk. The service is currently being re-structured and it has been recognised that there is a need for a specialist team for Adult Safeguarding. It was recognised that there is a judgement to be made about how to best use resources to respond to alerts e.g. can some be dealt with by other organisations? The national approach to adult safeguarding has been to move away from processes / meetings and to work more with the individual to identify what they want to help keep safe.

P. Taylor clarified an important difference between the responsibilities of the adult and children's safeguarding boards. Adults with capacity can do what they want.

J. McGillivray explained that under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 if a person has capacity, understands the decision and consequences they have the right to make unwise decisions.

P. Taylor said that sometimes people feel that the Council should do something – but if the person has capacity the local authority has no power.

J. McGillivray referred to the Annual Report and said that the information on adult safeguarding training was in some areas incomplete. The individual organisations provided the information that has been included in the report and in some cases not all the information was provided or it was provided in a different format.

P. Taylor added that this is partly because the current report is a pan-shropshire document but in future the Boards report will be for Telford and Wrekin.

P. Taylor said that the Council's internal audit were currently carrying out some work to assess safeguarding practice against policy. This work was in final draft but the Scrutiny Committee might want to follow up any recommendations.

Cllr. McClements asked what the implications were for adult safeguarding as people live longer and the number of people with dementia and Alzheimer's increases. She also asked about the role of the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

J. McGillivray responded that the CQC are the regulators for care and all health care providers, day care. Personal assistants are not regulated. If the CQC had a concern about safeguarding there is a formal alert form that they send to the local authority. This would then be screened and it would be determined if it is a quality monitoring issue, in which case it would be referred to contract monitoring or if there is a risk of harm. If an inspection of the service is carried out and the concerns are so serious that all residents are at risk of harm the

large scale strategy would be implemented. The CQC have legal powers to take action. The CQC has not previously taken very little action but under the new inspection process this will hopefully change.

P. Taylor said that the Government has put more resources into the CQC.

J. McGillivray explained that when there are concerns about the quality of care provided by an organisation if new management are brought it is important to ensure that the practice changes as changes do not always filter down. The CQC has the powers to close a provider. The Council can stop purchasing care from that organisation. It was explained that the intervention process does make a difference to the quality of care. She gave the example of concerns relating to a provider; the CQC met with the Registered Provider and Care Home Manager who decided to self suspend and not take any new people until the service was safe. There are many different organisations and professionals who have a responsibility to ensure that services are safe e.g. local pharmacists, tissue viability nurse,

The Chair explained his concern about personalisation and the risks this presents. He gave the example of an older person who could not do shopping so gave a bank card and PIN number to a carer who then stole money from the account. When this was reported to the police they could not take action because the PIN number had been given. He also gave an example of a care home that was reducing costs by removing meal options for residents.

P. Taylor said that it will be the responsibility of the Adult Safeguarding Board to hold all organisations to account. In terms of the provision of meals it is condition or registration that residents are given a choice.

J. McGillivray said that in response to the example given of financial abuse the police response was correct. However, when a person is planning their care if they do employ a carer through a personal budget, the planning process should include 'how are you going to keep yourself safe?' and consider questions like 'What do you do if ....?' Choice and independence are important but we must also ensure that people are safe.

The Chair asked how someone who is bedbound at home would be expected to access money?

J. McGillivray responded that the large scale investigations have been around values, ethics and quality of care not finances.

P. Taylor said that as well as responding to abuse adult safeguarding must also be preventative.

J. McGillivray said that Healthwatch are very interested in adult safeguarding and have said that it will help them to target their work. Returning to the Annual Report she highlighted page 31 which set out the implications of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards for individuals in hospitals and residential settings.

P. Taylor said he had brought this to the attention of the senior management

team and that there is one off money to respond. The DOLS legislation was in response to a case in which a person with learning difficulties was in hospital and was not detained under the mental health act but the professionals used their power to say why the family could not take the person home. The High Court said that the professionals had no legal power to detain the person, this power only through the Mental Health Act.

J. McGillivray added that the court case made clear that it does not matter how nice an environment is – if someone was to get up and walk out – if they are stopped this would be a deprivation of liberty. “ A gilded cage is still a cage”. There are currently 3 people who are able to carry out DOLS assessments and this is in addition to their own job.

P. Taylor explained that a DOLS assessor has to be trained and that this training requires extra resources.

J. McGillivray said that this is national issue and the Department of Health is realising that this is a very significant issue. Locally there are 400 people waiting for a DOLS assessment. Under both Safeguarding Boards there will be a DOLS sub group. The requests for DOLS assessments have to be prioritised and she gave the example of a patient who was in intensive care in hospital following a car accident. The hospital trust may request a DOL but this would be a low priority. Discussions are taking place with Keele University about a Best Interest Assessor training course which would be completed over 1 week. All social workers would be trained.

Cllr. Seymour asked about people who stay at home but are still very vulnerable. How does the council know what is going on and protect the interest of these people?

J. McGillivray said that there is no easy answer but the Board has a number of objectives that cover care at home e.g. domestic violence and financial abuse. It is important to discuss these issues with the person who needs care e.g. how will your money be managed?” and explaining that being at home may be important because it provides independence but there are risks and these should be managed.

The Chair thanked the officers for their report and said the Committee looked forward to receiving the report from the statutory Adult Safeguarding Board the following year.

## **SMB – 13      CHAIRS' UPDATES**

Cllr. Guy reported that it was agreed at the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee at the meeting the previous week that the Committee would undertake a review on multi-agency working against Child Sexual Exploitation. This had been discussed with the Cabinet Member and the Chair of the Children's Safeguarding Board. It was explained that this was a very large piece of work to undertake and that the remaining work programme has been put aside. As this was a change to the agreed work programme Cllr. Guy

asked for the Board's approval.

The Chair supported this review and said that it is a timely piece of work.

Cllr. McClements said that she was pleased that the Cabinet Member had asked Scrutiny to look at this issue.

Cllr Reynolds said that she was happy for the Committee to look at this work.

Cllr. Guy said that as it was a huge area of work the review would need to be focussed. It would not look at ongoing cases but look at what had been learned from earlier work including Operation Chalice. The Committee has agreed to interview senior people from different organisations but also to talk to front line staff. The Jay report into CSE in Rotherham had criticised scrutiny for not testing out the information they had been given by senior officers. This follow up work would be carried out by a sub group which may co-opt people with knowledge of this issue.

Cllr. Turley said he had attended a briefing where it had been confirmed that CSE is still an issue in Telford and Wrekin.

The Scrutiny Group Specialist explained that it had been discussed that once there was a draft terms of reference this may be published for comment to ensure that people have confidence in the scope of the review and how it will be carried out.

**AGREED:** The Committee supported the Scrutiny Review of CSE to be undertaken by the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee.

Cllr. Guy left the meeting.

#### **SMB – 14    RECOMENDATIONS ON ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE ACCOMMODATION**

It was agreed that recommendations would be made that as a matter of urgency a forum should be established to improve communication between the Council and Registered Housing Landlords to ensure that people in housing need in the Borough have access to the accommodation that is available.

The recommendations should also cover the following points:

- Capacity to respond to the number of calls to Telford Housing Options
- Providing information about facilities where people can access computers to register online
- The Council and housing providers look into the option of making their registration systems accessible from mobile devices.
- The need to ensure that the registration system enables people to register housing need even if they do not have all the information required to complete the full form
- The Council negotiates access to make proxy bids

The Chair said that he would follow up the discussion with local voluntary organisations that work with people who are homeless to see how the system work for their clients and service users.

**AGREED:** The Scrutiny Group Specialist will draft recommendations based and circulate these to the Members present at the meeting for comment. The final recommendations would be agreed with the Chair of Scrutiny Management Board.

**SMB- 15      SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2014/15**

The Scrutiny Group Specialist presented the work programme update. Following the previous discussion the review of Multi-Agency Work against CSE would be added to the work programme.

The meeting ended at 12.47pm

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD - 27<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2015**

**2012/13-2014/15 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME – END OF YEAR REPORT**

**REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY TEAM**

**1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the report is to provide information to enable the Scrutiny Management Board to monitor the performance of the scrutiny function and scrutiny team in delivering the 2012-2015 scrutiny work programme.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**2.1 That the Scrutiny Management Board note the report**

**2.2 That the Scrutiny Management Board make resolutions or recommendations arising from information contained in the report.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

In June 2014 the Scrutiny Management Board agreed to review the Scrutiny work programme rather than go through the process of drawing up new work programme in the final year of this council term. Scrutiny Management Board recommended the issues that the Scrutiny Committees should focus on during the year.

In November the Scrutiny Management Board received an interim report to update the Board on the delivery of the work programme. Annual reports have been presented to Council that report on the Scrutiny work programme in the previous two years.

**4. 2012/13-2014/15 WORK PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

**4.1 Delivery of the Work Programme**

The table below shows the 3 year scrutiny work programme for 2012/13-2014/15 and what was delivered in each year.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
<b>SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD</b>			
Holding the Executive to Account	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>n/a</b>
Planning Scrutiny work Programme 2014/15	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>G</b>
Scrutiny Chairs' Updates (standing item)	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>
Changing the Council & Local	<b>G</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>

Topic	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Communities Together- the Co-operative Way			
Strategic Vision for the Council	n/a	n/a	G
Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Police & Crime Panel (PCP) update and budgets	G	G	R
Domestic Violence	R	G	n/a
Community Safety Plan	n/a	G	n/a
Homelessness Strategy	R	G	n/a
Flood & Water Management (annual scrutiny recommended)	R	G	R
Public Health Transition		G	n/a
Appointment of Town & Parish Council co-optees	G	n/a	n/a
Scrutiny Recommendations Database	A	A	R
Managing cross-cutting issues	G	n/a	G
Changes to the Constitution and Scrutiny Handbook from changes to legislation	A	G	n/a
Choose Your Home (Access to Affordable Housing)	n/a	n/a	G
Adult Safeguarding and Care Act update ( Joint with HACSC)	n/a	n/a	G
Housing Allocations Policy	n/a	n/a	R
Scrutiny Work Programme Half Year Report	n/a	n/a	G
<b>BUDGET &amp; FINANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>			
Service & Financial Planning Strategy (budget proposals) (standing item)	G	G	G
Service & Financial Planning Report – 2011/12 Outturn	G	n/a	n/a
Local Government Finance: Business Rates Retention, New Homes Bonus etc.	G	n/a	/n/a
Capital receipts (Audit Committee)	G	n/a	n/a
Savings proposals agreed September 2012	G	n/a	n/a
New Funding Formula for Schools	G	n/a	n/a
Welfare Benefit Reform policies (with Co-operative & Communities)	G	G	G
Safeguarding and Early Intervention Cost Improvement Plan, and Securing Permanency report	G	G	n/a
<i>Opposition group alternative budget proposals</i>	n/a	G	G
Working with partners / shared services	n/a	n/a	R

Topic	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Section 106 Annual Report			R
Benefit Fraud ( joint with Audit Committee)			G
<b>CHILDREN &amp; YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY</b>			
Children in Care Placement Strategy (in-depth review)	G	n/a	
Provision of Primary School Places (in-depth review)	A	G	G
Youth Offending Service	R	G	n/a
Ofsted action plan (Safeguarding and LAC)	G	G	n/a
Ofsted action plan (Fostering)	G	G	n/a
CIC Performance Monitoring Dashboard	G	G	G
Education attainment	G	G	G
Youth Unemployment (In-depth review Youth Services)	R	A	G
LCSB briefing	G	R	G
Early Intervention programmes (in-depth review)	R	R	R
Leaving Care Grant	n/a	G	n/a
Care Placement Budget (with Budget & Finance)	n/a	G	n/a
Feedback from LGA Peer Review	n/a	G	n/a
Monitor implementation of recommendations incl: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IRO Annual Report</li> <li>• Outcomes from Queensway Care Contract</li> <li>• Missing children return interviews</li> </ul>	n/a	G	n/a
School Improvement	n/a	G	G
Multi-Agency working Against CSE ( in-depth review)			A
Early help			R
SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Reforms			R
<b>CO-OPERATIVE &amp; COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY</b>			
Co-operative Council updates	G	G	G
Welfare Benefit Reforms: Council Tax Support Scheme Discretionary Housing Payments Local Crisis and Resettlement Assistance	G	G	
Welfare Benefit Reforms: How the Council and partners are supporting people through changes	A	n/a	n/a
First Point for Business update	G	n/a	n/a

Topic	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Impact of changes to leisure concessions policy	G	n/a	n/a
In-depth review of Co-operative Values and Employee Commission	A	G	G
Provision of debt advice, role of credit union, capacity of food banks	R	G	n/a
Implications of the withdrawal the Local Crisis Assistance and Resettlement Assistance funding	n/a	G	n/a
Support for people who have had their benefit sanctioned	n/a	G	G
Impact of recommendations on the Management of Community Centres	n/a	G	n/a
Community Loan Scheme	n/a	n/a	G
Community Centre business Plans	n/a	n/a	R
<b>HEALTH &amp; ADULT CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>			
Continuing Healthcare	G	A	A
Meals on Wheels	A	G	
Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)	R	R	n/a
Alcohol Strategy	R	G	A
Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Board Annual Report ( Joint with SMB in 2014/15)	R	G	G
Standing item: Health and Social Care Policy Developments (including changes to Health Scrutiny)	G	G	n/a
<b>JOINT HEALTH OVERVIEW &amp; SCRUTINY</b>			
Travel and Transport Plan	A	G	n/a
Stroke Review	A	G	n/a
West Midlands Ambulance Service and Make Ready	A	A	n/a
Reconfiguration of Hospital Services	A	G	G
111 Service	A	G	n/a
Ophthalmology	G	n/a	n/a
SaTH Foundation Trust Application	A	n/a	n/a
Relocation of Head and Neck Surgery	G	n/a	n/a
Children's Surgery	A	G	G
Emergency Department Review	A	A	n/a
End of Life Care	R	R	n/a
Future Fit	n/a	n/a	G
<b>HOUSING, ECONOMY &amp; INFRASTRUCTURE</b>			

Topic	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Waste Services Procurement process	A	G	n/a
Empty Properties and Private Landlords (in-depth)	A	G	G
S106 / CIL (deferred in line with Shaping Places)	R	R	A
Business Improvement Districts and attracting jobs to Telford & Wrekin	R	R	n/a
Car Parking Enforcement and 20mph speed limits outside schools ( <i>deferred</i> until 2016)	R	R	n/a
Questions to Cabinet member for holding to account session	G	n/a	n/a
Shaping Places consultation process	n/a	G	n/a
Governance of LEP	n/a	n/a	A
Marches Local Transport Body	n/a	n/a	R

- G** Item has been to scrutiny including where further work was identified  
**A** Item under way and partially completed  
**R** Item outstanding or deferred beyond the period of the work programme

## 4.2 Scrutiny Meetings

The Scrutiny Management Board set a benchmark of six formal meetings per committee per year. The scrutiny committees hold as many meetings as possible in public session in the interests of transparency and public involvement. However, members may hold informal working group meetings to gather evidence as part of a scrutiny review.

The table below shows the number of meetings held by each committee during each of the last 3 years and the total over the period. Joint meetings have been accredited to the lead Scrutiny Committee to avoid duplication of counting.

Committee	Benchmark total	Formal committee 2012/13	Working group 2012/13	Formal committee 2013/14	Working group 2013/14	Formal committee 2014/15	Working group 2014/15	Total 2012/15
Scrutiny Management Board	18	6	0	4	2	3**	1	16
Budget & Finance	18	7	0	7	1	6*	0*	21
Children & Young People	18	6	4	7	4	5	1	27
Co-operative & Communities	18	4	4	3	1	2	1	15
Health & Adult Care	18	8	11	7	4	3*	8*	41

and Joint HOSC						**		
Housing, Economy & Infrastructure	18	1	5	2	6	1**	0	15
Total	108	32	24	30	18	20	11	135

\*the Budget and Finance and Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committees held 1 joint committee meeting and 1 joint working group meeting during 2014/15

\*\*Members of the Housing, Economy and Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee attended the Scrutiny Management Board meeting that considered implementation of Telford Housing Options and led to the report on Access to Affordable Housing.

Members of the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee attended the Scrutiny Management Board meeting that considered the Adult Safeguarding Board Annual Report and update on the Care Act.

**Not reported** in the table are:

- Other council meetings attended by scrutiny members to avoid duplication of work e.g. Budget & Finance scrutiny work with Audit Committee on debt fraud.
- Chair's briefings with officers from partner organisations and NHS partners
- Scrutiny Chair "Keep in Touch" meetings with Cabinet Members and senior Council officers
- Regional and national scrutiny network meetings e.g. West Midlands Overview & Scrutiny Network, West Midlands Health Scrutiny Network, National Overview & Scrutiny Forum.

### 4.3 Outcomes from Scrutiny Reviews

The tables in the preceding sections are quantitative measures of activity. The table below attempts to show the qualitative outcomes of scrutiny work. The indicators used are all measures of effective scrutiny. The table includes work carried out during 2014/15 only. Outcomes from work carried out in 2012/13 and 20113/14 were reported in the 2013/14 end of year report and in the 2012/13 Annual Scrutiny Report.

Topic	Recommendations to Cabinet / Council	Recommendations to other organisation	Recommendations to service area	Contributed to policy development	Executive held to account	Performance monitoring	Report noted	Involvement of partners	Involvement of service users or public	Other
<b>Scrutiny Management Board</b>										
Access to Affordable Housing	Y			Y	Y		Y	Y		
Scrutiny Work Programme						Y				
Agreeing Process to Scrutinise Budget Proposals										Process agreed
Safeguarding Adults in Telford and Wrekin						Y				
Strategic Vision for the Council					Y		Y			
Scrutiny Chairs' Updates							Y			
<b>Budget &amp; Finance Scrutiny Committee</b>										
Service & Financial Planning Strategy 2014/15-2015/16 (budget proposals)	Y			Y	Y					
Opposition group alternative budget proposals	Y									
Adult Care Budget and Savings ( Joint with Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee)				Y		Y			Y	
Benefit Fraud ( Audit Committee)						Y				
<b>Children &amp; Young People Scrutiny Committee</b>										
Review of Youth Unemployment	Y			Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	
Monitoring recommendations of Scrutiny Review of Provision of Primary School Places						Y				
School Improvement						Y				
Education Attainment						Y				
CIC Performance Monitoring Dashboard						Y				
Recruitment and retention of social workers						Y				

Topic	Recommendations to Cabinet / Council	Recommendations to other organisation	Recommendations to service area	Contributed to policy development	Executive held to account	Performance monitoring	Report noted	Involvement of partners	Involvement of service users or public	Other
Taking Parents out of school							Y			
Review of multi-agency working against CSE					Y			Y	Y	
<b>Co-operative and Community Scrutiny Committee</b>										
Welfare Benefit Reforms (with Budget & Finance) Supporting vulnerable people who have had their benefits sanctioned	Y					Y		Y		
Community Loan Scheme										Verbal update to working group meeting
Update on implementation of recommendations from review of Co-operative Values and Employee Commission										Update to meeting 24 <sup>th</sup> March
<b>Health &amp; Adult Care Scrutiny Committee</b>										
Continuing Healthcare						Y		Y		
Meals on Wheels	Y			Y				Y	Y	
Adult Safeguarding Annual Report and Care Act Update ( with SMB)						Y	Y			
Adult Care Budget and Savings (Joint with Budget and Finance Scrutiny Committee)				Y		Y			Y	
Alcohol Strategy										Not completed
<b>Shropshire and Telford &amp; Wrekin Joint Health Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b>										
Future Fit		Y		Y				Y		
Review of modernisation of mental health services including Castle Lodge		Y		Y		Y		Y		
Update on work of the Shropshire Community Health Trust							Y	Y		
<b>Housing, Economy &amp; Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee</b>										
Bus Subsidy	Y			Y						
Update on Empty Properties and Private										Update circulated to

Topic	Recommendations to Cabinet / Council	Recommendations to other organisation	Recommendations to service area	Contributed to policy development	Executive held to account	Performance monitoring	Report noted	Involvement of partners	Involvement of service users or public	Other
Landlords										Members
Shaping Places consultation process S106 / Community Infrastructure Levy										Briefing circulated to Committee
Access to affordable housing (Joint with Scrutiny Management Board)	Y			Y	Y		Y	Y		

#### 4.4 Scrutiny Recommendations

A key measure of success is the number of scrutiny recommendations accepted. The table below summarises the number of recommendations made, the number of recommendations accepted, partially accepted or rejected and a list of the formal responses submitted as part of consultations or policy development. Not shown in the table are the numerous informal suggestions made by scrutiny to Cabinet members or officers during discussions at meetings which are not monitored but may nonetheless have had an impact.

Summary of Recommendations 2014/15						
Recommendation made to:	Made	Accepted	Rejected	Partially accepted	Awaiting response	Unknown
Cabinet	36	29 (80%)	2(6%)	5(14%)	0 (0%)	0
SMT / service area	0	0	0	0	0	0
Employees	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scrutiny	2	2	0	0	0	0
External organisations	23	23 (100%)	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	59	52( 88%)	2 (4%)	5 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Formal responses to consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service &amp; Financial Planning Strategy 2015/16-2017/18</li> <li>• Main Opposition Group Budget Proposals</li> <li>• HM Treasury and Communities and Local Government Service Transformation Panel</li> <li>• To be completed - Quality Accounts for Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust, West Midlands Ambulance Service, Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust and South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare Foundation Trust.</li> </ul>					

\* NHS organisations have responded to the recommendations regarding Future Fit and the Review of the Modernisation of Mental Health Service. However, as these are ongoing programmes some responses require further information or clarification as the programmes progress.

#### **4.5 Scrutiny Suggestion**

One online Scrutiny Suggestion was received this year regarding the chairmanship of Full Council meetings. The suggestion asks if there is a Scrutiny Committee that would review the appointment process and role of the Chair.

#### **4.6 Regional and National Scrutiny Network**

Telford & Wrekin is a member of two regional scrutiny networks:

##### **a) West Midlands Overview & Scrutiny Network**

The network is for members and officers across the region to exchange information on policy changes affecting scrutiny and to share views and experience on scrutiny related issues. The network has no formal standing as a joint scrutiny committee but has started to make its mark nationally for its pioneering work.

Cllr. Derek White was appointed Chair in 2013/14 and reappointed in 2014/15. The Network has continued to develop links with Parliamentary Select Committees which has resulted in the development of a Good Practice Guide for Local Government Scrutiny working with Parliament. Members of the Network also visited West Minster and met with the Chair of the Communities and Local Government Select Committee, the Clerk of this Select Committee and attended the Select Committee meeting in the public gallery. Both of these pieces of work have been supported by the West Midlands Parliamentary Outreach Officer. The Network also started to develop a working relationship with SOLACE ( Society of Local Government Chief Executives) and met with Mark Rogers, President of SOLACE.

Cllr. White will continue to chair the network into 2015/16.

##### **b) Regional Health Scrutiny Chairs and Officers Group**

The purpose of this network is to provide a forum for national and regional health bodies and policy makers to inform scrutiny about proposals and consultations affecting health services in the West Midlands. It is also a forum for discussing and exchanging views between member authorities.

Cllr. Derek White attended all of the meetings in 2014/15 which included working with the Care Quality Commission, NHS England, developing regional health scrutiny in response to the 2014 regulations. The information is used to inform the work of the Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee and the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

#### **4.7 Good Scrutiny Awards**

The Scrutiny Management Board selected 3 pieces of scrutiny work for submission to the 2014 Centre for Public Scrutiny Good Scrutiny Awards. Two of these pieces of work were shortlisted for an award.

Following this success Scrutiny Management Board decided to run the Telford and Wrekin Good Scrutiny Award. Each Scrutiny Chair nominated a piece of work for an award and all Elected Members and Scrutiny Co-optees were invited to vote for the best piece of scrutiny work. The joint winners of this were:

- a) Scrutiny of the children in care placement strategy including costs and care leavers, by the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee
- b) Budget Scrutiny by the Budget and Finance Scrutiny Committee.

Work is underway to make submissions for the 2015 CfPS Good Scrutiny Award.

#### **4.8 Call-in and Key Decisions**

##### **a) 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. Under the LEP Governance Arrangements the Housing Economy and Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee will consider call-in of decisions of the LEP Joint Executive Committee.

There were no Call-in requests to Telford & Wrekin Scrutiny Management Board during 2014/15. ( Herefordshire Council's General Overview and Scrutiny Committee met in January 2015 to consider the call-in of the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership Joint Executive Committee's decision on the Marches Enterprise Zone taken on 11 December.)

##### **b) Key Decisions**

Provisions in the Localism Act 2011 require that:

- Where a Key Decision is not published with 28 clear working days notice, the relevant Scrutiny Chair must be notified of the decision to be taken, or
- Where a Key Decision is not published with 5 clear working days notice, consent must be sought from the relevant Scrutiny Chair for the decision to be taken, or
- Where a decision contains information exempt under legislation and at least 28 clear days notice has not been given, consent must be sought from the relevant Scrutiny Chair for the report to be exempted.

Six requests were made during 2014/15:

July 2014 - Request for exemption of Item not published as such in the Notice of Key Decisions and Private reports / meetings. Cabinet Decision: Revision of RIPA policy document to be noted. Appendix of the report included the Office of Surveillance Commissioners Inspections Report which is a restricted document.

Decision of Scrutiny Chair: Request Approved.

September 2014: Notification of Key Decision not included in the Notice of Key Decisions. Cabinet decision: Approval of prudential borrowing to meet conditions of HCA funding agreement regarding gypsy and traveller site. Scrutiny Chair notified.

October 2014: Request for exemption from Call-in. Cabinet decision: termination of existing agreement between the Council, Sainsbury's and St. Modwen in relation to the sale of Station Road, Newport site and to seek approval for residential led development of land at Station Road, Newport. Decision of Scrutiny Chair: Request Approved.

November 2014: Request for exemption of Item not published as such in the Notice of Key Decisions and Private reports / meetings. Cabinet decision. Report on rationalisation of Property Investment Portfolio containing commercially sensitive information. Decision of Scrutiny Chair: Request Approved.

December 2014 Notification of Key decision not Included in the Notice of Key Decision. Joint LEP Executive Committee Decision: Marches Growth Deal, Proposition for the Retention of Receipts from Proactive Stewardship of HCA Land Assets. Scrutiny Chair notified.

February 2015: Approval of Key Decision not Published in Notice of Key Decisions. Cabinet Decision: Procurement update not included in notice of key decisions through administrative omission. Decision of Scrutiny Chair: Request Approved.

## **5.0 SCRUTINY TEAM**

During 2014/15 Steph Jones was successful in gaining a secondment to the Cooperative Council and Commercial Delivery Team from mid September 2014 – June 2015 . The position of Scrutiny Officer was advertised internally in line with council's procedures and Deborah Moseley was appointed on a secondment and took up the position early December 2014.

## **6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

The Scrutiny Committee's consider the equal opportunities implications of the issues in the Scrutiny Work Programme.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There is a revenue budget of £123k in 2014/15 relating to Scrutiny and the Scrutiny work programme is managed within this. Any financial implications arising from recommendations have been highlighted and considered as part of the relevant reports. Scrutiny is an important part of the budget consultation process which is reflected in the work programme and is a key piece of work for the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee which feeds into the Council's overall budget strategy.

## **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The work undertaken by the overview and scrutiny management committee is subject to statutory regulation. The role and authority of the scrutiny function is set out in the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) at part 1A, Chapter 2 and associated legislation.

Specific rules relating to key decisions as referred to in section 4.8 of this report are set out in the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012. Further, the Council's own procedures to meet the statutory requirements for scrutiny are contained in the Council's Constitution and in more detail in the scrutiny handbook.

MJC 16.03.15

## **9.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications resulting from this report

## **10.0 WARD IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct ward implications resulting from this report

**Report prepared by:**

**Fiona Bottrill, Scrutiny Group Specialist: 01952 383113**

**Deborah Moseley, Scrutiny Officer: 01952 383114**

## **Scrutiny Management Board Report and Recommendations on Access to Affordable Housing**

At the Scrutiny Management Board meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014 the Committee received information on the implementation of the Choose Your Home Scheme and heard from the 4 main Registered Social Landlords in Telford and Wrekin. The Board were concerned that, while it was reported that the Choose Your Home scheme start up phase had worked well, there is a lack of communication between the different housing providers and the Council – a significant concern was that 3 of the Housing Providers reported difficulties in letting properties to eligible local people. It was reported that of the 363 properties let by these 3 RSLs none were let to people from Telford and Wrekin who were statutorily homeless and being supported by the Council and some properties were let to residents from outside Telford and Wrekin. The Board was also informed that in October 2014 the Council's Telford Housing Options number had received 1247 call of which 847 were handled and that 2 agency staff were being recruited to increase the capacity of this team to manage the calls.

Following the Committee Meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> November the Chair of Scrutiny Management Board met with senior staff from Maninplace and the KIP Project that provide support and accommodation to the vulnerable and homeless. The Key points from this discussion were:

The demand for the services provided by Maninplace and KIP have increased significantly. The examples given were that from November to mid January the demand for the Bleak Midwinter Service was 68% higher than the previous year. It was also highlighted that of the 92 accommodation units that Maninplace manage 50% are taken by long term tenants. A high proportion of the people seeking accommodation are through Maninplace are aged 18-25 years. 45% of the clients between April and December 2014 were from this age group. The number of women seeking support has also increased and now account for 1 in 3 clients.

Both services find it very difficult to access social housing for their clients. In many cases the reason the individuals seek support is because they have drug or alcohol issues, chaotic lifestyles, have previous criminal convictions, mental health issues and financial difficulty / debt and therefore do not meet the criteria for social housing. If Maninplace is not able to provide its intensive housing managed accommodation directly the only option for their clients is to find accommodation in the private rented sector in houses of multiple occupation.

Mental health is a significant issue for people finding accommodation through Maninplace and KIP. The monitoring data showed that it was the most frequent secondary reason for someone becoming homeless. This would indicate that mental health issues are in many cases the underlying reason behind the primary issues such as family break down or financial problems. It was identified that there is a large gap in the service and accommodation for this client group.

The 100 hours of floating support that Maninplace has and is provided through the Thrive Partnership has enabled people to maintain tenancies albeit temporary accommodation.

The Board therefore agreed a number of recommendations to Cabinet and partners that will address this problem and some of the underlying causes:

- 1) A forum for the 4 major RSLs, Maninplace and similar providers, should be urgently established by the Council to oversee and co-ordinate demand and housing supply issues. The forum should ensure that the Council, RSLs and organisations such as Maninplace are communicating effectively to ensure the Council can discharge its statutory homelessness duty effectively and that local people in the most need are housed in the Borough. This will also be an opportunity to clarify roles and responsibilities of the different organisations to ensure that tenants / prospective tenants are able to register and that their progress through the system is monitored.
- 2) That the Council brokers discussions with the RSLs and Maninplace regarding the management of hard to let properties. This should include the option for the RSLs to lease hard to let properties to Maninplace who would manage this on a long term basis. The discussions about the working relationship between Maninplace and the RSLs should also consider extending the floating support provided through the Thrive Partnership to vulnerable tenants with the RLS.
- 3) The Council works with partner organisations to identify other suitable accommodation that can be let to and managed by Maninplace to extend the provision of accommodation to vulnerable people in the Borough.
- 4) That in line with co-operative values, the Council works with relevant organisations to ensure that local people have the skills to access online services to register their housing need and bid for properties. The Board recommends that information is easily available to the public on the Council's website and other channels that set out where there is:
  - unsupported on line access ( including opening times)
  - supported on line access where staff / volunteers can support someone to complete the on line registration for housing ( including opening times)
  - access to training to enable people to register and bid independently. ( it was suggested that this could be linked to the ASL funding that the Council currently disperses)

The list of potential services and partner organisations identified were:

- Wrekin Housing Trust
- Sanctuary Housing
- Bournville Village Trust
- Bromford Housing
- First Point
- Libraries
- Community Centres

- Job Junctions
  - TCAT
  - CAB
  - Donnington Life Long Learning Centre
  - Maninplace
  - The Salvation Army KiP Project
- 
- 5) Where online services can be currently accessed through mobile devices this should be publicised to tenants / prospective tenants. The Local Authority and Registered Housing Associations should work together to ensure where possible all services should be easily accessible via mobile devices.
  - 6) That systems are in place to ensure that anyone in housing need is not deterred from registering and finding accommodation due to difficulty in providing the information required by the online registration systems.
  - 7) That the capacity of the Homelessness Service is monitored to ensure that the response rate for calls improves without resulting in resources being diverted from other homelessness services.
  - 8) That the Council negotiates access to the Homes Direct and the Wrekin Housing Trust system so that proxy bids can be made on behalf of people who are statutorily homeless or in unsuitable accommodation.
  - 9) The Council should consider extending the existing Bond Scheme to cover the initial cost of up to £70 made by private sector landlords. This facility should be available to individuals at short notice working through a third party who would otherwise be unable to find accommodation.

## **Telford and Wrekin Scrutiny Management Board Response to LGA Consultation on Sector Led Improvement**

Sector-led improvement is the approach to improvement put in place by local authorities (including Fire and Rescue Authorities) and the Local Government Association (LGA) following the abolition of the previous national performance framework. It is based on the fundamental principles that councils are responsible for their own performance and are accountable for it locally (not nationally), and that the role of the LGA is to support the sector.

The LGA held a consultation 'Taking Stock – Where Next with Sector Led Improvement' from January until 13<sup>th</sup> March. A draft response to the consultation was circulated to Scrutiny Management Board Members for comment and the final comments agreed by the Chair of Scrutiny Management Board for submission by the deadline.

### **Q1 Given the current and future challenges facing the sector, are the principles on which the sector-led improvement is based still the right ones?**

Yes, they are generally relevant, but I suggest some changes

### **Q2 If you answered no or suggested changes, what would you suggest as an alternatives/ additions?**

A greater recognition of the role of local government scrutiny both as part of the democratic accountability and a mechanism to improve services.

### **Q3 How should the increasing role that council's play in working with other parts of the public sector on a place based approach be reflected in the sector led improvement?**

Statutory arrangements already exist for scrutiny of NHS commissioners and providers, CDRP and flood water management authorities. In Telford and Wrekin Scrutiny Committees have developed very positive relationships with organisations not covered by scrutiny legislation including Registered Social Landlords, Police, schools, FE colleges, Probation, CPS and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board Chair. It would be beneficial to build on these relationships and promote the benefits of these and other organisations participating in Local Government Scrutiny.

**Q4 Is there more that all councils should do to strengthen local accountability in the areas? If so what?**

It would be beneficial to build on the initial research carried out by the Centre for Public Scrutiny on the political leadership and support arrangements that promote good Scrutiny.

**Q5. Do council's or the LGA need to do any more to ensure that local people and others have the comparative performance data they need to hold council's to account? if so what?**

**Q6. Is there anything more that needs to be done to help councillors exercise effective scrutiny?**

National recognition of the role of local government scrutiny as an important part of local accountability arrangements - recognition of this role at a national level will raise the profile locally.

Ensuring there are opportunities for Scrutiny Councillors to network and share good practice regionally and nationally. (The West Midlands has very active Health Scrutiny Chair's Forum and a separate West Midlands Scrutiny Network. However, the future of the West Midlands Scrutiny Network is at risk due to reduced resources across authorities to support scrutiny.)

In responses to Q 7 and Q8 below - all peer challenge reports and the action plans should be presented to public scrutiny committees.

**Q7. Do you have any views on the core components of a corporate peer challenge?**

It would be beneficial to include Scrutiny Members / officers in the corporate peer challenge process.

Also - in addition to assessing the effectiveness of the Scrutiny Function within the local authority it would also be helpful to have specific criteria against which the Executive demonstrates its willingness to enable independent scrutiny and its constructive approach to engaging with and responding to scrutiny.

In response to Q8 below – Yes but there also needs to be ongoing monitoring of the action plan by a Scrutiny Committee.

**Q8. Should all authorities be expected to have a corporate peer review challenge on a regular basis, say every 4 years?**

Yes

**Q 9. Should all corporate peer challenge reports be published?**

Yes

**Q 10. Should all authorities be expected to produce an action plan following a peer challenge?**

Yes

**Q.11 Are there other things we should do to limit the Governments potential appetite for inspection?**

**12. What changes would you like to see from the LGA's improvement offer?**

Recognition of the role of Local Government Scrutiny as part of the service improvement and democratic accountability framework.

**Q13. Is there a continued need for the inspection of services that protect and care for children and young people?**

**Q14. If you answered yes, should that inspection be carried out by Ofsted?**

**Q15 Is there a continued need for the inspection of council's school improvement services?**

**Q16. If you answered yes, should that inspection be carried out by Ofsted?**

**Q17. Should separate inspections of agencies contributing to the protection and care of children, such as councils, health and the police, be replaced by a single inspection of services across all agencies?**

**Q18. If a new multi-agency inspection for the protection and care of children is developed, should this be delivered through Ofsted, another existing inspectorate or a new inspectorate?**

**Q19. Do council's need further support, such as bespoke models of peer review for child sexual exploitation or school improvement, to meet the challenges faced in children's services? If so what?**

It is important to recognise the work that scrutiny committees are already doing on these issues. Scrutiny in Telford and Wrekin is currently carrying out an extensive review into multi-agency

working against CSE many organisations that are not required to participate in scrutiny have agreed to take part in this review including the police, probation, LSCB, CPS, Schools and FE colleges. Sharing existing good practice in the work of scrutiny of these issues is important.

**20. Do you have any comments about the arrangements and support put in place to help councils and their partners implement changes across adults and health programmes?**

Upper tier local authorities have the power to scrutinise both health and adult care services and to make arrangements for joint scrutiny with other local authorities. Telford and Wrekin Council has a Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee that focuses on issues with the local authority area and also a long standing joint HOSC with Shropshire Council. These scrutiny arrangements are a key element in the local accountability framework for health and social care.