



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough

Annual Scrutiny Report

2021 - 2022

June 2022

Foreword



Welcome to Telford & Wrekin Council's Annual Scrutiny Report, which highlights the work of our Scrutiny Committees in the 2021-2022 municipal year. The Council, Councillors and officers recognise the important role scrutiny can play in being a source of new ideas, challenging ways of thinking and examining current ways of working.

As the Borough continues to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, which itself has presented unique challenges to ways of working and operation, our Scrutiny Committees have continued their important work by reviewing key issues affecting the Borough and our residents. The work of Scrutiny will only become more vital as the Council looks to

protect, care and invest for its residents against a backdrop of societal changes and a rising cost of living.

Despite the challenges that the Council and our residents have faced over the past 12 months, given the Covid19 pandemic, Scrutiny's commitment to be a critical friend to the Council, the Executive, and officers has continued and will continue. It is a commitment to work on the basis of the Council's cooperative values to improve service provision, outcomes, and ways of working, for the benefit of our residents. To do this, our Scrutiny Committees have engaged with officers and external partners to examine whether there are better ways of working to meet the challenges of the future, not least the ongoing financial challenges that are being faced by councils across the country.

Looking ahead to 2022/2023, there are considerable challenges for the Council and the work programme for Scrutiny will continue to be considerable and varied, yet targeted on those areas where the most impact can be made. Amongst the most pressing matters are the wholesale changes to Health governance and leadership within the NHS as we move to an integrated care system. This will require close monitoring, in addition to ensuring that resources are used to provide the best possible services locally.

Whilst we are, once again, meeting in person, the use of virtual technology has been invaluable in our task and finish group work and evidence gathering. Our Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee undertook an investigation of the School Streets initiative and its suitability for Telford & Wrekin. By harnessing this virtual meeting technology, it has been able to take evidence from education and transport experts from across the country, leading to increased learning and sharing of ideas. This is but one example of Scrutiny's ability to innovate in order to achieve its goal to formulate better recommendations that add value to our residents' lives. This is something we plan to do more of in the next municipal year, with

a number of working groups across Children & Young People, Health, Environment and Communities committees in their preliminary stages.

I would like to extend a personal thank you to all the Scrutiny Chairs, Councillors, officers, and external partners that have contributed to the scrutiny process and our co-optees for their hard work and dedication. I am sure that this cooperation will continue during the next municipal year, as we look to tackle future challenges.

Councillor Derek White
Chair of Scrutiny Management Board



What is Scrutiny?

What does scrutiny do?

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 of good scrutiny set out by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny:

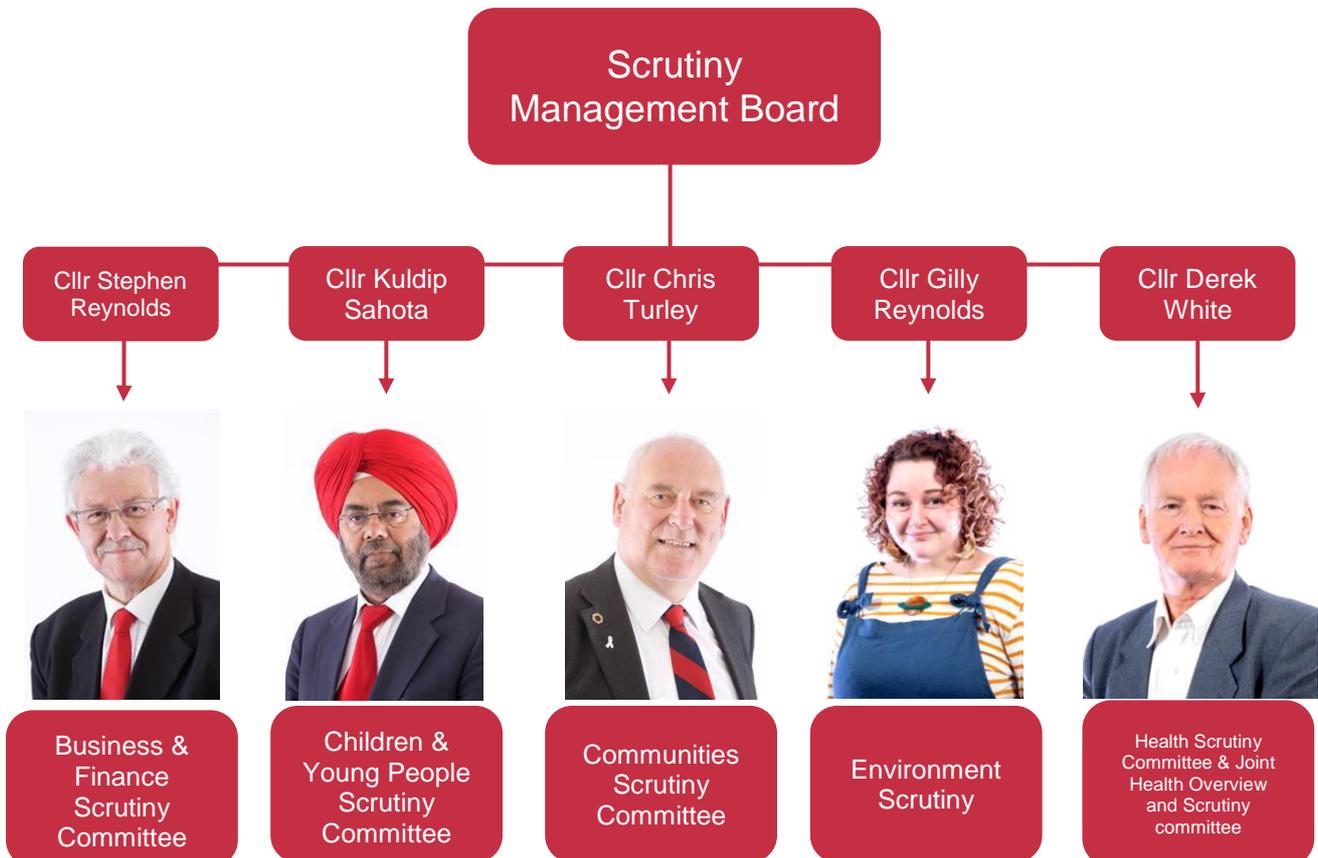
- Providing "critical friend" challenge;
- Amplifying the voice and concerns of the public;
- Being led by independent people who take responsibility for their role; and
- Driving improvement in public services.

At Telford & Wrekin Council, scrutiny is embedded within the organisation, with officers recognising the important value scrutiny brings to bear on the way the Council works.

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 who are co-opted for their 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 2021/2022, Telford & Wrekin had six scrutiny committees/boards:



Certain members and co-optees of the Health Scrutiny Committee also sit on the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) in partnership with Shropshire Council to scrutinise healthcare provision across the county.

How is scrutiny work carried out?

Scrutiny can be carried out in a number of different ways with the individual scrutiny committees carrying out the majority of scrutiny work. This usually involves reviewing services or policies at 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 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 committees meet in public but scrutiny members can also hold working group meetings to gather evidence for a review.

Scrutiny can also be carried out by working groups. These groups are specially formed 'task and finish' groups, tasked with an in depth review of a particular subject that cuts across different committee remits. To this end, the groups are constituted of members of two or more committees, lending their committee's respective eyes to issues. These types of review usually take place virtually, allowing engagement with a wide range of consultees, as well as enabling flexibility in terms of planning and structure. A final working group report is produced and returned to the referring committee with recommendations.

How do we monitor the effectiveness of scrutiny?

There are many ways that scrutiny can make a difference – though some are easier to measure than others are. 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 that 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. These organisations have no obligation, however, to accept scrutiny recommendations. Our approach is to engage partners positively in scrutiny so that recommendations are relevant, realistic, and more likely to be acted upon.
- **Policy development** – examples include examining draft policies to consider the implications for local people and suggesting improvements, giving feedback as part of a consultation on a proposed new policy or policy change, or proposing initiatives.
- **Holding health service commissioners and providers to account and monitoring performance of health services** – examples include examining the findings of patient surveys, gathering evidence from lived experiences and examining performance data linked to areas such as response times, waiting lists and discharges. The Joint Health Scrutiny Committee are also consulted on any upcoming or underway changes to services that will affect patients across Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire.

Annual Scrutiny Report statistics:

WORK PROGRAMME

suggestions for 22/23



73

ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS CONSULTED

for work programme



143

REPORTS RECEIVED



71

MEETINGS NOT INCLUDING

working groups



27

working group

MEETINGS



4

RECOMMENDATIONS PASSED



26

EXTERNAL PRESENTERS ATTENDANCE



14

OFFICER PRESENTATIONS



27

MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS:

Labour 27
Conservatives 27
Lib Dems 3
Co-optees 13

PAGES OF WORK RECEIVED FOR SCRUTINY



753

2,045

INTERNET PAGE HITS FOR SCRUTINY COMMITTEES 2021/22 municipal year



Scrutiny Management Board

Members:

Councillors Derek White (Chair), Steve Bentley, Thomas Janke, Angela McClements, Gilly Reynolds, Stephen Reynolds, Jacqui Seymour, and Chris Turley.

Chair's Summary:

The Scrutiny Management Board met once, at the beginning of the municipal year. The Board met to discuss the proposed work programme for scrutiny and to approve the draft Annual Scrutiny Report prior to its submission to full Council.

The scrutiny work programme for the year was referred to the relevant committees for approval and prioritisation. The Annual Scrutiny Report was approved for recommendation to full Council.



Business and Finance Scrutiny Committee



Members:

Councillors Stephen Reynolds (Chair), Eric Carter, Nathan England, James Lavery, Ian Preece, Adrian Lawrence, and Kuldip Sahota.

Roy Williams (co-optee)

Chair's Summary:

The main role of the Business and Finance Scrutiny Committee is to be a consultant 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. As well as considering the Council's budget, the scrutiny committee also has a role in scrutinising services provided by the Council to see if there are ways to maximise efficiency or deliver additional value, such as economic growth or social value within the Borough

In this last year, the committee has overseen and scrutinised many different elements of the business and financial services provided by the council. Services ranging from business support to procurement have received scrutiny from the committee. The committee provided feedback to, and constructive challenge of, the various areas being scrutinised with the hope that, in doing so, the committee can help the Council to provide a high quality of service across the Borough.

Some of the highlights of our work during the last year are set out below.

Commercial Projects Update:

In September 2021, the Committee received an update presentation from the Policy & Development Manager regarding the Council's commercial projects work. The Committee was informed that the Council looked for opportunities to deliver investment in the Borough which would have positive impact for the Borough's residents, for instance, the delivery of good quality housing to rent through NuPlace (the Council's wholly-owned housing company), securing employment and



inward investment. At the same time, some of these investments also provide an income revenue for the local Authority. As a Committee, we were also made aware of the impact that Covid-19 would have on the Authority, especially on how it is likely to affect business development. Members are keen to hear updates on this in the upcoming municipal year.

Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Update:

In November 2021, the Committee received an update on the work of the Marches LEP from the Chief Executive and the Chair of the Marches LEP Board. This is an annual feature of our work programme and gives the Committee an excellent opportunity to hear about the LEP's work in our Borough, particularly in providing funding for regeneration projects such as working with the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, where £174,000 was released to reinvigorate the hospitality, leisure, and retail sectors in Telford.

Overall, the Committee welcomed the Marches LEP's work to boost the region's economy and was supportive of the opportunities and projects that the LEP have offered in the locality. The continued Covid-19 support that the LEP provides was welcomed, especially the support to local businesses and hospitality establishments; it was noted that the LEP had provided £174,000 in funding for the hospitality sector.

Local Government Finance Workshop:

In December 2021, the Committee had a workshop session on local government finance delivered by the Director: Finance and Human Resources. The workshop covered the basics of local government funding in both a national and local context. The committee heard about how the local authority gains funding from both national government and through external funding such as partnership funding for projects. During the workshop it was explained how the budget is constructed. The Committee learnt a lot from this session and this should help committee members in their scrutiny duties.

2021/22 Financial Monitoring Report:

Also in December 2021, the committee received the 2021/22 Financial Monitoring Report. The report explored and analysed the Council's financial monitoring for 2021 to the date of the meeting, looking at how finances were used within Council to deliver services and other work. The Committee was assured that the Chief Financial Officer and his team are constantly monitoring the finances of the Council and look to deliver financial improvements across the Authority. The committee heard that, at the time the report was compiled, the capital programme totalled £82m for 2021/22 which includes all the approvals since the budget was originally set.

The importance of this report for the committee was to continue to monitor the spending by the Authority and examine the amount of spending that has taken place in comparison to the projections outlined in the budget at the start of the year – this serves a dual purpose, to ensure that the Council is delivering on its plans and also to make sure that spending remains within the figures agreed at the start of the year.

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 – 2025/26:

The Committee received the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23-2025/26 in January 2022. This report outlined the proposals for the Council's budget for the municipal years 2022/23 to 2025/26. It outlined the financial budget projections for the financial year 2022/23 and illustrated the allocated spending to each service area in the Authority. Members heard that the importance of this report is to look at the budgetary requirements of each area and scrutinise them to see if each area is receiving the adequate amount of funding to carry out their services and is being operated efficiently. It was also explained that the ability to agree a budget was largely dependent on the national government's budget announcements and looking at how much funding is allocated to services.

Neither opposition group submitted an alternative budget proposal so the Executive's budget was the only one scrutinised. The Committee was presented with a summary of the budget proposals report that went to Cabinet from the Chief Financial Officer. The Committee was supportive of the budget proposals, noting particular support for the

Council's proposed two-year freeze to general council tax for 2022/23 and 2023/24. The Committee noted that this would help the community in the face of mounting financial pressures.

Procurement Update – Social Value:

The Committee received an update from the Team Leader: Procurement Places regarding the social value delivered through contracts for services provided to the Council. The Council requires organisations that provide services to it to deliver additional social value, in line with the Council's cooperative values. The Committee asked how the Council could ensure that its service providers could contribute to the Council's goal to be carbon neutral by 2030 and heard some of the ways in which suppliers sought to meet this carbon neutral goal. One such way was pledging to limit carbon usage and find alternative methods of production. Another way in that suppliers have committed to this carbon neutral goal is by agreeing to offset their emissions to reduce levels of carbon.

After discussion and questions from Members, it was suggested that this item would become an annual item on the Business and Finance Scrutiny Committee's work programme. Members were generally pleased with the work of the procurement team to promote social value production from suppliers and looked forward to receiving future updates.

Business Support Programme update – Scene Setting:

The Committee received a scene setting presentation regarding the Council's Business Support Programme and Pride in Our High Street scheme. Members received an introductory insight into how the Business Support team provide local businesses with support across the Borough. It was explained that three main mechanisms were used to support local businesses. These were: Telford Growth Hub; Account Management; and, Project Management. It was heard that each of these are utilised to give an individualised approach to supporting local business in the Borough. Members learnt how this support could have positive impacts for local businesses. Members were particularly impressed by the work of the Telford Growth Hub in supporting businesses which puts local businesses in touch with national businesses/corporations or organisations ranging from charity organisations to academic institutions like the University of Wolverhampton for networking growth.

The second part of the meeting focused on the Pride in Our High Street work that the Council has delivered since 2019. Members heard that £12.4m has been allocated for investment in the Borough's Market Towns for the purpose of reducing the number of vacant retail properties in town high streets, creating new jobs and business, and encouraging young people to take an active role in the evolution of high streets. Members heard about various different grants for the high streets such as Diversification Grants of up to £4,000 for on-line trading, new products, re-branding and eco-packaging. Members heard that the majority of

businesses supported in this way have gone on to thrive and make a real contribution to the economic success of the Borough.



Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

Members:

Councillors K S Sahota (Chair), M Boylan, S P Burrell, A D McClements, I T W Fletcher, J Jones, B Wennington, and K L Tomlinson.

Sherrel Fikeis (co-optee,) Lyn Fowler (co-optee,) Carol Morgan (co-optee,) and Mel Ward (co-optee.)

Chair's Summary:

The Children & 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.



This year, the Committee has had two Chairs, myself, Councillor Kuldeep Sahota, and my predecessor, Councillor Angela McClements. I wish to thank Councillor McClements for her hard work as the Chair of this Committee since 2019 and to express my delight that her

expertise has been retained as a continuing member of the Committee. Additionally, I would also like to thank council officers and the external contributors who have brought reports or provided their expertise to Committee meetings and working groups throughout the year.

The Committee played a leading role in the School Streets Working Group work, which was undertaken throughout 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 – chaired by the Committee's former Chair, Councillor McClements. The Group's recommendation report, which recommended that an initial school streets trial scheme should be introduced for a limited period in Telford and Wrekin, has been approved this Committee – it is to go to Cabinet in the future following further consultation with Schools across the Borough.

Family Safeguarding Model Implementation Update

The Committee received an update on the implementation of a new model of practice known as the Family Safeguarding Model. This model seeks to utilise a strong partnership approach to provide timely, and high quality, specialist support to families underpinned by a single database for shared recording and case supervision across partner agencies.

At the time that the Committee received this update, it was noted that the new model of work had been introduced relatively recently and the Committee agreed that it would receive an update at an appropriate time to enable sufficient data to be available to measure the effectiveness of the new model of practice.

Belonging Strategy - Scene Setting

Members of the Committee were informed of the background to the Council's Belonging Strategy. The Strategy was rooted in the belief that the impact of belonging to a group could have both positive and negative effects on children. For this reason, it was important that connections with positive groupings were fostered. To this end, the Telford Education Strategic Partnership and the Belonging Strategy were being used to encourage collective ownership around the belonging agenda.

The Covid-19 pandemic had created further challenges, children were finding it hard to return to school due to gaps in their learning and prolonged periods of isolation. This made the belonging agenda even more vital, with the Committee informed that schools had been working hard to achieve a sense of belonging in the wake of this. Actions taken by school-based mental health support teams and the use of pre-exclusion hotlines for parents were welcome strategies. As the Strategy becomes more established, steps will be taken to capture the voice of pupils whilst promoting a whole system approach to restorative practices, developing online programmes and future school leaders.

The Committee is keen to hear an update on the matter at a later date to examine its implementation in practice.

Children with SEN and Learning Disabilities - EHCP Appeal Process Review

In November 2021, the Committee reviewed the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process. Having received an overview of the structure that EHCPs took, the Committee was informed of the conflict resolution framework that the Council adhered to. The Authority takes an approach that encourages productive working relationships with families through a number of means, from timely correspondence, to utilising positive and supportive language, and ensuring that families understand the range of choices available to them.

The Committee heard that there is a graduated framework of engagement to seek resolution to issues where needed. If these stages were unsuccessful, then the final step would be a SEND Tribunal. The number of appeals and cases proceeding to appeal had reduced in the six months to our meeting and the Authority's appeal rate was in line with the national average. While it was good to hear that the appeal rate was at the national average, it was more positive to note that officers were striving to improve on this and to reduce the number yet further.

The steps being taken to reduce this number, such as focusing on early, informal, resolution and giving young people a voice in the decision making process were welcome and lined up with the Council's wider policies, listening to service users and working cooperatively with our communities.

Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report

In May 2022, Members received the Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership (TWSP) Annual Report for 2020 – 2021. This is a standing item on the Committee's work programme, with the report being presented annually.

Members raised a number of questions regarding the impact of the pandemic and the ongoing pressures stemming therefrom. Key issues raised related to mental health and social isolation. The Committee heard that the Authority had worked hard throughout the pandemic to ensure vulnerable children were in schools, where they could receive in person support. Teachers had also been engaged to help identify students who would be best served via continued in person education. For those who were not in school in person there was regular contact.



Communities Scrutiny Committee



Members:

Councillors Chris Turley (Chair), Eric Carter, Vanessa Holt, Thomas Janke, Terry Kiernan, John Thompson and David Wright.

Chair's Summary:

The Communities Scrutiny Committee has a wide ranging overview that covers a number of key areas such as the development of Telford & Wrekin as a Co-operative Council and the planning, delivery, and performance of services provided to local communities. The Committee's work focuses on issues relating to how the Council works with partner organisations, housing, homelessness, transport and highways, regeneration, waste and recycling, customer services, community engagement, and enforcement. The Committee is also the designated body for scrutiny of the Safer, Stronger Communities investment.

Neighbourhood Enforcement Activity Review:

The Committee received an update from the Director: Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services on the work conducted by the Neighbourhood Enforcement team in 2020 and the ongoing work for 2021. Members heard that the key themes of this work focused on: tackling

anti-social behaviour, investigating environmental crime such as fly-tipping, the rollout of civil parking enforcement powers, and CCTV works. Following this item, it was suggested that a joint working group would be established with the Environment Scrutiny Committee to explore the issue of fly tipping in greater detail and this will take place during 2022/23

Strategic Transport Review

The Committee heard from the Director: Neighbourhood and Enforcement Services who provided a scene-setting report regarding the Council's transport strategies. This set out the plan for various transport strategies being implemented by the Authority. The Committee was made aware of two particular strategies: the Active Travel and Electric Vehicle strategies.

These two strategies have been brought to the Committee at different points throughout the municipal year; with an Active Travel update in February and the Electric Vehicle update in April.

The strategy focuses on looking at improving transport in the Borough. From being more environmentally aware to encouraging active forms of travel, with a view to improving the overall accessibility to travel across the Borough, as well as creating a more interconnected transportation system in terms of services and routes.

Review of Development Management

The Committee received an update report from the Director: Prosperity & Investment highlighting the work of the Development Management team, building control and enforcement, development control relating to highways engineering, and rights of way.

Private Sector Housing – Houses of Multiple Occupancy

The Director: Housing, Employment & Infrastructure and the Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Housing & Regeneration provided a briefing on Private Sector Housing, with a particular focus on Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO). This meeting highlighted the key legislation and policies regulating HMOs, both nationally and locally.

Members were keen to have further updates regarding the monitoring of HMOs in Telford and Wrekin and the work of the Council regarding HMOs.

Safer Stronger Communities

The Committee received an update on the Council's Safer Stronger Communities programme. Members expressed support for the programme and officers were keen to receive feedback from the Committee to see where they felt the service could be improved. Members provided feedback to the presenting officer and Cabinet Member for Safer Communities regarding the future of the programme.



The Committee was keen to see how the programme progresses and how it could possibly be implemented across other wards. Members also provided constructive feedback to the presenting officer regarding the future of the programme with regard to digital engagement with young people.

Transport Strategy – Active Travel

In February, the Committee heard an update on the Active Travel Strategy. Officers were keen to receive input from scrutiny regarding the recent developments in Active Travel and other continuing works. The Committee heard about these developments and how they have continued to make progress despite the ongoing effects of Covid-19.



The presenting officers asked scrutiny to provide feedback and that the Committee endorse the recommendations in the report. The Committee were keen to see how the active transport strategy progresses and develops over the coming months.

Transport Strategy – Electric Vehicles:

The Committee heard an update from the Director: Neighbourhood & Environment Services and the Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Transport & Highway Network Management regarding the Council's current Electric Vehicles (EV) Strategy.

Members were informed that the number of EVs in the Borough had been increasing in recent years and that this trend had continued particularly as more EV charge points had been installed. Since 2018, there had been major developments in the use of, and access to, EVs, ranging from grant opportunities from Government to ever-evolving technological changes.



The EV Transport Strategy formed part of the Council's pledge to be carbon neutral by 2030. The Authority was looking to ensure that the Council's vehicle fleet was, to the greatest possible extent, more environmentally friendly than its older vehicles.

Members are keen to hear further updates to this strategy. As part of this, Members were keen to know how these developments progress especially in regards to the use of this strategy for planning policies.

Expected work to come:

The Committee plan to examine the following topics further:

Fly tipping joint working group:

There is a planned cross committee working group with the Environment Scrutiny Committee. This working group will look at the issues of fly tipping across the Borough and see how it can be better enforced as well as how to better provide fly-tipping services within the authority. This will focus on the Council's priorities of creating a safe and clean living environment for residents and visitors to the Borough.



Environment Scrutiny Committee

Members:

Councillors G C W Reynolds (Chair), M Boylan, G H Cook, G L Offland, T Janke, T J Nelson

Chair's Summary:

The role of the Environment Scrutiny Committee is to scrutinise and monitor the Council's environmental impact and policies. The Committee is also the designated body for scrutiny of Flood and Water Management. Some of the highlights of our work during the last year are set out below.



Following a year disrupted by Covid-19 and marked by the prevalence of remote meetings, the Committee met a number of times, meeting exclusively in-person, in 2021-22.

This municipal year, the Committee has had an active role in scrutinising the progress of a number of the Council's environmental initiatives with Members receiving updates on 'Plastic Free Telford' and the Authority's 'Climate Change Action Plan'. The Committee has also been able to contribute to the development and implementation of environmental projects within the Borough; with one of our Members, Councillor Nelson, sitting on the fund allocation panel awarding funding from the Council's Climate Change Fund and with the

implementation of our Committee’s recommendation to Cabinet for the trial installation of dual-aperture recycling bins in the Town Park.

The Committee also contributed to the School Streets Working Group with Committee Member Councillor Janke taking an active part in the Group’s work over the past twelve months. The Group’s recommendation to Cabinet represents a welcome opportunity to better the air quality in specific school locales.

Plastic Free

The Committee has previously reviewed the Council’s single-use plastics policy; we again received officers to discuss progress towards a plastic free Telford and Wrekin. The Council had made progress, in terms of its own action plan, but the Authority’s work to influence the wider Borough had been hampered by Covid-19 – it had not, for example, been possible to hold community events and a number of projects had had to be put on hold.



It was encouraging to hear that the Borough’s Plastic Free Taskforce had expanded in early 2022. Major organisations, such as AO and Wrekin Housing Group, had since signed on to the taskforce. It was also welcome to hear that the Authority was planning educational visits, in collaboration with AO, to their recycling centre.

In spite of the pandemic, officers believed that the Authority was on track to meet its target of being plastic free by 2023.

Members had suggested that a plastic free shopping event be run to encourage residents to try local refillable stores in a fun and supportive environment.

Flood Water Management

In October 2021, the Committee received an item on floodwater management in Telford and Wrekin hearing about the Council’s work as the organisation responsible for drainage and flood risk in the Borough. Throughout 2020, there had been a number of severe flooding events in the Ironbridge Gorge.



The Council had worked with the communities affected and with partner agencies to gain a greater understanding of the events and their impact. It was acknowledged that community support was especially important in flood response and resilience and it was positive to hear that, in the aftermath of the January 2021 floods, 92% of respondents had felt supported by the Council at all stages of the flooding incident.

As well as community work, the Council had carried out investment in flood defences in partnership with the Environment Agency and had submitted a bid for funding from the government's Property Flood Resilience Grants Fund.

Members noted the positive steps outlined in the report, noting the impact of climate change on the frequency of severe weather events, and the measures that had been put in place to support those effected by flooding in the Borough. Members also welcomed the improvements made in the Severn area.

Climate Change Action Plan

The Committee received an update on the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

Telford & Wrekin Council had declared a climate emergency in 2019 and the Authority had set the target of carbon neutrality by 2030 with borough-wide emissions to be net zero by that same year. We were informed that there had been a sustained downward trend in emissions from the 2018/19 baseline year. In the two years since the baseline had been measured, there had been a 58% reduction in emissions.

Members were briefed on the actions taken by the Council so far. Actions such as retrofitting buildings to be more energy and heat efficient, streetlight LED conversion, and establishing a new naturally cooled data centre, amongst other measures. There were also a number of upcoming projects that the Committee welcomed, notably the Newport swimming pool decarbonisation scheme.

The Committee was keen to encourage outreach and educational work, involving the community in climate initiatives and giving residents a sense of agency in the projects they are involved in. Members also stressed the importance of the Council acting as a leader within the Borough, providing an example of best practice and acting as a point of contact for other organisations wanting to decarbonise.

Waste Update & Recycling Improvement Report

In March 2022, Members received an update report on the Borough's domestic waste and recycling.

The Borough had demonstrated promising levels of improvement in recycling and had an above average recycling rate for England; this was welcomed by the Committee. Members,

however, were keen to discuss ways to continue improving so that Telford and Wrekin was among the best performing areas in the country. To this end, a number of suggestions were made on ways to encourage residents to recycling. Members specifically discussed the importance of education and changing attitudes and behaviours if the Council is to reduce the amount of residual waste produced by the Borough.

Youth Climate Summit

The Committee received a presentation on the planned Youth Climate Summit in July.

The event will bring together 210 students from across the Borough to discuss climate change, with the aim of educating and empowering young people. Members were positive about the possible impact of the event and noted the importance of engaging young people. Discussions following the presentation focussed on how best to engage young people and schools to ensure climate action was taught and discussed. Suggestions included a dedicated social media strategy, focussing on those social media platforms with a younger user base, and identifying passionate environmental leads in schools to link in with. Officers would feed back to the Committee at a later date on the outcomes of the summit.

Plastic Free Update

At the April meeting of the Committee, Members also received an update on the Council's Plastic Free scheme.

The Council has pledged to become plastic free by 2023 and to this end, a Plastic Free Taskforce had been established to work towards Plastic Free Community accreditation through Surfers Against Sewage. Updates were provided on a number of projects related to the goal, such as the Borough's Ocean Fish Project and the plastic free pledge.

Discussions again focussed on the importance of engaging with young people and the valuable role they play in taking information and practices back into their communities, raising awareness of climate issues at home. For this reason, Members thought that education was key in driving the environmental agenda.



Health Scrutiny Committee

Members:

Councillors Derek White (Chair), Arnold England, Veronica Fletcher, Jayne Greenaway, Vanessa Holt, Leon Murray, Gemma Offland, Stephen Reynolds, Jacqui Seymour.

Jean Gulliver (co-optee,) Hilary Knight (co-optee,) Janet O'Loughlin (co-optee,) and Dag Saunders (co-optee.)

Chair's Summary:



The Health Scrutiny Committee scrutinises and monitors the planning and performance of the Council's adult social care services and health service matters distinctly related to the Borough of Telford and Wrekin. Some Members of the Committee are also appointed to work jointly with colleagues from Shropshire Council on the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

TELDOC Update

As part of the Committee's ongoing monitoring of TELDOC medical practice, the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Head of Clinical Workforce and Quality Governance for TELDOC

provided an update on their progress with the reconfiguration plans they presented in 2019. Since they last appeared before the Committee they had enacted their plan to open a centralised administrative function at a new Integrated Care Navigation Centre which allowed for better call handling and more clinical space. There were also further plans for expansion in order to future proof and localise services where possible. Members welcomed the improvements that had been made and intended to invite TELDOC representatives to return to the Committee in future to answer further questions on their progress.

Telford & Wrekin Adult Social Care Update

The Director: Adult Social Care provided the Committee with an update on the position of adult social care within Telford & Wrekin.

The Council is committed to providing specialist and supported accommodation which is key to keeping people in their own homes in their own community. This includes ensuring services that keep people connected and less isolated are provided regardless of any threshold. The Committee was informed that the advancements in technology utilised as a result of the pandemic had provided further opportunities for residents to keep their independence.

Post-Covid, there had been an increase in demand and complexity of social care issues. In order to manage these challenges the Council had worked closely with Telford and Wrekin Integrated Place Partnership, Shropshire Providers in Care, and the Making It Real Board. The experience of people with lived experience had also been invaluable.

As with many sectors of the Health and Social Care services there had been ongoing issues with workforce recruitment and staff retention. This had led to the commissioning of different types of care to manage those challenges. The support the Council had provided towards the recruitment campaign had bolstered applicants. There was also a commitment to co-ordinate a 7-day hospital discharge service in conjunction with SaTH and the Inter-Disciplinary Discharge Team.

Looking forward, there were a number of upcoming strategies and consultations that the Committee was keen to review in the next municipal year, including but not limited to; the Autism Strategy, the Learning Disability Strategy and the commissioning of local care.



Adult Safeguarding Board Annual Report

The Committee received an overview of the Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report from the Independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Partnership.

The Independent Chair explained that both adult and children's safeguarding capacity remained an issue, with a large number of people being unable to access mental health services due to oversubscription. This had worsened due to the pandemic. The Independent Chair sought the Committee's assistance in assuring that the right communication was going out to adults regarding accessing the correct services. Members of the Committee concurred that information needed to be readily available and that mental health was a concern and would be subject to further scrutiny in the future.



Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Members:



Councillors Derek White (Co-Chair, Telford & Wrekin Council), Steve Charmley (Co-Chair, Shropshire Council), Jayne Greenaway (Telford & Wrekin Council), Stephen Reynolds (Telford & Wrekin Council), Kate Halliday (Shropshire Council) and Heather Kidd (Shropshire Council).

Hillary Knight (co-optee), Janet O'Loughlin (co-optee, Dag Saunders (co-optee), David Beechey (co-optee) and Ian Hulme (co-optee)

Co-Chairs' Summary:

A Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee is required where a relevant NHS body consults more than one local authority about substantial reconfiguration proposals. Telford & Wrekin Council and Shropshire Council have delegated the health scrutiny power to this committee for health issues which cross boundaries for both authorities.

The Committee has held five formal meetings this year, in addition to a number of informal planning and briefing meetings with officers and healthcare professionals.

West Midlands Ambulance Service Review

The Committee met with the Director of Nursing, Quality and Clinical Commissioning and the Communications Director from the West Midlands Ambulance Service regarding the closure of Community Ambulance Station sites in Shropshire and delays leading to long wait times. Members were informed that the closures had been expedited to help improve the poor performance of the service which was primarily caused by delays of ambulances at Princess Royal and Royal Shrewsbury Hospital. The money saved through the closures would also be re-invested back into the service. Whilst Hospital Ambulance Liaison Officers (HALOs) were tasked with reducing handover delays there was not sufficient investment in them across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin. It was noted that over half the ambulance fleet could be sat outside the hospital at one time meaning that the average number of jobs that an ambulance crew did in a shift had reduced from 12 to 3 in a 12 hour period.

In response, the Director of Transformation, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group acknowledged that performance was not where it needed to be and that further joint working was required. They cited the Urgent Care Delivery Board and the Improvement Plan around emergency care.

The Committee understood that the closure of the community ambulance stations would result in an improved service. It was agreed that the Committee wished to see the CCG's Improvement Plan with timelines attached as soon as possible, and to review the measures put in place to alleviate ambulance delays by both the WMAS and the CCG.

Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin CCGs Urgent & Emergency Care Improvements and Winter Preparedness

Following the review of the West Midlands Ambulance Service, the Committee invited the Director of Planning, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin CCG to provide an overview of the improvement measures that they had, or would be, implementing regarding urgent & emergency care and winter preparedness. The NHS was experiencing unprecedented levels of demand and it was anticipated that, as winter approached, pressures would continue. To counter this there would be a wide scale recruitment drive of 22,000 allied workers who were to be in post by March 2022. Changes that had already been implemented to alleviate pressures included bringing on extra beds, access to the rapid response team in more areas across the county and direct access to medical and surgical.

The Committee requested that the Director for Planning be invited back to provide an update on the successes and lessons learnt from winter planning and noted the importance of speaking to the public regarding accessing services in the correct way.

End of Life Care Review

As part of the Committee's ongoing review of End of Life Care, the Medical Director, Severn Hospice and the Director of Transformation, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin CCG provided an overview on the implementation of the Respect document and the Advanced Care Plan document.

The Respect document had been designed to record the wishes of patients and was making a real difference to patient care, avoiding the need for repeat conversations. It had now been introduced in all settings across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin. The Advanced Care Plan Document followed the patient in all settings, and had been very successful in reducing uncertainty, preventing unwanted treatment and hospital admissions and helping determine future goals for end of life. This was to be measured by a positive CQC assessment and a reduction in complaints.

The Committee welcomed the progress that had been made and requested further updates in a year's time.

Proposed Changes to In-patient Cardiology Services

The Director of Public Participation, the Operations Manager for Cardiology and Clinical Director for Cardiology for Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin NHS Trust provided members with an overview of the recommended changes to Cardiology Inpatient Services. As an interim measure it was proposed that all Cardiology inpatient services are moved to Princess Royal Hospital (PRH) in order to prevent diagnostic delays and interventional procedures that had been experienced by Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (RSH) patients and strengthen the cardiology workforce. Although some patients were travelling further, they remained at the site they were admitted to rather than having to transfer from RSH to PRH for further treatment, meaning that their length of stay was shortened overall.

The Committee expressed their support for the proposed changes to Cardiology inpatient services outlined.

Musculoskeletal (MSK) Transformation Update

The Musculoskeletal (MSK) Transformation Programme began in January 2020 and was to be delivered in three phases over five years and included rheumatology, pain management and closer working with mental health services. The purpose of the programme was to improve the MSK referral process, which accounted for 30% of all GP consultations in England, to allow services to work in a more joined up model that would improve the patient experience. At the time of the meeting, it was still in phase one. The Programme was temporarily slowed in order to respond to Covid and winter pressures but had resumed. Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust were in the process of agreeing clinical

governance arrangements and planning for the system-wide Electronic Patient Record system which would ultimately simplify the referral process.

Proposed Changes to Renal Dialysis Services

Members of the Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee met with delegates from the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust to discuss the proposed changes to cardiology inpatient services and renal dialysis.

The proposed change would see the Renal Dialysis Unit currently located at Princess Royal Hospital (PRH) relocated to an offsite Satellite Unit in Stafford Park. The purpose of this move was to improve dialysis facilities for patients in Telford. Members heard that the current PRH Unit did not provide the space required, particularly when accommodating Covid social distancing and increasing patient numbers. The move to Holinswood House, Stafford Park had been designed to future-proof the provision of dialysis to meet the growing patient need over the next 10 years, based on the Hospital Transformation Team's modelling. In addition to the dialysis, the building also provided housing for a planned Community Diagnostic Hub and an additional 20-bed ward when required. There was also capacity for Doctors to run small clinics from the premises.

The proposed move would only impact patients who were stable enough to travel. Those more severe cases would continue to receive care at Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (RSH). As of February 2022, 18 patients with a Telford postcode were being treated at RSH, meaning that this move would directly benefit them by reducing travel times before and after long dialysis procedures.

The Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee were supportive of the proposed Satellite Unit and requested to be kept informed of its progress.

Phlebotomy Review

In August 2021, the Committee received an update on Phlebotomy services across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin as part of a wider strategy to make the service more accessible and user friendly. During the pandemic, Phlebotomy services had been moved out of the hospital and routine blood tests were not being carried out. Although the service returned to the hospital in September 2020, hygiene principals had prevented them from seeing patients.

The online booking system had been successful, although it had left SaTH struggling to keep up with the incoming demand in addition to clearing the existing backlog. The Committee raised concerns regarding wait times for routine blood tests exceeding 10 days. This was to be addressed as part of a wider review which would seek to ensure an equal local service for all.



School Streets Working Group



Members:

Councillors Angela McClements (Chair), Eric Carter, Ian Fletcher, Vanessa Holt, Thomas Janke and Janice Jones

Janet O'Loughlin (co-optee)

Chair's Summary:

At the Full Council meeting held on 26 November 2020, a motion relating to the investigation of the matter of School Streets was referred to Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee. The Committee felt that exploration of this was best suited to a working group environment.

School Streets schemes are initiatives intended to encourage active travel for primary age children to and from school and to discourage vehicles idling by school entrances. While varying in its implementation from case to case, the schemes share a number of commonalities. Generally, the schemes are implemented through the closure of the road at the main entrance to a school for between half an hour and an hour at the beginning and end of the school day.

The Working Group identified five specific areas that they were interested in investigating further:

1. Enforcement and Legal Issues;
2. Traffic Displacement;
3. Existing Travel Options and Influencing Travel;
4. Parent and School Buy-In; and
5. Environmental Impacts.

Throughout the review, Members of the Working Group heard evidence from a number of technical experts, delegates from other local authorities who had implemented the scheme, West Mercia Police, and officers from within Telford & Wrekin Council. Their testimony allowed the Working Group a greater understanding of the challenges of implementation and lessons to learn from.

Following deliberations, the School Streets Working Group made the following recommendations:

- That an initial School Streets trial scheme be implemented in Telford & Wrekin;
- The trial scheme should consist of up to three primary schools from across the Borough;
- Street closures should only be in place during term time;
- Interested schools should be sought and identified through a period of engagement;
- Prior to selection of the pilot schools, officers should, on the basis of the Group's findings, determine a suitability criteria from which pilot schools would be chosen; and that
- The results of the trial scheme should be brought back to Scrutiny when deciding whether to implement the scheme permanently and/or to expand the scheme.

Cabinet viewed the proposal favourably but, noting the additional pressures on our Schools across the Borough emerging from the pandemic, have asked officers to undertake consultative work with schools to identify the best trial locations for any such scheme.

Looking Ahead:

As we move into the new municipal year, the work of scrutiny remains as vital as ever. Providing cross party, non-partisan, overview of key policies and partners to ensure that Telford & Wrekin Council works for all of its residents, visitors, and workers.

Scrutiny Team Structure:

Anthea Lowe – Director: Policy & Governance
Richard Phillips – Service Delivery Manager: Legal & Democracy
Anna Plummer – Democracy Manager
Stacey Worthington – Senior Democracy Officer (Scrutiny)
Kieran Robinson – Senior Democracy Officer (Scrutiny)
Lorna Gordon – Democracy Officer (Scrutiny)
Sam Yarnall – Democracy Officer (Scrutiny)

Contacts:

To find out more about Scrutiny visit: www.telford.gov.uk/scrutiny.

To find meeting dates and agendas for scrutiny meetings visit: www.telford.gov.uk/meetings.

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