

# Scrutiny Annual Report 2012/13

## Health & Adult Care

*children in care placements*

## Co-operative & Communities

*holding the Executive to account*

## Children & Young People

*budget strategy*

## Housing, Economy & Infrastructure

*welfare benefit reforms*

## Budget & Finance

*continuing healthcare*

## Scrutiny Management Board

*waste management services*



Telford & Wrekin  
COUNCIL



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## Chair's Foreword

2012/13 has been another busy year for scrutiny. Like all areas of the Council, we have worked hard to use our resources as efficiently as possible. The Scrutiny Committees have remained focussed on their priorities and have worked flexibly to achieve tangible outcomes in a more resource efficient way.

This report comes mid-way through a two year work programme and reflects the breadth and depth of scrutiny work. Scrutiny has continued to give robust challenge, both to the Council and to NHS partners. This is clearly evidenced in the reports of the Health & Adult Care and Children & Young People Scrutiny Committees, and by the introduction in 2012/13 of formal "Holding the Executive to Account" sessions at Scrutiny Management Board.

We will continue to give challenge where we feel it is necessary. But as resources for local government reduce, local authorities nationally are increasingly seeing the valuable role that scrutiny can play in the policy development landscape. We have seen how well this has worked in Telford & Wrekin with the joint work of the Co-operative & Communities and Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committees on the welfare benefit reform policies receiving national recognition by the Centre for Public Scrutiny as runner-up for a Good Scrutiny Award, of which we are justly proud. We see the same approach with the Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee contributing to the review of the Meals on Wheels service.

Our Co-optees, new and old, have continued to strengthen scrutiny with their skills and insights and we would like to thank them for their continued support and contribution. The Town & Parish Council co-optees have helped start to strengthen links with the Town & Parish Councils and we will be looking at how we can improve this further over the coming year.

I was delighted to be appointed as Chair of the West Midlands Scrutiny Network for 2013/14. This presents a good opportunity for Telford & Wrekin to "set the agenda" and one of my key aims is to strengthen the network's influence at national level and I am already exploring ways of achieving this.

This report sets out some of our priorities for the next year, and I am confident that our Scrutiny Committees will continue to add value to these areas of work. As always, we continue to evaluate our performance and reflect on how we can improve in future. Your ideas are always welcome.

Finally, I must thank those scrutiny members who have worked so hard this year to make scrutiny a success, and all Cabinet members and officers who have faced our questioning and supported us in our work.

*Cllr. Derek White*  
*Lead Scrutiny Member*

## Purpose of Scrutiny

Scrutiny was introduced in local authorities by the Local Government Act 2000 as a check and balance in the political system. There are 54 elected members on Telford & Wrekin Council, but just nine of these make up the Cabinet (Executive) which is the main decision making body of the Council. This places a lot of responsibility with a small number of elected members.

Scrutiny is a way for elected members who are not on the Cabinet (they are known as scrutiny members) to be involved in work which helps the Cabinet make better decisions or to bring new ideas for doing things differently to Cabinet or, where necessary, to challenge the decisions that Cabinet makes. Scrutiny members can also scrutinise local NHS services and services provided by some other organisations. The purpose of scrutiny is to help make sure that the policies and decisions of the Council and these other organisations are in the best interest of local residents and that they make the best use of all the resources available.

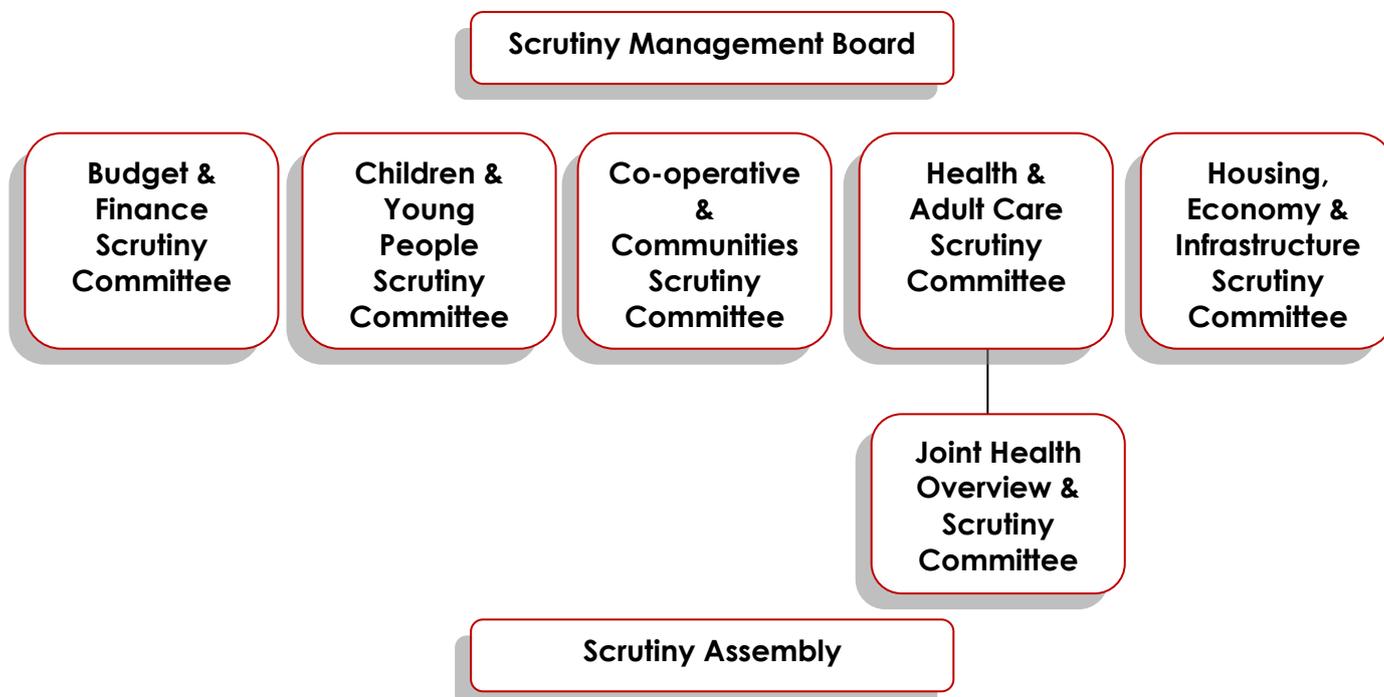
Scrutiny works in two main ways:

- a) By “holding to account” the Cabinet (and other decision makers). This means that scrutiny can question Cabinet members (or other decision makers) at public meetings about their decisions and about service performance: how the Council or NHS is spending money, what it is being spent on and how services meet the needs and wants of local people. This helps make sure that the decision making process is transparent and in the best interest of local people.
- b) By carrying out reviews of particular issues or services. Scrutiny can investigate any Council service, or services delivered by some other organisations and can make recommendations to Cabinet (or where appropriate to partner organisations) about how things could be improved or money saved. An important part of a review is to find out what people using a service think about it - what could be done differently or better and how people may be affected by any proposed changes. Scrutiny may also want to hear the views of wider members of the public, or from organisations delivering the service. Scrutiny’s recommendations are based on evidence gathered during these reviews.

Scrutiny work is carried out by scrutiny members who sit on Scrutiny Committees. The Scrutiny Committees and their work are described in the following sections of this report.

## Scrutiny Arrangements

In Telford & Wrekin there are five Scrutiny Committees and a Scrutiny Management Board. The diagram below shows the scrutiny structure that was in operation during 2012/13.



### Scrutiny Assembly

The Scrutiny Assembly is the collective body for all Scrutiny Members (i.e. all elected Councillors except Cabinet Members and the Mayor). There are also nine members of the public and six Town & Parish Councillors co-opted onto the Scrutiny Committees to bring specific expertise to the work of the Committees. Co-optees are also members of the Scrutiny Assembly. The Scrutiny Assembly is consulted on key decisions affecting scrutiny and the way it is carried out.

### Scrutiny Committees

The Scrutiny Committees are the main vehicles for carrying out scrutiny work. There are eight scrutiny members on each Committee who are appointed at Annual Council in line with the political balance of the Council, of one whom is appointed as Chair. There are also between one and six co-optees on each Committee. The Committees decide their own work programme and some reviews may be carried out jointly by more than one Committee. The main meetings of the Committees are held in public and the agendas and papers are published on the Council's website: [http://www.telford.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents\\_info.aspx?categoryID=200033&documentID=461](http://www.telford.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.aspx?categoryID=200033&documentID=461)

### Scrutiny Management Board

The Scrutiny Management Board includes all of the Scrutiny Chairs and other elected members to make the Board politically balanced, currently seven in total. The Board is responsible for making strategic decisions about scrutiny, for deciding the

priorities for scrutiny work and for overseeing and monitoring the allocation of resources and delivery of the scrutiny work programme. The Board holds Cabinet members to account at their meetings, and may scrutinise matters of strategic importance that cut across the remits of the individual scrutiny committees. All of the Board's meetings are held in public.

## What we did in 2012/13

In July of 2012, the Scrutiny Management Board made a number of decisions about the scrutiny work programme:

- It was agreed that scrutiny should move to a two year work programme to allow for continuity of work over municipal years. The current work programme covers the period 2012/13-2013/14.
- The Board reviewed all the suggestions that had been put forward for scrutiny and agreed the topics that would be scrutinised by the Board, and the allocation of other topics to the individual Scrutiny Committees for them to consider for their work programmes.
- A benchmark of six committee meetings per committee per year was set. This was to balance the workload across the Scrutiny Committees and ensure it was manageable within available resources.

## Delivery of the work programme

The table below shows the items selected for the 2012/13-2013/14 work programme and progress at the mid-point (June 2013). Additional items were added in-year and are also included in the table.

Topic	RAG
<b>Scrutiny Management Board</b>	
Changing the Council & Local Communities Together- the Co-operative Way	G
Holding the Executive to Account	G
Update on Police & Crime Commissioner and Police & Crime Panel	G
Appointment of Town & Parish Council scrutiny co-optees	G
Scrutiny Chairs' Updates	G
Scrutiny Recommendations Database	A
Domestic Violence	R
Homelessness Strategy	R
Flood & Water Management	R
Managing cross-cutting issues	G
Changes to the Constitution and Scrutiny Handbook resulting from changes to legislation	A
<b>Budget &amp; Finance Scrutiny Committee</b>	
Service & Financial Planning Report – 2011/12 Outturn	G
Local Government Finance: changes to funding mechanisms (Business Rates Retention Scheme, New Homes Bonus Scheme etc.)	G

Topic	RAG
Service & Financial Planning Strategy 2013/14 – 2014/15 (budget proposals)	G
Capital receipts (Audit Committee)	G
Savings proposals agreed September 2012	G
New Funding Formula for Schools	G
Welfare Benefit Reform policies (with Co-operative & Communities)	G
Safeguarding and Early Intervention Cost Improvement Plan, and Securing Permanency report	G
Items agreed to date for 2013/14: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget proposals</li> <li>2012/13 Outturn report</li> <li>Report from MD on response to comments on the budget including approach to shared services/outsourcing, financial planning, commercial income generation</li> <li>Single Status</li> </ul>	R
<b>Children &amp; Young People Scrutiny Committee</b>	
Children in Care Placement Strategy	G
Provision of Primary School Places	A
Youth Services and Youth Offending Service	R
Early Intervention programmes	R
Ofsted action plan (Safeguarding and Looked After Children)	G
Ofsted action plan (Fostering)	G
LCSB briefing	G
Children in Care Performance Monitoring Dashboard	G
Education attainment	G
<b>Co-operative &amp; Communities Scrutiny Committee</b>	
Co-operative Council updates	G
Welfare Benefit Reforms: Council Tax Support Scheme and Transitional Grant	G
Welfare Benefit Reforms: Discretionary Housing Payment and council Tax Support Hardship Policy	G
Welfare Benefit Reforms: Local Crisis Assistance & Local Resettlement Assistance Policy	G
Welfare Benefit Reforms: How the Council and partners are supporting people through changes	A
First Point for Business update	G
Impact of changes to leisure concessions policy	G

<b>Topic</b>	<b>RAG</b>
Review of Co-operative Values and Employee Commission	<b>A</b>
Provision of debt advice, role of credit union, capacity of food banks (to be scoped)	<b>R</b>
<b>Health &amp; Adult Care Scrutiny Committee</b>	
Continuing Healthcare	<b>G</b>
Meals on Wheels	<b>A</b>
Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)	<b>R</b>
Public Health Transition	<b>A</b>
Alcohol Strategy	<b>R</b>
Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Board Annual Report	<b>R</b>
Standing item: Health and Social Care Policy Developments (including changes to Health Scrutiny)	<b>G</b>
<b>Telford &amp; Wrekin and Shropshire Joint Health Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b> (Sub-group of the Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee)	
Travel and Transport Plan	<b>A</b>
Stroke Review	<b>A</b>
West Midlands Ambulance Service and Make Ready	<b>A</b>
Reconfiguration of Hospital Services	<b>A</b>
111 Service	<b>A</b>
Ophthalmology	<b>G</b>
SaTH Foundation Trust Application	<b>A</b>
Relocation of Head and Neck Surgery	<b>G</b>
Children's Surgery	<b>A</b>
Emergency Department Review	<b>A</b>
End of Life Care	<b>R</b>
<b>Housing, Economy &amp; Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee</b>	
Waste Services Management Procurement process	<b>A</b>
Empty Properties and Private Landlords	<b>A</b>
Community Infrastructure Levy (deferred)	<b>R</b>
Business Improvement Districts and attracting jobs to Telford & Wrekin	<b>R</b>
Other issues: Questions to Cabinet member for holding to account session	<b>G</b>

- G** Item completed or where the item has been to scrutiny and further monitoring or other work was identified.
- A** Item under way and partially completed.
- R** Item not looked at during the first year of the two year work programme.

## Scrutiny Meetings

The Scrutiny Management Board agreed a benchmark of six meetings per committee per year. The table below shows the number of meetings held by each committee by type of meeting and the total number of meetings held during 2012/13.

Joint meetings have been accredited to the lead Scrutiny Committee to avoid duplication of counting, but the joint meetings are indicated on the table.

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Formal meetings</b>	<b>Informal meetings</b>	<b>Total</b>
Scrutiny Management Board	6	6	-	6
Budget & Finance	6	7	1	8
Children & Young People	6	6 <sup>1</sup>	4	10
Co-operative & Communities	6	4 <sup>2</sup>	4 <sup>3</sup>	8
Health & Adult Care and Joint HOSC	6	8 <sup>4</sup>	11 <sup>4</sup>	19
Housing, Economy & Infrastructure	6	1	5	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>57</b>

<sup>1</sup> Two meetings were joint with the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee

<sup>2</sup> Two meetings were joint with the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee

<sup>3</sup> One meeting was joint with the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee

<sup>4</sup> Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee: 4 formal committee meetings and 7 informal meetings; Joint HOSC 4 formal committee meetings and 4 informal meetings.

The Scrutiny Committees aim to hold as many meetings as possible in public session in the interests of transparency and public involvement. However, members may hold informal meetings where evidence being gathered is confidential or relates to individuals or where members decide an informal meeting is the best format for effective scrutiny.

## Outcomes from scrutiny reviews

The tables in the preceding sections are quantitative measures of activity. This section attempts to show the qualitative outcomes and impacts from each piece of scrutiny work. The indicators used are all key measures of effective scrutiny.

Topic	Recommendations to Cabinet	Recommendations to other	Contributed to policy	Executive held to account	Performance monitoring	Report noted	Involvement of partners	Involvement of service	Other
Changing the Council & Local Communities Together- the Co-operative Way				Y		Y			
Holding the Executive to Account sessions				Y					
Update on the Police & Crime Commissioner and Police & Crime Panel					Y				Letter sent to PCC supporting Leader's views on proposed closure of police stations. Further work on protocol with scrutiny identified.
Appointment of Town & Parish Council co-optees							Y		
Changes to the Constitution and Scrutiny Handbook			Y						Delegations agreed
Service & Financial Planning Report – 2011/12 Outturn					Y				
Local Government Finance: changes to funding mechanisms (BRRS, NHBS etc.)						Y			
Service & Financial Planning Strategy 2013/14 – 2014/15 (budget proposals)	Y*			Y					* Committee's response presented to Cabinet
Capital receipts						Y			Joint with Audit Committee
New Funding Formula for Schools						Y			
Children in Care Placement Strategy	Y				Y		Y	Y	Development of relationship with Chair of LCSB.

Topic	Recommendations to Cabinet	Recommendations to other	Contributed to policy	Executive held to account	Performance monitoring	Report noted	Involvement of partners	Involvement of service	Other
									New model of working. Joint working between Committees.
Ofsted action plan (Safeguarding and Looked After Children)					Y				
Ofsted action plan (Fostering)					Y				
LSCB briefing						Y			Development of relationship with Chair of LSCB.
Education attainment					Y				
Children in Care Performance monitoring Dashboard	Y*				Y				*Recommendation to Cabinet as part of report on CiC placements.
Co-operative Council updates					Y				
Council Tax Support Scheme and Transitional Grant			Y						Joint working between Committees
Discretionary Housing Payment and Council Tax Support Hardship Policy			Y						Joint working and Member only meeting.
Local Crisis Assistance & Local Resettlement Assistance Policy			Y						Joint working between Committees
Progress on First Point for Business						Y			
Impact of changes to leisure concessions policy						Y			
Continuing Healthcare		Y					Y	Y	Establishing relationship with CCG and HWB
Public Health transition					Y				
Health and Social Care Policy Developments (including changes to Health Scrutiny)			Y				Y		
Joint HOSC (with Shropshire)		Y	Y				Y		

Topic	Recommendations to Cabinet	Recommendations to other	Contributed to policy	Executive held to account	Performance monitoring	Report noted	Involvement of partners	Involvement of service	Other
Waste Management Services Procurement Process					Y	Y			Fed into service specification for bidders. Followed-up recommendations by Scrutiny Management Board.

### Regional and national scrutiny work

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

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

The network meets quarterly and is going into its third year of operation. Its purpose is to provide a forum for members and officers to consider, discuss and exchange views and information on national and regional issues affecting local authorities in the West Midlands and to voice those views as appropriate. The network has no formal standing as a joint scrutiny committee and meets on an informal basis.

Past meetings have been attended by relevant Scrutiny Chairs or Committee members. The aim is to bring knowledge and ideas back into Telford & Wrekin (this worked successfully following a network meeting on housing) although it is the view of the Scrutiny team that reporting lines back to the Scrutiny Management Board could be strengthened. This will happen by default for the next year - the Scrutiny Management Board is aware that Cllr. Derek White has been appointed as Chair of the network for 2013/14 and that the July meeting is being hosted by Telford & Wrekin. One of his key aims is to strengthen the voice of the network at national level and he is exploring innovative ways of achieving this in addition to representing the network at the National Overview & Scrutiny Forum which meets in London.

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

This is a mature network which has been operating for a number of years and meets quarterly. Its purpose is to act as a vehicle for regional and national 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 2012/13. Telford & Wrekin hosted the January 2013 meeting and the Chair reported back to the Board on this in March.

## Call-in and Key Decisions

### 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.

Two Call-in requests were made during the 2012/13 municipal year:

- a) Cabinet decision of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2012 relating to the Waste Management Services Procurement. This was reported in the 2011/12 Scrutiny Annual Report.
- b) Cabinet decision of 26<sup>th</sup> July 2012 relating to the appropriation of land on Station Road, Newport. The Chair of the Scrutiny Management Board did not agree this was a valid Call-in and the request was rejected with the reasons given for the decision.

### 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 Key Decision has been published with 28 clear working days notice but contains information exempt under legislation and has not been published as a private report, consent must be sought from the relevant Scrutiny Chair for the report to be exempted.

Three such requests were made to Scrutiny Chairs during 2012/13:

- a) Request for exemption of Cabinet report 28<sup>th</sup> February, Retention and Refurbishment of the Business Development Centre, Telford.
- b) Request for exemption of Cabinet report 28<sup>th</sup> March, Hadley Redevelopment Phase 2 – Waiver of normal procurement procedures.
- c) Request for the report on the Regeneration of Brookside to be added to the 25<sup>th</sup> April Cabinet agenda.

Cllr. Turley as Chair of the relevant Scrutiny Committee (Housing, Economy & Infrastructure) consented to each request.

## Good Scrutiny Awards

We were delighted that this year Telford & Wrekin received national recognition as a runner-up in the Centre for Public Scrutiny's **Good Scrutiny Awards** in the "Working Together" category.

The entry was for the work of the Co-operative & Communities and Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committees on the welfare benefit reform policies. The work demonstrated groups of non-Executives working together, outstanding support from officers in the benefits team in working with scrutiny, a flexible and efficient approach to the use of member and officer resources and is a good example of how scrutiny can contribute to pre-Cabinet policy making.

Cllrs. Angela McClements and Shirley Reynolds received the runner-up award from Baroness Sally Hamwee, House of Lords and CfPS Advisory Board, at the CfPS Annual Conference in Westminster on 11<sup>th</sup> June.

Baroness Hamwee, who was on the judging panel, said that the entries showed the Executive increasingly turning to scrutiny as a valuable resource to help shape policy at a time of enormous changes in local government and showcased how scrutiny could bring creative solutions to the big issues, such as welfare and benefit reforms, that local communities face.

Further information about the work can be found in the Case Studies section of this report and a video showcasing the work can be seen at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RCSkrSACwO8>



## Case Studies

### Consultation on the **Service & Financial Planning Strategy 2013/14 – 2015/16** (draft budget proposals) by the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee



*"Scrutinising the budget proposals is the most important part of our work. We ask: are we spending within budget, are we spending on the right things and have we asked local people what it important to them?"*

Cllr. Shirley Reynolds, Chair Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee

The Committee considered savings proposals updated and approved for early consultation in September 2012 and met intensively during January and early February 2013 to consider the Service & Financial Planning Strategy 2013/14-2015/16 published in January 2013. Members had also looked at the changes to local authority funding mechanisms, the schools funding formula and the implications of the Autumn Statement for local authorities.

During its deliberations, the Committee met 6 Cabinet Members, a Director, the Chief Financial Officer, 4 other Assistant Directors and several other officers and also received written responses on a number of issues.

The Committee focussed on the higher spending services (children's safeguarding, adult social care and environmental and leisure services) and, being struck by the LGA forecasts for local government funding, looked at the medium-long term outlook. The Committee responded formally to Cabinet setting out its overall views on the strategy with 16 comments highlighting specific concerns or approvals and a number of operational suggestions relating to specific service areas.

The Committee found much to welcome in the strategy and gave credit to the efforts of the Council and its staff in achieving savings equivalent to more than £600 per household and with limited impact on front-line services. The Committee supported the commitment to prioritise continued economic and housing growth and heard many excellent examples of Co-operative working, recognising the contribution of partners, the voluntary sector and local people in helping deliver services which may otherwise be under threat.

Key concerns were highlighted as the continued overspend in safeguarding and questions about the Council's approach to spending priorities and income generation in the medium term if the financial outlook continues to worsen. The Committee will continue to monitor the key issues at future meetings.

## Review of the **Children in Care Placement Strategy** by the **Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee**



*"There can be no greater priority for the Council and elected members than the safety and well-being of vulnerable children and young people in our care – it is the least they should expect from us as corporate parents."*

Cllr. Mike Ion, Chair Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

The context for this review was increasing number of children coming into care (a national issue, not just one for Telford & Wrekin) and consequent impact on the Council's budget, and the recent high profile cases of child sexual exploitation which highlighted the particular vulnerability of children in the care system.

The Committee spent a number of months looking at the Care Placement Strategy, focussing on three key lines of enquiry:

- Whether current policies, procedures and practices keep children and young people in the Council's care safe
- If the Council's strategy and processes for care placements offer the best value for money
- What responsibility, if any, the Council has for children placed in care in the borough by other authorities.

Evidence was taken from foster carers, social workers, an Independent Reviewing Officer, senior Council officers, the Cabinet member, the Police and Chair of the Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Children Board.

The review highlighted some key strengths of the authority – the appointment of a Director of Children's Services and the strength of partnership working being particularly noteworthy – but also identified areas for improvement. The Committee made 12 recommendations aimed at strengthening the quality assurance of systems and processes and improving value for money.

The report was presented to Cabinet on 27<sup>th</sup> June with all the recommendations being agreed or partially agreed.

To view or download the report, go to:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/5882/scrutiny\\_review\\_of\\_children\\_in\\_care\\_placement\\_strategy](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/5882/scrutiny_review_of_children_in_care_placement_strategy)

## Review of the **Welfare Benefit Reform Policies** by Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee (jointly with the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee)



*"It was really important for us to scrutinise the Council's new welfare benefit policies – the changes would affect 12,000 households in the borough and there was no blue-print or precedent. We had to get this right for benefit customers, and within the reduced levels of funding."*

Cllr. Angela McClements, Chair Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee

The reforms meant the Council needed to develop new policies with no blue-print or precedent and in a very short space of time. The Scrutiny Committees wanted to ensure the policies were as fair as possible for benefit customers – which include some of the most financially vulnerable residents in the borough - whilst not putting unaffordable financial risk on the authority.

The Committees worked in parallel with officers throughout the process and was an excellent example of the positive contribution that scrutiny can make to policy development. The Committees were involved in the development of key policies:

- Council Tax Support Scheme (and the option of the transitional grant)
- Discretionary Housing Payment Policy & Council Tax Support Hardship Award
- Local Crisis Assistance & Local Resettlement Assistance Policy (replacement Social Fund).

For each piece of work, scrutiny's feedback was input into final policies which went through to Cabinet and Council. To view or download details go to:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/download/1609/scrutiny\\_of\\_welfare\\_benefit\\_reform\\_policies](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/download/1609/scrutiny_of_welfare_benefit_reform_policies)

**"The working group...was greatly helped by Scrutiny which was doing its work in parallel. This way of involving the Scrutiny Committee in forward policy making is important to eliminate shortfalls in policies."**

Cllr. Bill McClements,  
Cabinet Member  
Finance & Enterprise

**"I welcomed the scrutiny committees reviewing these policies in detail before they were presented to Cabinet. Their questioning was very insightful and their recommendations genuinely helped shape our thinking and the design of the final drafts... I am in no doubt that the schemes in operation are significantly improved as a direct result of scrutiny's input."**

Lee Higgins, Benefit Service Delivery Manager

## Review of **Continuing Healthcare** by the Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee



*"I believe this is one of the most significant pieces of work that the Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee in Telford & Wrekin has undertaken."*

Cllr. Derek White, Chair Health & Adult Scrutiny Committee

The Committee took on the challenge of reviewing the Continuing Healthcare (CHC) process which members heard had shunted around £8m annual costs from the NHS to the Council. Much previous debate had centred on funding issues, but the Committee's primary concern was that the people of Telford and Wrekin receive the level of healthcare based on their need and that this should be consistent with the level of healthcare provided in other areas.

Evidence was taken from Council officers, Cabinet Member, the Telford and Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) which in April 2013 assumed responsibility for commissioning many local health services, including CHC, from the PCT. Moreover, members met individuals, families and care homes directly affected by decisions about CHC who provided compelling evidence of fundamental flaws in the system. The implications of decisions about CHC on the wider health and social care economy were also considered as part of the review.

The Committee unanimously agreed 25 recommendations to present to the CCG which members feel will deliver improvements in the CHC process and better outcomes for some of the borough's most vulnerable people.

To view or download the report, go to:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/download/1607/scrutiny\\_review\\_of\\_continuing\\_healthcare](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/download/1607/scrutiny_review_of_continuing_healthcare)

## Review of the **Waste Services Management Procurement** process by the Housing, Economy & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee



*“Waste and recycling services are always a priority for residents. The new waste services contract is one of the biggest investments the Council will make in coming years and we wanted to make sure the procurement process was robust and would deliver the best possible services to residents for the best value for money.”*

Cllr. Chris Turley, Chair Housing, Economy & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee

Bringing the borough’s waste services management into a single procurement exercise made this a priority for the Committee because of the value of the contract and the fact that refuse and recycling affects every household in the borough. Following recommendations made by the Scrutiny Management Board at a Call-in meeting in July 2012, the Scrutiny Committee was actively involved at key stages of the procurement process.

Waste is a highly complex area with many inter-related elements and dependencies and the Committee garnered a depth of knowledge and understanding which underpinned its work. The Committee met with the Cabinet member, senior Council officers, officers in the procurement project team and visited a waste facility to witness sorting, bulking and recycling processes first-hand. The Committee received regular updates to seek assurance that the procurement process (using a methodology new to the Council) remained on-track, that the governance arrangements were robust and that risks had been mitigated as far as possible. A key concern for the Committee was to ensure that lessons learnt from past experience were applied to inform future service and contract arrangements. The Committee spent considerable time weighing the initial service framework and agreed a list of 29 priorities which were fed into the process and helped shape the service specification and method statements issued to bidders.

As part of the Committee’s due diligence, and in line with the recommendation of the Scrutiny Management Board, the Committee sought assurance that a detailed evaluation of the option of a Council owned and run Waste Transfer Station had been carried out and were assured that based on the costs and risks to the Council, the decision to procure a bidder-run solution was the best value for money option.

## **Holding the Executive to Account by the Scrutiny Management Board**

A key role for scrutiny is in holding the Executive to account. In 2012, the Scrutiny Management Board introduced formal “holding to account” sessions with Cabinet members at each meeting.

These provide a formal opportunity for scrutiny members to question and challenge Cabinet members in public session. The lines of questioning focus on how Cabinet Members have executed their role to date, their strategic priorities and challenges for the future. The sessions do not duplicate specific issues which may be under review by a Scrutiny Committee, but look at the overall approach of the Executive across their service area responsibilities and how they link into the work of other Cabinet Members.

In 2012/13, five Cabinet members attended the sessions which will continue during 2013/14.

## Looking Ahead

Minor changes were made to the membership of the Scrutiny Committees at Annual Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2013. Inductions have been held or arranged for new members, and the minor nature of the changes means there has been no interruption to the work programme.

Work continues on the second year of the two year work programme. The focus is to deliver the work programme and to improve outcomes from scrutiny work.

Topics due for scrutiny in the second part of the work programme include:

- Local arrangements for the planning and provisions of primary school places
- The impact of early intervention services
- Services targeted at young people including the Youth Offending Service
- Empty properties and private landlords
- Co-operative Values and Employee Commission
- Impact of welfare benefit reforms and policies
- Meals on Wheels
- Review of A&E services and 111 service

The work programme remains flexible to respond to new issues or emerging priorities that scrutiny members may want to examine.

The Scrutiny Management Board has reflected on examples of good practice from 2012/13 so lessons can be learnt and applied to future work. Some of these were:

- The sub-group monitoring model used by the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee
- The parallel working of scrutiny with officers on policy development
- Member-only meetings to reduce demands on officer time
- Joint working between Committees to eliminate duplication of work
- Greater use of electronic working
- Working quickly and flexibly to make sure scrutiny is timely

The appointment of Cllr. Derek White as Chair of the West Midlands Scrutiny Network presents opportunities to strengthen the voice of the network at national and regional levels and discussions are on-going about some possible ways of doing this.

## Contacts

To find out more about scrutiny, take a look at our web pages:

[www.telford.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.telford.gov.uk/scrutiny)

You can find meeting dates and agendas for Scrutiny Committee meetings on the Council website:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents\\_info.aspx?categoryID=200033&documentID=461](http://www.telford.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.aspx?categoryID=200033&documentID=461) or call the Scrutiny Team on 01952 383118.

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## How to get involved

You can get involved with scrutiny by:

1. Finding out more from our website at:  
<http://www.telford.gov.uk/info/1031/scrutiny/253/scrutiny>
2. Making a suggestion about what you think scrutiny should look at. You can do this by filling in an online suggestion form at:  
<http://www.telford.gov.uk/info/1031/scrutiny/253/scrutiny/5>
3. Coming along to a scrutiny meeting – our meetings are held in public unless there is a good reason not to. Agendas and papers for meetings are on the Council’s website at  
[http://www.telford.gov.uk/info/200033/councillors\\_democracy\\_and\\_elections/461/council\\_meetings/](http://www.telford.gov.uk/info/200033/councillors_democracy_and_elections/461/council_meetings/)